

EFFECT OF INSECURITY ON SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

The incessant increase in insecurity and decline in the economic development in Nigeria call for a concern among researchers and policy makers over the years. Security challenges occasioned by the activities of militants, kidnapers, violent armed robbery in almost parts of the country, political assassination, ritual killings and more recently activities of Boko Haram in some parts of the northern region especially north east still remain the greatest challenges facing nations all over the world and Nigeria in particular. These social menace, when put together impinge on the security of lives and property of both Nigerian citizens and foreigners living or even trying to invest in the country. This has become worrisome in the face of Nigeria's preparedness to be ranked among the twenty (20) developed countries of the world by the year 2020. These social menace trigger off a worrisome sense of insecurity that challenge Nigeria's efforts towards sustainable national economic development. It also scares the attraction of foreign investment and their contributions to economic development in Nigeria. This paper recommends effective leadership and good governance as a panacea to solving problems of insecurity, unemployment, poverty, hunger, disease, etc.

Keyword: Insecurity, Sustainable, Economic, Development, Nigeria

Security remains a complex phenomenon that unarguably requires not just counter-measures to deal with but concrete preventive and resilient decisions to manage in order to avoid loss of lives and properties. Thus, the occurrence of security has taken center stage in the contemporary international system. Continents, regions, states among others are battling directly and indirectly to improve their direct domestic and international security status (Dike, 2010). All over the country today has been enmeshed in a firebox of insecurity leading to scores of deaths of innocent civilians, foreigners, some members of the nation's

security personnel, elected officials and many government workers. The rate of insecurity in the Nigeria has become a threat to national development.

However, national development is the ability of a country or countries to improve the social welfare of the people such as providing social amenities like quality education, portable water, infrastructural facilities, medical care and so on (Abimbola & Adesote, 2012). Ewetan (2013) conceptualized national development in terms of progress in three major dimensions in life of a nation. These three dimensions are economic, political and social or moral. The state of insecurity in Nigeria today has served as a backdrop to Nigeria's national development. Nigeria of today is faced with developmental obstacles like high level of unemployment, rural and urban poverty, and low physical and social infrastructure and massive domestic and foreign debts (Ewetan, 2013:).

Infact, the insecurity challenge has assumed formidable dimensions forcing the country's political and economic managers and indeed the entire nation, to rue the loss of their loved ones, investments and absence of safety in most parts of the country. The level of insecurity in Nigeria of today is alarming and worrisome due to the persistent level of terrorism, kidnapping and armed robbery, herdsman conflicts, suicide bombings, religious killings, politically-motivated killing and violence, ethnic clashes, armed banditry among others has increasingly become the regular signatory that characterises life in Nigeria since 2009 (Omadjohwoefe, 2013). These social menace reinforce insecurity and impede Nigeria's efforts towards national economic development. Besides, foreign investors are scared away from making contributions to economic development in Nigeria.

Concurrently, the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria specially affirm that "The security of and welfare of the people shall be the paramount function of government". The security of and welfare of the people shall be the paramount function of government". Regrettably, the government has failed to discharge their duty in this regard. According to Oluwarotimi, (2012) the government have failed to provide a secured and safe environment for lives and properties in Nigeria and driven away foreign investors. The high rate of insecurity in Nigeria has led to crime rates and several terrorist attacks in different parts of the nation which has had an adverse effect on Nigeria's national development. Security represent the instrument set in place to avoid, averting or thwarting violent conflicts, and threats that originate states, non state actors, or structural socio-political and economic condition (Stan, 2004).

Conceptualization:

Concept of Insecurity

The concept of insecurity is not alien to societies, as it has existed even in the primitive societies of the world. To be able to give an all-encompassing definition of insecurity, it is important to know what security is. According to Omede (2011) security can be defined as a dynamic condition which involves the relative ability of a state to counter threats to its core values and interests. McGrew (2010) holds that, the security of a nation hangs on two important pillars which are (1) the maintenance and protection of the socioeconomic order in the face of internal and external threat and (2) the promotion of a preferred international order, which minimizes the threat to core values and interests as well as to the domestic order.

Insecurity on the other hand is the antithesis of security. Belend (2015), defined insecurity as the state of fear and anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection, it refers to lack or inadequate freedom from danger. Insecurity is also seen as the state of being subject to all forms of dangers of both natural and artificial disasters and mostly resulting from human activities towards society or individuals. In the same way, Udoh (2015) sees insecurity as the state of being subject to danger or injury. It is the anxiety that is experienced when one feels vulnerable, insecure and lack confidence (Adagba, 2012).

In addition, insecurity has attracted such common descriptors as want of safety, danger, hazard, uncertainty, want of confidence, state of doubt, inadequately guarded or protected, instability, trouble, lack of protection and being unsafe. Achuniba, Ighomereho and Akpo (2013), argue further that, these common descriptors point to a condition where there exists a vulnerability to harm, loss of life, property or livelihood. Therefore, they consider insecurity to be a state of not knowing, a lack of control, and the inability to take defensive action against forces that portend harm or danger to an individual or group, or that make them vulnerable. This definition reflects physical insecurity which is the most visible form of insecurity, and it feeds into many other forms of insecurity such as economic insecurity and social insecurity.

National Security

In the past, national security was perceived traditionally as building up defence and security manpower, and amassing or collecting weapon systems so that in the event of a threat situation, the state could meet the challenge. In other words, the state channeled all her energy and resources to military manpower and armaments. Thus, this idea of national security was perceived from a wrong direction. For instance, Mroz (2011), conceived national security as “the relative freedom from harmful threats”. Similarly, Bellany conceptualized national security as “relative freedom from war, coupled with a relatively high expectation that defeat will not be a consequence of any war that should occur”. These conceptualizations of national security show that the state perceives it as equipping the military system in terms of training its personnel and armament acquisition or build up.

However, in the modern world, national security has taken a new dimension to embrace social, economic, cultural, political, environment and even technological variables. This became necessary because too many a scholar and researcher in this area or field, for a nation to be really secured, security must be seen from wholistic perspective. In this regard, lack of press freedom, obnoxious laws and policies, food insecurity, bad governance and ineffective leadership etc constitute critical security threats to any nation.

Economic Development

One cannot conceptualize economic development without first invoking economic growth. This is because economic growth is one aspect of the process of economic development (Sen, 2013). Therefore, economic growth is the increasing capacity to satisfy the needs and wants of the economy overtime. It is conventionally measured as the percentage rate of increase in real gross domestic product, or real GDP.

On the other hand, economic development can be defined as “the process of improving the quality of human life through increasing per capita income, reducing poverty, and enhancing individual economic opportunities. It is also sometimes defined to include

better education, improved health and nutrition, conservation of natural resources, a clear environment and a richer cultural life” (Penn State University, 2008). There are three variables of economic development.

First, structural change as defined by Matsuyama (1997) “is a complex, intertwined phenomenon, not only because economic growth brings about complementary changes in various aspects of the economy, such as the sector compositions of output and employment, organization of industry, etc but also these changes in turn affect growth” and hence can be seen through the development of an economy.

Second, external influence on government, and international institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF as well as MNCs, have the potential to decrease government control in its own country causing a loss of legitimacy (Riddell, 1998). According to Miller (2012), external influence on local governments consists of political instability and policy instability. Political instability deals with the potential or actual change in the political system and the opportunities evolving from such changes. Policy instability refers to the instability in government policies.

Third, environmental conditions refer to “any change to the environment, whether adverse or beneficial, wholly or partially resulting from an organizations activities, products or services” (Service Canada, 2005). Economic development generally refers to the sustained, concerted actions of policy makers and communities that promote the standard of living and economic health of a specific area. It can also be referred to as the quantitative and qualitative changes in the economy. Such actions can involve multiple areas including development of human capital, critical infrastructure, regional competitiveness, environmental sustainability, social inclusion, health, safety, literacy and other initiatives.

Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

In recent times, Nigeria as a nation has suffered plaques of crisis, each leading to loss of lives and destruction of properties. There are many factors that attributed to insecurity in Nigeria. These are as follows:

1. **Corruption:-** This is one social vice that is the bane of development of Nigeria despite her huge human and material resources. Corruption constitutes a run on the economy of any nation. This is the reason most governments in the world do not treat issues of corruption with kid gloves. In Nigeria, corruption seems to have defied solution despite the measures and campaign against it. Though, government has set up agencies like Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC) as well as an enabling Act, but there is lack of political will to fight corruption. The global anti corruption watchdog, Transparency International ranked Nigeria 143 out of 182 countries in its 2011 Corruption Perceptions Index. Conversion of public funds to personal use remains pervasive (Oshodi, 2012).
2. **Imposition of unpopular policies:** - Nigeria is yet to get a leader who will make policies that majority of her citizens embrace and support. More often than not, policies are foisted on people despite their opposition and disapproval. One of such policies was removal of fuel subsidy and deregulation of the downstream sector of the economy on January 1, 2012 by the Jonathan led government against people’s opposition and protest. This unpopular policy culminated into mass protest, crisis and violent demonstration as the youths engaged

the police in a fight for two hours and threw missiles which led to the use of live bullets by the security agents (Obasi, 2012).

3. **Unemployment:-** In Nigeria today, unemployment is soaring very high because critical infrastructure like roads, constant power and water supply needed to create jobs is not put in place by the government despite promises made to fix them. According to Mohammed, a sociologist, with the high rate of youth unemployment, all manner of crimes such as the activities of Boko Haram, kidnapping and other vices were to be expected. “There is a serious economic violence on the people, that is why those with violent intentions can easily employ them (Newswatch, 2011).

4. **Poverty:** This is a social problem occasioned by unemployment and lack of empowerment. In other words, as unemployment rate increases, poverty level also rises. Poverty, despite decades of military rule by leaders from the north, coupled with a lack of formal education has driven the region’s exploding youth population toward extremism. New government statistics released showed that in Nigeria’s north west and north east regions besieged by Islamic insurgents, about 75 percent of the people live in poverty (Oshodi, 2012). Also, in a recent report of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Nigeria’s poverty profile 2010 shows that at least 112.6 millions of Nigerians or 69 percent of the country’s population are living below the poverty level (Oshodi, 2012).

5. **Terrorism/Suicide Bombing:** This is the greatest security challenge the government of President Jonathan has faced since assuming power last year. In some parts of the country especially north east, security of lives and property has been undermined due to the activities of Boko Haram. Boko Haram is a Nigerian Islamic militant group that is opposed to western education, but seeks the imposition of sharia laws in 12 states of Nigeria. The group has engaged in suicide bombings in different parts of the country including Abuja, Bornu, Kano, Yobe, Plateau, Kaduna and Kogi that led to the loss of many lives and destruction of properties.

Measures to Tackle Security Challenges in Nigeria

The increasing level of insecurity in Nigeria occasioned by the activities of different groups especially in the northern part of the country, for example the north east, has instilled fear in both citizens and foreigners living in the country. Consequently, the federal government, individuals, groups, organizations (religious and political), non-governmental organizations and even the international community continue to articulate views and make suggestions on the way out of this challenge. In particular, the federal government has being put under pressure to find lasting solution to security challenges facing the country.

First, government has core responsibilities to its citizens, the greatest being good governance which political leaders pledge to provide but which they renege at all levels. There is no doubt, this could be remotely connected to the disaffection in the polity. Government should put all political options on the table and nothing should be left in the search for peace. The Presidency should be free to talk with any agitated group or segment, without compromising public law and order, or the corporate existence of the country.

Second, government should create an enabling environment for job opportunities for the teeming Nigerian youths. This can be done through laws, policies and provision of

infrastructural facilities which will facilitate investment and creation of jobs by the private sector organizations in the country.

Third, terrorism is a global problem especially after the 2001 attack on America by Late Osama Bin Laden Al Qaeda Network. This calls for synergy with the international community to fight the scourge of terrorism. Although, the federal government is collaborating with some countries and organizations which have even voluntarily offered to assist Nigeria in the fight against terrorism (eg US, UK, Israel, South Korea and other bodies like AU, ECOWAS and UN), there is an urgent need to galvanize their efforts more effectively to check the Boko Haram sect whose activities have instilled fear in every Nigerian because of the mysterious way they carry out their mayhem. It should also diversify and strength its means of creating avenue for international intelligence sharing and inter agency cooperation through diplomatic channels/pacts.

Fourth, the security agencies including the Police, DIA, Army, SSS, Navy and Air force should be trained and retrained in a modern way of combating terrorism. Though, this is ongoing now, it should be supported and followed by the provision of modern equipment and facilities by the government to enhance intelligence gathering and effective coordination of the activities of security agencies in the country. Besides, government should increase its budget allocation to these agencies in order to boost their morale in securing lives and property of both Nigerian citizens and foreigners living in the country.

Fifth, corruption is the bane of Nigeria's development. Thus, in the face of huge resources that accrue to Nigeria from her mineral resources, majority of Nigerians still wallow in abject poverty as few people monopolize the resources (Tambuwal, 2012). This attracts negative reactions from youths that impinge on our security. President Jonathan should muster political will to deal with the acts of corruption instead of the lethargic attitude towards the vice. According to Akanbi (2012), "I know that if we don't kill corruption, corruption will kill us if we continue the way we are going". The war against corruption has to be total. We have to follow the examples of the likes of Leo Kuan Yew of Singapore or follow the example of Hong Kong Kuan Yew who made sure that the man who headed its corruption battle was learned and committed to fighting corruption.

Sixth, Boko Haram group is sponsored by some Nigerians apart from international sponsorship (Abimbola, 2010). The federal government should fish out their sponsors especially Nigerians and make them face the law accordingly. In this regard, President Jonathan should ensure that the law against terrorism is implemented to the letter against those found culpable no matter how highly placed if the goal of stamping out terrorism can be achieved.

Seventh, it has become imperative to decentralize the Nigeria Police Force because of the increasing security challenges witnessed in the states instead of the present centralized system. Though, discussions are going on in various quarters as individuals, groups and government officials are making their views and opinions known either for or against the issue. At the state level, the commissioners of Police are answerable to the Inspector General of Police (IG) and not the Governors, yet the latter are responsible for breaches of security in their respective states. If and when approved, a law should be enacted by the National Assembly to forestall abuse by the Governors.

Conclusion

This paper therefore believes that, insecurity is a serious challenge to national economic development of Nigeria. It is then clear that, insecurity occasioned by the activities of militants, kidnappers, bandits, violent armed robbers among others in the country can truncate the sustainable national economic development. This can be done by government proving effective leadership and good governance, ensuring well equipped and coordinated security and enhancing intelligence gathering mechanism through synergy between Nigeria and the international community. Besides, equitable distribution of national resources and egalitarian society are essential or germane to achieving our vision.

Recommendations

This paper recommends that,

1. Effective leadership and good governance have the capacity to ensure political stability in the country and guarantee economic growth and development.
2. Well equipped, funded and coordinated security can protect lives and property through intelligence gathering mechanism with the cooperation of the international community.
3. Government should create an enabling environment for job opportunities for the teeming unemployed youths. This can be done through laws, policies, programmes, projects and provision of infrastructural facilities like roads, potable pipe borne water and constant power supply that can attract investment especially foreign direct investment.
4. Government should ensure equity and egalitarian society without discrimination.

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