

INSECURITY ISSUES AND THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY

¹Adeleke A.A, ²Agbaje, T.A, ³Salami, A.A. & ⁴Oyelekan O.

General Studies Department, Osun State College of Technology, Esa-oke

Corresponding Author's Email: adeadeleke1964@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This paper develops an approach towards understanding and explaining the causes behind prevailing level of insecurity in Nigeria. Today, the centre can no more hold due to various destructive forces that are coming together to give a failed toga to Nigeria. The paper shows that the current state of insecurity is a manifestation of deep-rooted and structurally entrenched crisis of development that create avenues for worsening conditions of poverty, unemployment and inequality in the country. These in turn lead to frustration, alienation and social discontent that result in violence and insecurity. These conditions could not have degenerated into serious national security problem threatening to tear the country apart but for the enabling environment. The paper also looked at the relationship between insecurity and the economy and suggests various remedies to arrest the situation

Key words: Insecurity, Nigerian, Economy.

INTRODUCTION

The concept "insecurity" has been agitating the minds of researchers and policy makers for quite a long time in Nigeria. Insecurity has been devastating and unpalatable situation that has been part and parcel of Nigeria since the inception of Nigeria state known as giant of Africa.

Insecurity, as the direct opposite of security refers to presence of danger, fear, doubt, lost of confidence and unsafety. For the purpose of definition, Chiedu (2015) opines that insecurity could be described as the presence of fear and absence of economic or physical protection of persons, buildings, organizations or country against destruction or threats like crimes or attacks.

In Nigeria, heightened social insecurity has arguably fuelled the crime rate, leaving unpalatable consequences for the nation's economy and its growth. The rate of terrorist bombings, kidnappings, armed robbery attacks on banks as well as violent crimes in recent months, have led to prevalent massive loss of the nation's human resources and others.

The news of insecurity seems to get from bad to worse, as the security situation of Nigeria deteriorates further and further. There is crises everywhere, the centre can hardly hold with many people killed and properties lost. The physical and physiological toll on Nigerians is great. People sleep every night with one eye open, no one really feels safe in the country.

Fanoro (2009) opines that for more than three decade now, Nigeria national security apparatus and agenda have been under attack and even ridiculed with notorious gangs and persons committing crimes against groups and group of individuals, the government seems weak, impotent, baffled and unable to

protect the citizens across the country and especially in places like Jos and Borno. There have been recurrent ethnic/religion conflicts. A good number of observers (Bello, 2004, Williams, 2008, Lake, 2001, Leon & Walt, 2001) observed that insecurity in a given state not only affect the growth and survival of democracy but also lead to high level of poverty, unemployment, high rate of crime, poor standard of education, high rate of illiteracy, poor infrastructural development, poor state of health facilities among others. These qualities fit in into what has been in vogue in Nigeria for several decades.

Different types of insecurity are being witnessed in Nigeria ranging from transport insecurity, health insecurity, political insecurity and economic insecurity. Transport insecurity entails bad roads which for a very long time have been sources of death to thousands of Nigerians, Aircraft crashing had been claiming lives of Nigerians in hundreds not to talk of goods that are always perishing due to various accidents. Arguably, the health insecurity involves the poor state of health facilities such as moribound hospitals, non release of funding and incessant strike actions of health practitioners. Political insecurity is associated with the assassination of opponents, kidnapping, burning of properties, election manipulation and other political crimes. The economic insecurity is viewed from the point of corruption which is the source of greed, selfishness and personal aggrandizement. There is a wide gap between the rich and the poor giving room for a lot of unrest and agitations.

The objective of this paper was to explain the state of insecurity in Nigeria using democratic peace and relative place theories with case studies and show the inter connection

between insecurity and poor economy with provisions for some recommendations to move forward.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Democratic Peace Theory and Relative Deprivation theory to explain the connection insecurity and Nigerian economy.

Democratic Peace Theory is a theory which posits that democrats are hesitant to engage in armed conflict with other democrats as catalyst to development and growth. Contrarily where there is no peace no meaningful development can take place due to confused situation where there are fear, lost of confidence and others. Relating this to Nigeria's situation, the activities of various unscrupulous elements have been bane to the peace of the nation thereby retarding the progress and target of Nigeria to be one of the twenty advanced nations come 2020. The route to peace is, therefore, to encourage democratic system, the universal respect for human rights and the development of civil society. But such achievement depends largely on untroubled and robust correlation between the democratic nature of a state and peaceful inclination.

On the other hand the Relative Deprivation Theory was propounded by Dollard et al (1939). The theory was effort to link socio-political and economic inequalities in the society to rebellions and insurrections. As individual and group-based theory of aggression, the relative deprivation theory argues that when expectation outstrips achievement, regardless of the absolute levels of economic consumption or the provision of political rights, frustration is generated. Thus, collective frustration turns to anger and violence (Dollard et al, 1939).

Applying this theory to Nigeria situation, it helps to trace the historical antecedence of conflicts, agitations and frequent rise of individuals and groups against Nigerian government. Considering the relative deprivation theory, it is clear that the abysmal failure of Nigerian government to address critical challenges to development in many parts of the country may be responsible for the internal insurrection by various groups against the state. Also the insecurity or threats in some parts of Nigeria particularly the northern region, are clear indications that government seems to have failed in her constitutional role of protecting lives and properties of the Nigerian people. This is clearly because, available evidence demonstrates that

there is increasing rate of poverty among Nigerians. Also, unemployment looms large, per capital income is low and high rate of inflation has not been addressed. Similarly, Nigerians are still facing challenges of poor health status, poor state of infrastructure, high rate of illiteracy, low technological development, among others (Anosike, 2010).

Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

Whenever there is problem, there is always the cause but the case becomes a bigger problem when the cause is not just one or two but an accumulation of many just like the case of Nigeria. What and what are then the causes of insecurity in Nigeria?

The insecurity in Nigeria can be majorly traced to bad leadership and governance, imbalance federation and structures, favouritism and nepotism, issue of Quota system, ethnicity and activities of ethnic militia. Good leadership is paramount to meaningful development if a state would walk tall among the comity of states. The importance of good leadership therefore cannot be overemphasized. A leader according to Oxford Learner's Dictionary (2010) is a person who leads a group of people especially the head of a country or organization. Not only should a leader lead but must be an exemplary one. This has been eluding Nigeria as a state for a very long time. Successive government in Nigeria has not been able to take the country to her promise land.

Akinrefon and Oke (2007) opine that leadership problem has made it impossible for Nigeria to get to its peak in terms of socio-economic and political development. This problem has remained in the front burner of national discourse. The polity has not gotten it right because of bad leadership and governance. The polity has remained stagnated in terms of developmental challenges and this has been attributed to selfish, greed and corrupt political office holders who have milked or are presently milking the country out of its resources.

Similarly, imbalance in federal structures has been a source of Nigeria security challenges. From inception of Nigeria state, there had been imbalance in division of regions, states and local councils coupled with imbalance in federal structures. The imbalance has been creating fears for minorities with the hope that this can lead to oppression. The resultant outcome of this is frequent agitation for equality on daily basis thereby increasing the activities of various agitators.

Favouritism and nepotism cannot be left out of the causes of insecurity in Nigeria. Oxford dictionary (2010) defines favouritism

as act of unfairly treating of one individual or group better than others and nepotism is giving unfair advantage. Favouritism and nepotism have been robbing Nigeria of the solemn peace that needs to give room for rapid development and economic growth. The group or individuals who felt cheated constitute themselves to rebellion group against the government of the day. For instance, the people of south-south and south-east of Nigeria for a very long time felt cheated concerning the distribution of funds on petroleum which they believed is their own birthright. Their agitation is that not much meaningful development has been found in that part of the country.

Another important issue that brings about discourse in Nigeria is the introduction of quota system in every area of endeavour. With the introduction of quota system for instance in education sector whereby in the same examination conducted, some individuals require high marks while others just need to get average in the sense that they belong to a part of the country referred to as educational disadvantage states. This development has not been palatable with some group, hence, the agitation for federal restructuring. Their activities always culminate into insecurity in the nation.

Ethnicity is another great cause of insecurity in Nigeria. The concept 'ethnicity' refers to a social formation that rests upon culturally specific practice and unique set of symbols and cosmology (Ake, 2000). Ethnicity, as a social construct can be regarded as the employment of ethnic identifications and differences to gain advantage in situations of competition, conflict and cooperation (Osaghae, 1995).

Ethnicity is indeed an issue that buggles the mind of Nigerians today. It can be logically deduced that the Nigerian politics have presented an image of struggle among various ethnic groups for the sharing of national resources. Thus, as observed by Crawford (1993), social competition in Nigerian arena subsequently placed ethnicity at the center of political cognition for political struggle.

It is worth noting that activities of ethnic militia have eaten deep into the security of Nigeria, giving the nation a serious security challenge. Ethnic militia movement is the extreme form of ethnic agitation for self-determination as various ethnic groups assume militant posture and gradually metamorphosed into militia groups each of which bear ethnic identity in order to act as the machinery through which the desires of its people are to be

realized. The common features of these ethnical – inspired movements are, the resort to violence, preponderance of youth membership, ethnic identify affiliations, and that they are mainly popular movements demanding change over the status quo (Agbu, 2002). It is argued that the activities of the militia groups as well as ethnic sectarianism are real threats, to the territorial integrity of the country (Tell, November date, 2000).

Internal Insecurity in Nigeria and its Challenges: Case Studies

Security is seen as a mechanism deliberately fashioned to perpetuate serious threats that prevents people from pursuing their cherished values. In Nigeria, for several decades, the achievement of desired internal security has been elusive. There have been proliferation of different militia groups and crimes of diversified form that posed serious security threat to the Nigerian government. Thus, such unwholesome behaviours does not only affect economic activities in many parts of Nigeria but also resulted in lost of many lives and properties of the Nigerian citizens.

A critical look at table 1 helps in having a vivid understanding of security threats in Nigeria.

Table 1: Form of security threats to Nigeria zone by zone

S/N	SECURITY THREAT	POLITICAL ZONE
1	Niger Delta militancy	South-South
2	Jos crisis ethnic crises	North Central
3	Kidnapping, ritual killing and armed robbery	South-East and north Central
4	Boko Haram	North-East, North Central and North West
5	Political assassination /ethnic militia	All zone

Source: Field Survey, 2015

The pathetic threats to Nigeria internal security is critical examined under the following case studies.

Niger Delta Militancy

Militancy in Niger Delta arose in the early 1990s due to tensions between foreign oil corporations and some Niger Delta's minority ethnic groups who felt they were being exploited, particularly the Ogonis and the Ijaws (Osungade, 2008). Thus, ethnic and political unrest continued in the region throughout the 1990s and persisted despite the coming of democracy in 1999. The inability of the government to address the root causes of the agitation (environmental problems, poverty,

unemployment, lack of basic amenities etc.) in the Niger Delta region, resulted in proliferation of ethnic group causing the militarization of nearly the entire region by ethnic militia groups. The resultant effect is the outbreak of violence and conflicts which had great and negative influences on the peace, growth and economic development of the region. Against this backdrop, daily civilian life was disrupted, forcing schools and economic activities to shut down (Aderoju, 2008), similarly properties of indigenes of the area worth millions of naira were destroyed.

Kidnapping in the South East zone of Nigeria.

Kidnapping as a social problem is the act of illegally taking somebody away and keeping him as a prisoner in order to get money or something in return for releasing him/her. The history of kidnapping in the South-East zone of Nigeria could be traced to hostilities, conflicts and violence in the Niger-Delta region. In Abia and Imo states, kidnapping were used target at paramount indigenes and residents of the states.

This situation became terrible shortly after 2007 general election in Nigeria. This is partly because, the youths that were used as political thugs by politicians during 2007 general elections subsequently engaged in kidnapping as means of livelihood after the elections. This act of kidnapping adversely affected the economy of the states as many businessmen and manufacturing companies relocated to neighbouring state where there was peace. Also this unpalatable development got to the peak when school children were kidnapped in Abia in 2010.

The kidnapping of school children forced all the commercial banks to close down for several days. It is pertinent to note that prior to this period, many commercial banks were robbed in Abia which is the commercial centre of Abia state. In rural areas, kidnapping of traditional rulers and poor people were also rampant. Worse still, people were kidnapped while attending church services and village meetings (Ajani, 2010). All these act jeopardised peace and economic activities of the zone for a very long time. Even some foreign expatriates had to leave the area for their safety.

Jos ethnic crisis

Jos ethnic crisis is another internal insecurity that threatened the peace of the zone. Oladoyin (2009) opines that the Jos crisis was a complex one that claimed numerous lives and properties worth millions of naira. He went further to state that the crisis resulted to several

attacks on Christians by Muslims. Indeed, from 2007 – 2010, over 10,000 Christians were slaughtered making the zone to become hell. Whatever the argument over the remote causes of continuous crisis in Jos may be, the fact remains that it is one of the greatest internal security threats to corporate existence of Nigeria. The crisis in Jos adversely affected the economy and unity of Nigeria.

Boko Haram crisis

Another major security challenge in Nigeria which has adversely affected Nigerian economy is the activities of Boko Haram. The Boko Haram is a devilish Nigerian militant islamist group that seeks the imposition of Sharia law in the northern states of Nigeria. The activities of Boko Haram sect constitute serious security challenges in the contemporary Nigerian state. The activities of this group which raise critical questions among investors on the safety of their investment in Nigeria especially the northern zone. They engage in killing of innocent Nigerians, raping of women, bombing of major cities and police stations. The criminal and unwholesome acts of the Boko Haram group has not only made living in most of the cities in the north-east zone fearful but also Nigeria unsafe for investors and tourists.

Political assassination

In almost every geographical zone of Nigeria, there came reports of assassinations of political opponent be it in the primary election or the general election. General Muritala Mohammed was assassinated in 13th February 1976, chief Bola Ige died in the hands of assassins in December 21, 2001, Otunba Dipo Dina was killed in January, 2010 and Engineer Funso William was assassinated on July 2006 etc.

This development has been a major threat to security in Nigeria to the extent that some super-powers of the world were predicting the non-existence of Nigerian state after 2015 election. Coupled with this is the ritual killing of the innocent by so called politicians in order to achieve their selfish ambition. This development exerts negative effect on the peace and economy growth of Nigeria.

Relationship between Insecurity and Economy

Security is an important factor that allows economy of a country to blossom. Therefore, is the direct opposite of insecurity. Insecurity exerts great negative effects on economy of a nation. Conflict, violence, crisis,

crimes and activities of various militia which are ingredients of insecurity do not allow peace and where there is lost of peace, it will be highly difficult for economic to thrive. In today's world, it is well accepted that violence exerts high cost on global development in about 60 countries over the last 10 years and that violence has significantly and directly reduced economy growth (William 2008). Insecurity is a risk factor which investors in the world over are afraid of. For investors, insecurity in any country is considered as a warning sign to take investible funds to another country where there is adequate or semblance of security. Foreign direct investments are required to stimulate the Nigeria emerging economy. However, the more the warning signal persists, the more fearful the investors become about investing in the Nigerian economy. Infact, panic withdrawal or disinvestment often result from insecurity in Nigeria (Okorie, 2011). Indeed insecurity as an index has a way of affecting investment capital. It affects this is a negative way. (Okorie, 2011) opines that on everyday, about \$1.4 trillion investment capital circulates round the world. This shows that capital in the global economy is volatile. Insecurity, therefore, often hampers the inflow of this investment a nation where there is no peace, no investor would want to invest where conflict, violence, fear and crimes are the order of the day.

Consequences of Insecurity on Nigerian Economy

The current wave of insecurity in most emerging economies like Nigeria has become very unprecedented. It has hampered poverty reduction efforts and delays progress towards the achievements of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS). In Nigeria presently, insecurity and social unrest are the greatest challenges to peaceful co-existence in the country. People now live in fear and anxiety as many innocent citizens are being killed daily. In the view of Onikhi and Osemwengie (2012) the effect of unwholesome killings is the direct reduction in effective population essential for meaningful development of the economy especially where numbers count.

Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset (ACLED, 2013) asserts that Nigeria is the 4th most violent country measured by the number of violent events and the 7th most fatal over the course of the dataset coverage (1997-2013). This violence has different spread pattern between 1997 and 2009, although the level of

both violence and reported fatalities were relatively inconsistent. But since 2010 both have climbed sharply, with increases holding in both absolute and proportional terms. The Nigerian state is plagued by many crises of marked volatility and extreme violence leading to high level of insecurity. Nigeria may have shown serious recovery in these centrifugal forces, but. It is most unparallel in scale, scope, reach and intensity (ACLED, 2013).

Internal trade is being hampered by the activities of criminals in most parts of the country. In the North-East, Boko Haram is holding sway while in the South-South and South-East kidnapping is an everyday affair. In the last few years, manufacturers in the country have been licking their wounds over streams of losses as a result of built up finished inventories of goods in their warehouses that they cannot sell. This is as a result of insecurity in the northern part of the country that has taken away part of their market. Many companies chief executives agreed that North is important to their business as the region accounts for more than 30% of Nigerias market (Omoh, 2014).

Though the manufacturers see the market as huge, distribution of goods and services to this region is being hampered by security challenges in the affected states. This has led to significant reduction in turnover, reduction in sales closed/sales outlet, lay off of production staff by companies operating from other parts of the country due to high unsold inventory from multinationals to small and medium scale firms.

Also quoting Martin Woolnnga, Managing Director of Nestle, Omoh asserts that the marketing of the products in the north is being hampered and describes the state of insecurity in some parts of Northern Nigeria as "stress on the economy".

RECOMMENDATIONS

The federal government should formulate and effectively implement policies and programmes capable of addressing the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria such as poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, environmental degradation, dearth of infrastructural facilities, uneven development, among others.

Huge fund allocation should be released to government institutions charged with the responsibility of national security with proper monitoring in order to protect lives and property of citizens as well as creating an enabling environment for the economic development.

Addressing the security challenges in Nigeria require not only understanding of the causes of threats but have a critical evaluation of the performance of security agencies in handling the situation in Nigeria.

The federal government should re-organize the country's intelligence system and build a capable and more proactive security apparatus in Nigeria. This will add more values in checking incessant bombings, robbery, kidnapping and violent crimes or crises by hoodlum all over Nigeria.

Peace studies and security management should be included in school curriculum at all levels of education. This will go a long way to inculcate in Nigerian youth how to appreciate the importance of peace and security in a secular state like Nigeria.

Collective security arrangement by federal, state and local government is recommended. This arrangement should produce a committee at village, community, local, state and federal level with the responsibility of providing sensitive security information for security agencies at their areas of operation. This will in no small way assist in identifying criminals, their sponsors and hideout in Nigeria.

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CONCLUSION

In Nigeria, insecurity and threat perception arose from many quarters. Over the years, government in Nigeria has not been able to address the root causes of dissatisfaction, anger and agitation among various groups, conflicts, crimes and many others in the country, with its attendant leading resulted to serious challenges on the economy.

This unpleasant crux has not only denied the Nigeria government enormous revenues, but also led to serious problems such as unemployment, infrastructural decay, poor health status, poor image of Nigeria at regional and global outings, low level of investors' participation in Nigeria's economic development, relocation of existing investors to peaceful states in Nigeria, among others.

In consideration of the consequences of these challenges on the economy of Nigerian state and to save the country from ruins, the need for good governance, justice, equity and tolerance among the stakeholders of the country is advocated and should be pursued rigorously by both government and the Nigerian people.