
The Role of Psychology and Good Governance in Mitigating Insecurity in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study focused on the role of psychology and good governance in mitigating the challenges of insecurity in Nigeria. Nigeria is under national security threats caused by acts of internal terrorism which greatly affects the Nations stability and well-being. Eminent among these acts of internal terrorism are ethno-religious conflicts, armed robbery, bombing, vandalizing oil pipelines, shooting of armed men on innocent citizens, kidnapping and so on. The causes of insecurity has been imputed to some factors which include bad governance, staggering poverty across the country, unemployment, porous borders, weak security system and lack of education. The level of insecurity in Nigeria has reached an alarming rate and there is a need to remedy the situation at hand. To this end, this paper focused on security challenges in Nigeria and its causes. It examined psychological approach and the role of good governance in mitigating security challenges. Based on the discussion, the paper recommended among others that psychological measures should be adopted in mitigating the challenges of insecurity and the paper concluded that fighting insecurity is not for the government alone, though the government has a greater role to play, everyone needs to be involved in eradicating insecurity.

Keywords: Psychology, good governance, mitigating and insecurity.

Nigeria is a great nation in Western coast of Africa and has diverse geography with climates ranging from arid to humid equatorial. Nigeria has the highest concentration of human population among African countries with abundant natural resources, notably large deposits of petroleum and natural gas (Toyin, 2020). Nigeria is greatly endowed and blessed by nature but one of her major challenges is insecurity. Insecurity is a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of both human and natural resources (Ndubuisi O. P. U& Theresa A, 2019). A review of our political history would reveal that the country has been plunder with series of crisis and security challenges which has disturbed the unity of the country. The numerous crises that deluged the country were exhibited base on national consciousness and dignity of ethnic considerations. The previous insurgencies in Nigeria have varied in their range, experience and vigour. Nigerian government is still battling with insecurity. Nigeria

which is perceived as the giant of Africa has witnessed an unprecedented incidences of insecurity ranging from the activities of Fulani herdsmen, boko haram insurgencies, armed robbery attacks, kidnapping, political/religious crisis, killing, destruction of oil facilities, child abduction/trafficking, destruction of vehicles, burning of churches, police stations, schools, hospitals, clinics, and shops. These challenges have made security a pivotal issue that has culminated in the allocation of country's huge exiguous resources to the protection of lives and properties. It has also made government to reroute resources meant for developmental purposes to security. When a country is insecure it becomes impractical for that nation to create the right intentions for her economy to thrive neither can there be any sustainable development. Consequently, no nation can achieve any significant development if there is no security. Presently in Nigeria insecurity has affected the economic, political and religious affairs of the nation, also insecurity has threatened the attempt to industrialize the existing socio-cultural tranquillity and sustainable development as a result of these Global peace index, 2012 rated Nigeria as regard security matters, Nigeria is seen and marked as an unsafe place of abode and has also been included among one of terrorist countries in the world and these scares away investors and foreign expatriate from investing. Nigeria is faced with an unequalled wave of varying but projecting security crisis ranging from kidnapping to extremist insurgencies, almost every corner of the country has been hit by violence and crime (Aliyu,2021). The scale of insecurity threatens the very fabric of the society. With every attack, human lives are lost or permanently damaged (Audu, 2021). Insecurity in Nigeria is backed by corruption and corrupt people in every sector. Security ranges from a nations protection against external aggression, foreign suppression or interest and natural disaster to concerns about individual freedom to hunger, threats and fear (Anyim, 2021)

The Distinct Security Challenges in Nigeria

Nigeria is a Federal Republic comprising 36 states and its Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The states are grouped into six (6) geo-political zones, North Central (NC), North East (NE), North West (NW), South West (SW), South East (SE) and South-South (SS). The nature of insecurity takes various forms in different parts of these geo-political zones. The various forms of insecurity in Nigeria are examined below:

Conflict between Herders and Farmers:

The conflict between farmers and herders is one of the social problems that bestow serious security challenge and obstruct with severe threat to entrepreneurship practice and the unity of Nigerians, particularly in the south-western states Brimah A. N. & Shittu M. O (2000). There have been vicious conflicts between nomadic animal herders and farmers in Nigeria for years on end. These conflicts arose over the use of land, water, as well as grazing routes have been aggravated by climate change and the spread of the Sahara Desert, as herders proceed further south looking for pasture. Recently conflict between the farmers and herders has degenerated into terror attacks on farmers by herders, between 2010 and 2015 Nigeria lost 6,500 citizens and 62,000 others were displaced from their homeland in 850 recorded violent clashes between herdsmen and farmers in the middle belt region of the country (Oludayo, 2020). While the conflict has concealed economic and environmental reasons, it also has religious and ethnic dimensions (Aliyu, 2021).

Banditry and Kidnapping:

Kidnapping by bandits and insurgents is among the biggest organised or gang crime in Nigeria. According to Aliyu (2020) more than 1000 students have been abducted from their schools since December 2020; only few students have been released after thousands of dollars were paid as ransom. These culprits attack villages, abduct civilians and burn down houses, when attacking a community they don't want any form of resistance, when they are resisted they remobilise to sack the entire community (Abdulaziz A, 2020). The most common examples of rural banditry in Nigeria are armed robbery, kidnaping, cattle rustling and village raid (Caleb D.D, 2021). Raids by bandits have compelled thousands of people to evade their homes and seek safety in other parts of the country.

Jihadism:

Jihadism which began in the Northeast by a group called Boko Haram is spreading into new areas and taking advantage of Nigeria's poverty and other security challenges to stoke up its fanatical ideologies. Boko haram is but a small component, of a wider and more convoluted Islamist-Jihadist challenges to the entire Heart of Africa (Yossof, 2015) Boko haram launches cruel attack and in some situations imposes fanatical ideologies on local people. According to United Nations, in 2020, conflict with the group had led to the deaths of almost 350,000 people and forced millions from their homes. In recent times, a splinter faction allied to the Islamic state group called the Islamic states West Africa Province has surpassed Boko Haram in size and capacity (Aliyu, 2021).

Separatist Insurgency:

There is separatist agitation in virtually every area. Here we focused on a separatist group called the indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB). According to report, there have been countless conflicts between IPOB and Nigerian security agencies. IPOB wants a group of states in the south-east, predominantly populated by the Igbo's to break away and form the independent nation of Biafra. The idea of Biafra is not new. In 1967, regional leaders declared an independent state, which led to a brutal civil war and the death of up to a million people. Presently this movement have been accused of launching deadly attacks on government offices, prisons, homes of politicians and homes of community leader (Aliyu, 2021). Despite these developments, the separatists claimed that their militant operations were mainly aimed at defending local communities from armed herders and bandits instead of fighting the Nigerian government (Chidi, 2021)

Militants in the Oil Producing States:

Prior to this time militants in the Niger Delta have long agitated for a greater share of the profit gotten from oil and gas in the Niger Delta region, they mounted pressure on the government by kidnapping oil workers and launching attacks on security personnel and oil infrastructure like pipelines. In other to address this, ex-president Umaru Musa Yar'Adua launched a presidential amnesty programme in 2009, which saw the end of the Niger Delta Militants (Aliyu,2021).

Causes of Insecurity:

Insecurity is seen as a chronic threat to human life, territories, state, religious believe, properties and institutions among others (Callistar, 2015). Insecurity in Nigeria is a significant reason why the growth and development of the country are affected. Even

though the country is blessed, getting a lasting solution to this problem is still a major concern. George (2020).

Factors responsible for insecurity in Nigeria:

- Staggering poverty across the country
- Unemployment
- Bad governance
- Porous borders
- Weak security system
- Ethno-Religious conflicts
- Lack of education/ineffective education
- Selfishness/unpatriotic
- Weak judicial system
- A high influx of arms
- Narcotics

The Role of Psychology in Mitigating Insecurity in Nigeria

Psychology is derived from two Greek words psyche and logos which means the study of science of mind or soul (Nwamuo&Ikpeazu, 2006). Psychology lays emphasis on human behaviour. Its goals are to understand, explain, predict and control behaviour of organisms. Psychology is faced with the task of discovering and understanding objective data about human behaviour in order to enable individuals to understand themselves and improve their conditions. The discipline of Psychology is broadly divided into two parts: a large profession of practitioners and a smaller but growing Science of mind, brain, and social behaviour. The two have distinctive goals, training and practices, but some psychologist integrates the two. The main aim of Psychology is to provide better answers to questions about behaviours. Psychology is applied to almost all areas of life in other to understand and improve existing conditions through its branches such as clinical psychology which involves the study of mental processes, behaviour Psychology which involves understanding behaviour through different types of Conditioning, biopsychology which involves research on the brain, behaviour and evolution, and educational psychology which focuses on the learner's characteristics, growth rate, intelligence, abilities, interest, personality traits, health dispositions and learning processes. The field of psychology is considered a "Hub Science" with strong connections to the medical sciences, social sciences and education (Boyack, Klavans&Borner, 2008). Psychology can be used to mitigate the challenges of insecurity because there is a psychological aspect of security management. Government needs to adopt psychological measures which include counselling and psychotherapy in dealing with victims and vulnerable individuals. According to Anna M, (2020) the term "counselling" and "psychotherapy" are often used interchangeably, but there is a slight distinction. Counselling generally refers to short term consultation while psychotherapy typically refers to longer term treatment.

The Concept of Counselling

Counselling is the professional guidance of an individual by utilizing psychological methods especially in collecting case history data, using various techniques of personal interview and testing interest and aptitudes. Counselling is an

art and science. It is a short term, interpersonal, theory based, helping profession. Its aim is to resolve developmental and situational difficulties. Counselling help to bring change in life: change in thought; change in emotion; and change in behaviour (Syed, 2017). According to Akinade, (2005) counselling is an environmentally controlled objectives helping profession and discipline that assists individuals called counsel to resolve their peculiar challenges, concerns, doubt and worried in diverse areas of their lives such as career education and socio-personal faces of their lives”. Counselling serves as medium of enlightening the people to help each other to facilitates growth, development, and positive change through exercise of self-understanding and ‘improve their well-being; resolve crises and increase their ability to be creative, innovative and make success focused decision wherever they exist” (Akinboye, 2003). Counselling is needed in suppressing criminal activities and easing security problems daily faced in the society

The following counselling measures can serve as remedy to the problems of insecurity in Nigeria:

Government should facilitate counsellors for group counselling plenary. Group counselling is very vital as it will uncover the merit of living together in peace rather than in constant hostility, violence and bloodshed. Group counselling plenary should be conducted in schools, churches and mosque. Seminars, workshops, jingles on radio and television should also be organised. The essence is to enlighten people on peaceful coexistence as better, safer and more expedient than violence.

There is a need for counselling recuperation; counselling recuperation is a specific practice of counselling within the discipline where professionals work to help people who have emotional. and physical disabilities so that they are able to live more independently

To combat unemployment and job insecurity. Unemployment is a huge problem among Nigerian youth, unemployment has been on the rise for many years in Nigeria, despite the high number of youths enrolled in formal education and the number of graduates each year there is a need for the government to start a program to train entrepreneurs instead of allowing unemployed graduates to search for jobs that are not there

Psychological aid should be provided for casualty of insecurity to help reinstate their troubled emotional state, through systematic desensitization.

Counselling assistance should be offered to victims and vulnerable individual

Counselling assistance should be given at each level of education. This will enable children as well as youth to appreciate the importance’s of security as early as possible and assist in inculcating good personality development and adjustment

Cognitive restructuring techniques and Behaviour techniques should be adopted in order to help people change the way they think, we have positive reinforcement and negative reinforcement both can be used to modify individual behaviour (Onabamiro, 2020).

The Concept of Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy is the use of psychological methods, particularly when based on regular personal interaction, to help person change behaviour and overcome problems in desirable ways (Akwash&Lliya, 2019). Psychotherapy focus to refine an individual’s well-being and mental health to completely heal or allay troublesome habits, beliefs, compulsions, reasoning or emotions and to enhance relationships and social skills. Some

psychotherapy are considered clinical for treating some diagnosed mental disorders while others have been criticized as pseudoscience. There are so many varying psychotherapy techniques, some being slight variations while others are substantial variation, some involves one to one sessions, between client and therapist while others can be conducted in groups. Psychotherapists may be mental health professionals such as psychiatrists, psychologist or other mental health provider from a variety of backgrounds, depending on the Jurisdiction and it may be legally regulated, voluntarily regulated or unregulated. A lot of people have been psychologically traumatised by dreadful things they see during insurgency period. Most of them need to be psychologically recuperated in order to restore them back into their societies. Women and children have had their husbands, fathers and brothers slain or hacked to death in their presence and their properties and villages burnt to ashes. Boko haram has displaced millions of persons, including a substantial number of children and more than 567m is needed to rehabilitate the displaced and psychologically traumatised persons in the North Eastern part of Nigeria, especially children whose situation is one of the worst in the world (Red Cross, May, 2015). Without proper psychotherapy and in some cases clinical psychotherapy recuperation of the insurgency victims, many will never come back to normal life and others, especially children are bound to wicked, heartless and brutal in the remaining parts of their lives for what they had seen and undergone under the insurgency. Child's psychological development is profound and significantly influenced by the kind of care he or she receives. (Zastraw& Ashman, 2010) have noted that psychological factors act together with biological and social conditions which then determine and influence individual's actions, relations, condition and behaviour.

The Role of Good Governance in Mitigating Insecurity

Good Governance has been variously defined to suit different purposes. The concept of good governance came to prominence after the end of the cold war around 1990 in donor discourse, such that the World Bank who was the first major donor institution even adopted 'good governance' as a condition for lending to developing countries Udo (2004). Good governance is about striving for the rule of law, transparency, equity, effectiveness/efficiency, accountability and strategic vision in the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority. Good governance according to Downer (2000) is a process whereby institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the realization of human rights. Good governance is the Panacea for insecurity challenge in Nigeria. The war against insecurity would only be won by raising governance standards, which is cultivating the culture of good governance where the government is responsible and accountable to the people. Security management and good governance cannot be set apart; they both have to work in harmony. So many have also linked security to governance system. The general view is that peace and security are determined by good governance. Oluwa(2012) stated that good governance is a function of effective, visionary, transparent, trustworthy and credible political leadership whose driving force is an improvement in the collective well-being conceived, effectively implemented economic policies and human development programmers. The underlying principle of good governance is the focus on people as the ultimate objective of governance. Government needs to be dynamic in dealing with security issues and threats by providing security facilities in other to

abridge security issues. According to Ndubuisi O.P.U& Theresa A. (2019) Government need to take the business of governance seriously and redress issues of injustices, victimization, marginalization, discrimination and to ensure that the fundamental human rights in the Nigerian constitution are strictly adhered to. Government need to enshrine security management in school educational curriculum at all levels ranging from primary to tertiary institution. This will enable children as well as youths to appreciate the relevance of security.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The level of insecurity in Nigeria has reached an alarming rate. It imperative to strengthen the security system with all sincerity and doggedness that it deserves to make Nigeria habitable for all.

The following are recommended:

1. There is a psychological aspect of security management which the government must take seriously. Government needs to adopt psychological measures which include psychotherapy and counselling in dealing with victims and vulnerable individuals.
2. Counselling and psychotherapy should be taught at each level of education so as to enlighten young minds about its importance.
3. Everyone needs to be involved in eradicating insecurity, although the government has a major role to play. Government need to step up concrete security measures through the provision of security infrastructures to abridge security issue.

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