VIOLENCE AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA: THE BANE OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The dangers of violence cannot be overemphasized. It breeds insecurity, lack of security and most importantly loss of lives and properties of the citizenry. The resultant effects is severe hindrance to meaningful development. This climate of fears scares domestic and foreign investors. At the heart of many of these conflicts is access and control of resources. Secondly data were collected, interpretations and analysis carried out. Data was collected through a comprehensive review of literature on the subject of inquiry. The trust of analysis was systematically presented under select themes and sub-themes designed to address the salient aspects of the paper's objective. This paper will therefore examine the causes of violence vis-a-vis insecurity, its effects and proffer strategies that will make Nigeria relatively safe. There should be massive public education about the evil of violence and insecurity.

Keywords: Violence, Insecurity, National Development

Introduction

The main concept behind the formation of a state is security of life by nature, according to Thomas Hobbes was brutish, nasty, delicate and cruel. Every man competes for survival. The rule of life then was survival of the fittest. The state thereby existed to ensure that there is

a peaceful co-existence among the people as every individual now has the liberty to acquire property and live freely with a central body (the State) regulating the affairs of man. The state therefore has the responsibility of maintaining law and order in the society and also protect and defend the national integrity of the state. In recognition of the above, 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.

However, it appears government has failed to provide safe environment for lives and properties and the conduct of economic activities. The rate of increase in violence in Nigeria is alarming. Since the return of Nigeria to democratic rule, security of life and property has been threatened, armed robbery and banditry, herdsmen attack, terrorism and other related crimes is on the increase. This according to Osawe (2015) has resulted to high number of casualties on Nigerians and non Nigerians, as well as unpalatable consequences for the nation's economic growth and development.

In an attempt to fight increasing waves of violence and insecurity in Nigeria, the federal government has enacted the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2011, strengthened the ministry of Defense with huge allocation of fund to fight insecurity in 2017 and 2018 budget. For example, recently, the National Assembly approved a loan of one billion US dollars ($1b) to fight terrorism.

All these monies were meant to purchase fighting equipment and organize special training for the security forces. The National Security Adviser (NSA) has organized several training programs, both local and international. Despite these, it appears the level of violence and insecurity in the country is still on the high side and confirmation of these is the low ranking of Nigeria in the Global Peace Index and declaration of Nigeria as a terrorist country by US.

Amidst the deteriorating security situation in the country, Nigeria is also confronted with daunting developmental challenges which pose serious threat to socio-economic development. These developmental challenges include: endemic rural and urban poverty, high rate of unemployment, debilitating youth unemployment, low industrial output, unstable and deteriorating exchange rate, high inflation rate, inadequate physical and social infrastructure, very large domestic debt and rising stock of external debt (Ewetan, 2013)

Against the background, this paper therefore seeks to examine the pertinent issue of violence and insecurity in Nigeria, and its implications for Nigeria socio-economic development.

Objectives of the Paper

The objectives of the paper are

4. To find the causes of violence and insecurity in Nigeria.
5. To examine the effects of violence and insecurity on national development.
6. To identify the challenges that has inhabited the security agencies in curbing violence and insecurity in Nigeria.
7. To seek out solutions to violence and insecurity and corrections that can be made to make Nigeria a better place.

Conceptual Analysis

The concept of violence can be viewed as the physical force destructive in nature, capable of causing fear in mind of people. Therefore violent crimes are crucial activities that employ the use of violence to intimidate or cause terror (fear) in the mind of people with intent to coerce an individual, group of people, or the government in order to affect the conduct of the individual, group of people or

influence the policy of the government. No society is immuned from violence, but what differs is the frequency and magnitude of the situation and the response mechanism to address it.

The high rate of violence has created an atmosphere of fear, anxiety and tension - a state of insecurity. Okechukwu (2012) argued that 'violent crimes such as murder, armed robbery, kidnapping and terrorism are the most inhumane crimes that can plague Nigeria into destruction. Lately, kidnappings for ransom and terrorism have taken the center stage, leading to bloodshed and economic setback.

There are divergent approaches to conceptualizing security which is the antithesis of insecurity. This paper therefore seeks to examine the concept of security to facilitate a good understanding of the concept of insecurity. Security need was the basis of social contract theory between the people and the state, in which the people willingly surrendered their rights to an organ (government) who oversees the survival of all. In this light, security embodies the mechanism put in place to avoid, prevent, reduce, or resolve violent conflicts, and threats that originate from other states, non state actors or structural socio - political economic conditions (Stan, 2004).

For decades, issues relating to security were on the front burner in the development discourse. Several attempts have been made since the cold war ended to redefine the concept of security from a state -centric perspective to a broader view that places premium on individuals in which human society that embodies elements of national security, human rights and national development remain major barometer for explaining the concept. At the heart of this debate there have been attempts to deepen and widen the concept of security from the level of the states to societies and individuals, and from military to non-military issues (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013; Kruchman, 2003).

According to Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013) the divergent approaches to the conceptualization of human security in the theoretical strand that conceptualizes security as primary responsibility of the state. The second strand, a post-modernist or plural view, conceptualizes security as the responsibilities of non -state actors and displaces the state as the major provider of security. Proponents of the state as the major provider of security.Proponents of this approach argue that the concept of security goes beyond military determination of threats.They are of the view that government should be more concerned with the economic security of individual than the security of the state because the root causes of insecurity are economic in nature.

Some scholars in conceptualizing security placed emphasis on the absence of threat to peace, stability, national cohesion, political and socio-economic objectives of a country (Igbuzor, 2011; Oche 2001; Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013). Thus there is a general consensus in the contemporary litereature that security is vital for national cohesion, peace and sustainable development. It is therefore apparent that national security is a desideratum, sine qua non for economic growth and development of any country (Oladeji and Folorunso, 2007) In the intelligence community there is a consensus that security is not the absence of threats or security issues, but the existence of a robust mechanism to respond proactively to the challenges posed by these threats with expediency, expertise and in real time.

The concept of insecurity connotes different meanings such as: absence of safety; danger, harzard, uncertainty, lack of safety. According to Beland (2005) insecurity is a state of fear and anxiety due to absence or lack of protection. Achumba et al (2013) defines insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or the threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly insecurity

is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. These definitions of insecurity underscores the major point that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but they are also vulnerable to the threats and dangers when they occur. In the context of this paper, insecurity is defined as the breach of peace and security, whether historical, religious, ethno-regional, civil, social, economic and political that contributes to recurring conflicts and leads to wanton destruction of lives and property.

The term development is understood as a social condition within a nation, in which the authentic needs of its population are satisfied by the rational and sustainable use of natural resources and systems. This use of natural resources is based on technology, which respects the cultural features of the population of a given country. The concept of development includes the specification that social groups have access to organizations, basic services such as education, housing, health services and nutrition, and above all else, that their cultures and traditions are respected within the social framework of a particular country. Akintoye (2000), argued that national development means a change or transformation into a better state in the areas of political, economic, social and cultural life of the people at a particular time or period and on a sustainable basis. Over the years, development has been defined in various ways by different scholars. Rodney (1969), defines development as a many sided process. At individual level, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material wellbeing. Todaro (1975) sees development as a multi-dimensional process involving the re-organization and re-orientation of the entire society.

Obasanjo and Mabogule (1991), posits that development is a process concerned with the people's capacity in a defined area over a definite period to manage and induce positive change; that is to predict, plan, understand and monitor change and induce or eliminate warranted and unwarranted change. In other words, development is all about the people and how they can best utilize their potentials. According to Seers (1969), development takes place only when the center problem of poverty, unemployment and inequalities in the society have been reduced from the high level. From the above definitions of development, it is clear that development revolves around man because the fundamental aim of development is to extend the frontiers of human lives or advance the welfare of the people.

Theoretical Framework

There are several theories as to why people engage in violence. In this context, the theory of Relative Deprivation shall be examined.

Relative Deprivation Theory.

This classical theory explains why people engage in violence (riots, criminal activities, rebellions, coups etc). According to Gurr, this is the tension between your actual state and what you feel should be achieved. It examines the psychological causes involving frustration and aggression as the primary sources of human capacity to violence. Frustration is a much stronger motivating force and prolonged frustration may cause greater probability of aggression. Relative deprivation is the discrepancy between what people think they deserve and what they actually think they can get (Gurr, 1970). Deprivation therefore occurs when your value expectations exceed your value capabilities. Value expectations include welfare, security, self-actualization etc while value capabilities are those legitimate means of achieving the expectation; employment for instance.

The theory could be used to link rising number of unemployed youths and violent crimes in Nigeria. The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria section 16 (1)(a) states that "the state shall control the National economy in such a manner as to secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity". The constitutional responsibility of the state has so far been abandoned by the government. In Nigeria, many of the qualified youth have been deprived of their employment opportunity. A country that produce thousands of university graduates every year without commensurate employment opportunities may be creating a fertile ground for a feeling of frustration among those unemployed graduates. This condition have placed most youths idle, creating more frustration in the life of the society. The rise in violent crimes (robbery, kidnapping, armed banditry, oil bunkering, thuggery, terrorism etc) committed by youths is a sign of frustration.

Causes of Violence and 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 use of the military during and after the Nigerian Civil war, some of which got into the hands of civilians (Ewetan 2014), Soon after the civil war, these arms were used by civilians and ex-military men for mischievous purposes such as armed robbery. These were also the army of unemployed youths some of whom lost their jobs during the civil war. The level of insecurity assumed dangerous dimension in the prolonged years of military rule beginning from 1970 during which people procure arms and light weapons for personal defense. Some of these arms and light weapons got into the hands of unemployed youths who used them for deviant purpose. While some researchers attribute youth violence to peer group influence and other psychological factors

associated with growing up, others emphasized the impact of political and economic factors such as ethnic agitation, political agitation, unemployment as triggers of violent reaction among the youth.

Many scholars have identified many causes of violence and insecurity in Nigeria. These are grouped into both external and internal. This paper will however, focus on some of the internal causes of violence and Insecurity in Nigeria.

1. **Ethno-religious conflicts:** Ethnic and religious issues are part of the most recurring issues in Nigeria's politics today. The issues have permeated the landscape since the colonial period up till date. There seems to be no solution at sight to the conflicts of ethnic rivalry and religious intolerance. The dominant and minority ethnic groups treat each other with suspicion and the different religious world view clash at the slightest provocation. The frequent and persistent ethnic conflicts and religious clashes between the two dominant religions (Islam and Christianity) is a major security challenge that confronts Nigeria.
2. **Poverty and Unemployment:** This is one of the factors responsible for insecurity. The majority of theyouths are jobless, with no means of livelihood, they are impoverished, mercenary politics becomes theway out. The politicians capitalize on this to recruit the youth who do not constitute the pillar of societybut also the most vulnerable to the self-inflicted poverty, as their thugs and touts to penetrate violence.
3. **Politically Based Violence:** In Nigeria, politics is conceived as an investment. The politicians havinginvested colossally on campaigns and other political activities, coupled with the existing system ofwinner takes all, would want to win at' all cost. And the need to employ the use of thugs and touts to destabilize

and rig election   becomes inevitable especially when such politicians are not popularcandidate.

4. **Corruption:** this is a hydra-headed monster that has held the Nigerian state captive. This hascontributed to government failure and breakdown of institutional infrastructure. The state of insecurityin Nigeria is a function of government failure, traceable to systemic and political corruption. It has addedanother dimension of violent conflicts which has eroded national values. It has been described bypresident Buhari as a cancer militating against Nigeria's development because it deeply threatens thefabric of the Nigeria society. Corruption hampers economic growth, disproportionately burdens the poorand undermines the effective investment and aid (Iyare, 2008)

5. **Economic violence:** crisis of resource control and revenue control and revenue sharing regularly rentthe air between proponents and opponents also leading to violent agitations among the contendingactions and between the state and proponents. The Niger Delta crisis in Nigeria presents a classic case ofthe violent struggle that has been on since the end of the Nigerian civil war in 1970. These violent agitators here claimed many lives of Nigerians and foreigners, military and para-military personnel, andproperties worth billions of naira.it has also resulted in economic misfortune in Nigeria through loss ofoil revenue as a result of shortfall in crude oil exports by oil companies occasioned by disruption of oilexploration activities in the Niger Delta.

6. **Inequalities and Unfairness:** there is a general perception of marginalization by a section of the peoplein the circle of government policies, political patronage, and these are triggers of disaffection,resentment and revolt (Achumba et al 2013). This have given rise to sections agitations and splittergroups like

IPOB, Afenifere etc. Also the incessant strikes by labour, professional groups and demonstrations by civil society groups are mainly due to pervasive material irregularities and unfairness.

7. **Terrorism:** the most fundamental source of insecurity in Nigeria today is terrorism which is traceableto religious fanaticism and intolerance particularly in Islam dominated states of Nigeria. Terrorism is aglobal phenomenon and it is ravaging the whole world. In recent times, terrorism has assumed apolitical undertone and is been spearheaded by a faceless Islamic insurgents based in Northern region ofNigeria called BokoHaram, that has claimed thousands of lives in the North since 2009.

Effects of Violence on National Development

There is no investor whether local or foreign that will be motivated to invest in an unsafe and insecure environment. Thus the alarming rate of violent crimes in Nigeria has made the economy unattractive to foreign investors and this has impacted negatively on economic growth and development. Crime isdysfunctional as it threatens the stability of a nation (Adebayo 2013). Economic development does not thrive in an atmosphere of instability and crisis.

The most devastating consequences of violence and insecurity is the fatalities and extensive property damage. BokoHaram alone has killed over 20,000 since 2009 (Punch Newspaper) while suspected Fulani herdsmen have killed over 4000 within the past three years alone. Apart from fatalities, millions have also been displaced from places of residence.

Of particular significance is the impact of herdsmen's atrocities on food security. It is estimated that food production dropped by as much

as 90 percent in some villages in North-Central Nigeria and by an average of 40 percent overall in the affected states. Reduced production of cash crops has also affected the nations export earnings. These developments do not bode well for a country in which agricultural export is being touted as an alternative to oil export.

Socioeconomic development is the primary goal of every well-meaning government, and it is essentially dependent on the level of economic activities in a country, the level of economic activities is in turn enhanced by peaceful co-existence by people. In the absence of security, socio-economic development cannot be sustained as it destroys economic, human and social capital.

Nevertheless, the relationship between security and development has also been conceived to be bilateral in nature. There will be no development without security and no security without development. And both security and development also depends on respect for human rights and rule of law. Klingebie cited in (Osawe 2015) argued that in the areas of development, security and human rights must go hand in hand. Development is necessary for security to thrive while security on the other hand is a precondition for development.

Challenges facing the Security forces in the menace of violence and Insecurity in Nigeria

The government ineptitude and laxity in dealing with security challenges has posed a problem for the security forces in discharging their duties. The National borders are porous thereby making it possible for infiltration of mercenaries and arms proliferation into the country. Lack of modern equipment has hampered the Nigeria armed forces from discharging their duties of territorial integrity a mirage.

Closely related to the above is lack of training and motivation on the part of security forces. Most of security personnel lack the modern fighting techniques which is needed in the present situation. The welfare of personnel has also not adequately been attended to and the relations of those who died was not given adequate compensation. All these affect the psychology of our fighting force.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Today the biggest challenge confronting our country is the issue of violence and insecurity. The spate of bombings, kidnappings, armed banditry, herdsmen killings, currently being witnessed especially in the northern parts of the country is doing a lot of damage to the nation.

Lack of security of lives and property of the citizenry is a severe hindrance to any meaningful development. A climate of fear will frighten both domestic and foreign investors.

Clearly, the positivity of President MuhammaduBuhari, the non-prosecution of offenders and the lack of coherent strategy of containment of violence have also led to its escalation. It is high time thegovernment embark on a comprehensive plan to contain violence from various sources if national development is to be achieved. The following recommendations are proffered in solving the menace of violence and insecurity in Nigeria:

Recommendations

4. The starting point is massive public education about the evil of violence and insecurity and theneed to avoid it. Some money being spent on self-promotion by political candidates especially

sitting governors could go with public education about the evils of violence. Such education should include workshops and seminars to be organized state by state, involving a cross section of the citizen in each state.

5. Simultaneously, the security agencies should commence a nationwide operation to mop uparms and ammunition across the country. Possible targets of the operation should include the herdsmen, political thugs, cultists and armed robbers. They might even be enticed with compensation if they voluntarily surrender their arms.

6. Above all, the government must take steps to address the major causes of social inequality in Nigeria by creating opportunities for communities to realize their potential within the states. Perhaps, no better measure could be employed to create opportunities than restructuring of the country. If well planned, restructuring should allow for power devolution, fiscal federalism and the creation of state police. These are measures that could ultimately limit unemployment, reduce poverty and even encourage a rise in literacy level as no state would like to be left behind.

7. There should be no cessation in the pursuit and prosecution of the elite who have committed large scale corruption against the state in the past, and their ill-gotten assets seized to serve as an additional deterrent.

8. There is need for security agencies at the borders to cooperate with each other and be equipped with modern communication and transportation facilities in order to enhance their cooperation.

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