

THE CHALLENGES OF INSECURITY AND SOCIAL UNREST IN NIGERIA: THE WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

This study aims at determining the challenges of insecurity and social unrest in Nigeria and the way forward. Nigeria is faced with social and political unrest. These problems emanated from economic frustration such led crimes such as kidnappings, ritual killings, religion killings, suicide bombings and armed banditry, ethnic malatia, etc. Frustration-aggression theory was adopted for this work. From the findings, the results revealed that the causes of insecurity and social unrest in Nigeria are: economic problems, corruption, poor institutional development, leadership style, illiteracy and lack of civilization. In conclusion the challenges of insecurity and social unrest in Nigeria has live the country in limbo causing divers' violent act. It is recommended that government should provide basic social amenities, infrastructures and employment to the young graduates in the country.

Introduction

Over the years Nigeria has suffered an increasing rate of insecurity and social unrest which has assumed a formidable dimension, necessitating the country's political and economic elites, and indeed the entire nation to rue the loss of their loved ones, investments and absence of freedom in most parts of the country. There has been increase in crimes such as kidnappings, ritual killings, religions killings, suicide bombings, armed banditry, ethnic clashes and politically-motivated killings and violence etc (Imhonopi & Urim, 2012).

There has been perennial eruption of ethnic militias and their preponderant religious fundamentalism that aggravates the propensity of insecurity and widens its scope (Egwu, 2001). Thus, the activities of these militias which execute the unconventional violent crimes threaten the very fabric of national integration in the country, creates the ecology of fear, disquiet and anxiety in the country and consequently destroys industrial development badly (Imhonopi & Urim, 2012).

The 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria specifically states that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government. Hence, government has continued to face this challenge of insecurity evolving several strategies aimed at containing or to dense it.

There is also that advocacy for multistakeholder intervention to the insecurity question, and scholars, social researchers, security experts and consultant have not rested in making diverse recommendations and solutions to address the blight.

Thus, the focus of this paper is to examine the causes of insecurity in Nigeria and have how peace can be achieved for Nigeria's sustainable development.

ii. Insecurity and social unrest

To be able to concisely define and understand this monotonous phenomenon, which incessantly had kept the Nigerian state in siege. For some years now, we take a hunch from the concept "security". Security from the conventional usage simply means safety or freedom from danger, and protection against external aggression or infiltration. For some people, this meaning is tied to military and police keeping. But there is more to the concept than this Omede (2012) sees security as a dynamic condition which involves the relative ability of a state to counter threats to its core values and interest. This implies that condition in which the state refuses to tolerate activities that jeopardize its peaceful existence whether from within or external. Hence, McGrew in Onifade, Imhonopi & Uirim (2013) pointed out two pillars of security which are.

- 1) The maintenance and protection of the socioeconomic order in the face of internal and external treats and
- 2) The promotion of a preferred internal order which minimizes threats.

On the contrary, insecurity is the antithesis of security which can be simply stated to be situation of lack of safety, freedom or peace. Insecurity connotes all activities in a country that threatens the existence and sustainability of individuals of a state. Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor-Robaro (20B) explains insecurity as moments of danger, hazards, uncertainty, doubt, want of confidence, want of safety, instability, trouble, and inappropriate protection and guard. Insecurity is fuelled along political, Religions, regional ethnic, communal or even genders and age differentials. It can span from low level civil disorder large scale violence to even armed insurgency, and easily directed to any soft target as citizens, infrastructure or government organs/institutions in bid to make their points felt.

Achumba in Onifade, imhoropi and Urim (2013) further explained insecurity to describe conditions where there exists vulnerability to harm, loss of life or property. The magnitude of insecurity can range from petty crime, serious organized crime political or industrial unrest to domestic terrorism.

iii. History of Insecurity in Nigeria

Insecurity challenges can be traced to the early years of military rule when large quantities of arms were imported into the country for the prosecution of the Nigerian civil war, some which got into the hands of the civilians. Soon after the war, these arms were used by the civilians and ex-military men for social vices such as armed robbery. There was also the army of unemployed youths that lost their job during the civil war (Akindiyo, 2014) Dike (2010). These social vices assumed dangerous dimension with the prolonged years of military rule from the 1970's as people procure arms and light weapons for personal defence.

Most of these arms and light weapons got into the hands of the unemployed youths who used them for deviant purposes to make their living. With these arms smuggled into the country became a profitable venture and as the police combats with the criminal, they advance in training and techniques to contain the police.

More significant is the formation of pressure group to impart political, religious or economic suspicious, agitations and distrust that ends in violent confrontations (Achumba et al, 2013) Salawu, 2010; AH, 2013: Okorie 2011). More obvious instance of this is the persistent Muslim and Christian conflicts which has been of average occurrence of once every two years. Cases of social unrest and insecurity situation occasioned by pressure groups of political, ethnic and religious contention includes: Aba women riot of 1929 that fought the taxation of women by the colonial masters, the pogrom against 160s in the northern Nigeria 1967 that lead to the Nigerian civil war, political crises of the annulled June 12 election of 1993, movement for the emancipation of Ogoni land that saw the killing of Ken Saro Wiwa and nine others from Ogoni during Abacha's regime in 1996, the religious crises against Christians northern Nigeria occasioned by a women's use of paper which has some Koranic writings on it in 2002 and the Jos religious crises 2008, Niger Delta volunteer force and Mass movement for emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) struggles for the emancipation and development of Niger Delta regions in 2004 and the present day case of Boko HARAM Islamist insurgence in North East Nigeria. In all these their operations sees increase from non use of arms Aba women's riot to use of sophisticated weapon and arms to extent that the present day Boko Haram uses arms that are more sophisticated than the ones Nigerian militate uses.

Frustration- Aggression theory: This theory argues that social movement occurs when frustration leads to collective, often aggressive behaviour. The Maslows hierarchy of needs tells us that safety is one of the most fundamental needs that are basic to human needs. These are the needs to be free of physical danger and of the fear of losing a job, property, food or shelter. It also includes protection against any emotional harm.

And Maslow explained that for an individual to move to higher level need, the lower (basic) ones must be satisfied. Otherwise, frustration sets in. so it is paramount that citizens safety needs be actualized (not only from attacks but including disasters, food scarcity and basic amenities) before they can be composed to make impacts to national development.

Frustration can be absolute which happens when people do not enough to survive, or relative which occurs when people have less than those around them. This frustration that makes people prone to any appeal that seems sympathetic to them.

Causes of Insecurity and social unrest

Many scholars have identified several causes of conflicts leading to social unrest and insecurity in Nigeria, but this focuses more on developing nations as a whole. Hence the notable causes are:

- **Economic problems**

Many scholars have pointed out this problem to the extent that they all agreed that the government have failed woefully in this regard (Egwu, 2000 and Igbuzor, 2011). The government has failed over the years to deliver public goods to citizens. More noticeable is the rate of decay in infrastructural amenities and these imparts negative externalities on the citizens who bear the burden of the bad

infrastructures in the form of high cost of living and negative incentive to investment. More disturbing is the gaping chasm of inequality of income and wealth which gives room to economic dependency and agitations. The little rate or absence of government programmes and policies to eradicate the high poverty and unemployment rate among youths leads to frustration and reinforces violence/conflicts. There is also the backward technology in developing countries and lack of implementation of company's social responsibilities to lost the required externalities of the citizens having source of income (Olabanji & Urlic, 2014, Egwu, 2000, Udeh, 2013).

- **Corruption**

This is another evil factor which has so engulfed the nation that all is now guilty of it. Okereke (2012) pointed out that the figures and rate of involvement is mind-boggling. Individuals steal and embezzled billion or even trillions of naira without thinking twice and these are monies meant for infrastructural development. Onafide, Imonopi and Urim (2013) identified that even the huge amount of money voted out for security in many states find their way into the pockets of some highly-placed private citizens and the chief executives of the states, leaving the helpless citizens to the mercy of criminals and sociopaths. This brings loss of revenue meant for health-care, human capital development and providing basic utilities. At present, only relatives to top managers and officials or money bags can secure jobs in the country now. These casts doubts in the mind of investors and creates anxiety and frustration on the citizenry.

- **Poor institutional development**

Threaty of Nigeria existence stipulates formation of the Nigerian state based on equity, fairness, just and building an egalitarian society. But there have been many cases of marginalization agitations by ethnic groups, some ethnic groups have even files suits for not being treated fairly and justly. There are no distinct, unbiased, policies to running of government which have been the bane of continuity from one government to another. Most government establishment and agencies are used at the discretion, any group in control of government. Thus, many Nigerians still maintain that the country still need a constitution developed by them. (Igomu, 2001) pointed out that in a speech by president Obasanjo during 1999 Independence Day celebration, stated that Nigeria was yet to achieve the much desired ethical conduct requisite for sound social relations which could guarantee the maintenance of security, peace and order in the country.

- **Leadership**

Over the years Nigeria has been controlled with leaders who ascended to seat of president without the political will to lead the nation aright. Politician ascend to leadership with selfish interest or to serve the interest of a few or section. Most leaders are unable to tackle offences because they want to avoid troubles it would bring. An instance is the issue of Boko-Haram which started 2005 which was nursed and fertilized with the "Sharia" laws introduced in a nation that has an existing constitutional laws and the president at the time could not tackle it until it got into the hands of politicians and external forces to create the present day havoc they are doing. This contrast with the of Niger Delta volunteer force, and Mass

mobilization for the actualization of the sovereign state of Biafra (MASSOB) at the south-east that was tackle head long and we had momentary peace.

Again, most leaders maintain disjointed relationship with their subjects. There are gaps between government and the citizens. Many maintain this because they believe in sectionality or ethnicity, but others do it ignorantly. These create negative perceptions about the government inconsideration of their welfare, mistrust and resentments in the people, creating opportunity for crisis at little insight (Akindiyo, 2014, Onafide, Imnopi & Urim, 2013).

- **Illiteracy and lack of civilization**

This is the most serious and strong cause of insecurity in the northern part of the nation. Akindiyo (2014) identified it as a very strong factor leading people against their own country. Unlike the southern part where people can be illiterate and still be civilized. This makes it easy for rich politicians to take advantage of their poverty and timidity and influence their psych with little gifts.

Effects of Insecurity

Akintokumbo (2011) identified the breach of peace as the most direct effect of insecurity. This is very detrimental to economic growth because at such instances, every economic activity becomes under productive or closes down because of incessant disturbance of their activities.

Again, the case where there is loss of social cohesion amongst communities, families and regions or federating units. Eventually, there is dehumanization of women, children and youths. This is observed as rapes, child abuses and trafficking, killings and inhuman rituals and abuses to human life. Families and communities are disrupted and dislocated and left with trauma of war for several days and months.

Insecurity also sends unpleasant signals about the country to the rest of the world. This discourages investor (both domestic and international) who starts moving their firms and enterprises out of the affected region and eventually leaves the country in some cases. It affects even capital market of the country, retards portfolio investment and affects the GDP.

Huge amount of money that can be used for infrastructural development are redirected to fighting the crises both by state and business firms, as a result, their profit reduces and leads to low production and low GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and makes governance expensive, with loss of skill, human resources and potentials both in public and private sectors.

Lastly, insecurity threaten democracy. During democracy, the use of military and powerful arms even by the police follow some meticulous principles and processes even by the president. This makes it difficult to curb insurgents at early stage while they gain the use of more sophisticated equipments earlier than the military, making our military more weak and vulnerable. Also, huge amount of money are paid as ransom to insurgent or terrorists demands for their crimes. These a times

seems to dire democracy consolidations even to attracting the military to the seat of power.

Conclusion

The prevalence of insecurity in Nigeria is a heart-aching and worrisome situation. But more disturbing is that the problems and pitiable state of the country are incited by Nigerians directly or indirectly in pushing their own private interest. And the greed for power as well as position among individual and federating units of the nation undermines the rationality axioms of Nigeria's existence one equity, fairness and social justice. In order to maintain our democracy, what Nigeria needs is good governance and it is possible if people in government becomes committed to discharge their duties with patriotism and zeal and without fear or favour. The government should focus on the pre-requisite of solving the problem of insecurity objectively and unbiased, most of which have been recommended above following an indepth study. Democracy is not the cheapest or most perfect system of governance, but as Aristotle argued, it is the least evil of all possible governments.

Solution and Recommendations

Considerations of wake-up calls cannot be treated without due emphases if the country means to develop. The quest for citizens made constitution cannot be relegated. This will solve many agitations of many groups whose though are silent now but are not satisfied. This is equally necessary for the federating units to decide the terms of their coming together. Hence, the sovereign national conference reports of 2014 by President Goodluck Jonathan needs to be passed and used as the Nigerian constitution. Also, government will be able to make policies that will enable clear institutional development of Nigeria. Bill like the petroleum industry bill (PIB) that has been passed for proper development of the sector. This means, that members of national assembly do not have the interest of the nation paramount in their hearts.

- The government should be brought closer to people to close the disconnect between the government and the people. This involves the participation of the people in government programmes made possible when their representatives from their constituencies provides adequate information and complementary programs for the people. Such instances are the agricultural grants and small medium scale industrial grants which most of the people interested lack the direction to secure them.
- Government should be proactive to insecurity by equipping security agents with modern methods and gadgets of intelligent gathering. And this intelligent information should be able to be shared and utilized among security agencies collectively. Also, the government should provide programmes to retrain and overhaul the security services with update technology to be able to contain the reoccurring security challenges.
- The judiciary should be more committed in discharging justice against corruption cases. The judiciary should have time specification to decide cases and avoid prolonging the time for cases, which they eventually abandon.

- The government should make frantio effort to develop the country and eradicate unemployment and poverty. The government should be practice in bridging the inequality gap in income distribution both individually and regionally.
- Schools should be built to take off the illiterate citizen from the streets. Also there should be curriculum restructuring for moral values and psyche re-orientation of youths. This also should be taken to churches and mosques to help curb Nepotism and impurity with indirect government supervision. Nigerians should be patriotic enough join in re-branding Nigeria rather than labeling the nation with negativities even when the government has some good programmes.

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