

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

One major setback to development in Nigeria is insecurity. Until in recent times, plethora of explanations on the crawling pace of development in Nigeria tends to pay insignificant attention to the centrality of security to national development. It is no surprise therefore that since 1999 when Nigeria returned to democracy insecurity tends to have held back national development. Security is evidently the pillar upon which every meaningful development could be achieved and sustained. The development strides in most Western Capitalist States that place premium on security lend credence to this assertion. Whilst Nigeria is endowed with abundant resources, negligence to numerous challenges of insecurity of the environment appears to have created porous security condition that engendered violence and retards development. This paper relies on qualitative analysis as it looks at the imminent security danger posed in Nigeria in the light of the present onslaught and the extent the insurgency has shape development trajectories in Nigeria. It is the opinion of the paper that security avails the opportunity for development. The paper thus, concludes that Nigeria can achieve sustainable development only through firm prioritization of security in the development agenda.

Keywords: National Development, security, Nigeria

Introduction

In May 1999 Nigeria's return to democracy was accompanied with fresh hopes and concealed optimism. This optimism is predicated on the fact that democracy would guarantee freedom, liberty, and equity and enhances security of lives and property, which would indeed repositions development trajectories to sustainability. Regrettably this optimism seems to be an illusion. Nigeria is presently rated as the headquarter of poverty in the world with debilitating youths unemployment. For instance, Adagba (2009) observed that over ten million Nigerians were unemployed by March 2009 and unemployment was running at around 19.7 percent on average which stands at 33% now in 2022 (see National Bureau of Statistics Report 2022). This figure geometrically increases yearly with less realistic efforts by the managers of the state to abate the rampaging unemployment problem. In Nigeria, like many other developing countries, about 70%

of the population lives in poverty (Otto and Ukpere 2012: 6767). Majority of the population seem to lack access to pipe borne water, health care facilities, electricity and affordable quality education.

Amidst these development challenges, the security situation in the country deteriorated significantly. Nigeria's return to democratic rule is threatened by security disaster. Questionably, considerable progress has been achieved in the areas of freedom of speech and liberty, but series of resource based conflict (Niger Delta), South East (IPOB, ESN) ethno-religious crisis (Jos crisis), Bandits terrorist and communal conflicts persisted. The climax of these security threats as at now is kidnapping for ransom and possible murder mostly in the Northern part of Nigeria. Thus, a considerable effort to end the violence and build a sustainable peace to steer the economy to sustainability seems far from realization. The basic questions are: why development has continued to elude Nigeria in spite of numerous amounts of human and material resources? To what extent has security crisis impacted or contributed to development crisis in Nigeria? Is Insurgency and Banditry really a threat to development in Nigeria? These pertinent but complex questions needed urgent attention especially now that Nigeria is struggling to maintain her position as the biggest economy in Africa.

It is against this backdrop that this study addresses the interface between security and development in Nigeria. Particularly, it seeks to demonstrate that insecurity is a major impediment to development in Nigeria. The paper is therefore divided into four parts: first is the introductory section, the second is the conceptual explanations, followed by security dimensions in Nigeria, and the last is conclusion and recommendations.

Conceptual Clarifications

Security:

The term National Security became prominent in Nigerian society during the upheavals that followed the political imbroglio of 1966 which heralded the Nigerian civil war, beginning from 1967-1970. The word gained ascendancy and became a household parlance in our polity at the return to civil democracy in 1999, following the withdrawal of the military from the active politics and governance of the country. There is no gainsaying the fact that Nigeria is currently facing serious security challenges, that have put every citizen on the edge including those at the helm of affairs and even the security operatives saddled with the responsibility of securing lives and properties. Hardly can fellow countrymen and women sleep with their two eyes closed. Since the last four years, there has been a dramatic twist on the wave, dynamics and sophistication of insecurity in Nigeria. Insecurity that used to be one of the lowest concerns in the hierarchy of Nigeria's social problems has now assumed an alarming proportion. A time we thought that corruption and power failure have the crown of our problems, insecurity in the country has now taken the centre stage (FinIntell, 2013).

Fear, apprehension and restlessness have become the lot of Nigerians. Consequently, huge amount of money is always allocated to security by government for the purpose of addressing these threats of insecurity. A quick glance at the Nigerian daily newspapers will convince one of the states of insecurity in the country. Youth restiveness, kidnapping, bombing, arson, militancy, insurgency inter alia, have become the order of the day (Ogheneakoke, 2014). National growth, economic development and human capital development have all been hampered by this social problem. Robert McNamara, a onetime president of the World Bank, once observed that no country can develop under an environment of insecurity. Peace and stability, to him, are necessary condition for growth and development. As seen in Nigeria, Mordi (2013) noted that the nation's growth and

stability have been truncated by the on-going mayhem and destruction of lives and property in different parts of the country by the peril of Boko-Haram and Banditry in the Northern states, the militants and kidnapers in the south-South; among others. Food production has been grossly affected and on the decline as farming and agricultural activities have been hampered, while oil exploration, exploitation and export have been negatively affected in the North and south-south, respectively (Omoroge, 2012). Thus:

“Security has to do with freedom from danger or with threats to a nation’s ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interests and enhance the well being of its people. Thus, internal security could be seen as the freedom from or the absence of those tendencies which could undermine internal cohesion and the cooperate existence of the nation and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values and socio-political and economic objectives, as well as meet the legitimate aspirations of the people. Internal security also implies freedom from danger to life and prosperity” (Imobighe cited in Oche 2001:76-77).

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Development

The concept of development seems to be in a state of fluctuation since the end of the Second World War. In the early 1940s the ideological differences between the Socialist East and the Capitalist West appears to have influenced the meaning and the conceptualization of the term. Ake (2001:9) argues that the ideology of development itself became a problem for development because of the conflict between its manifest and latent functions. At the time when development seems to be conceived as the product of economic growth, many theorists as Rostow (1952) and Harrod and Domar (1957), among others proposed models of development, generally identifying structural changes, savings and investments as the source of economic development and growth (Otto and Ukpere, 2012:6766). The hypothesis was that economic growth would generate fund for investment and infrastructural development that would guarantee better living condition of people.

This seems to have necessitated the new opinion and redefinition of development from economic growth to human centered approach. Development is now seen as a transformation of the society, a move from the old ways of thinking, and old form of social and economic organization to new ones (Stiglitz cited in Afeikhena 2004:207). As Chandler (2007:367) rightly observed that development has been redefined, taking the emphasis away from traditional economic indicators

of GDP and trade and broadening out the concept to take in psychological and material factors related to the measurement of human well-being. Specifically, Rodney (1972), Nnoli (1981), Ake (2001) have argued that development is multifaceted and indeed centered on man. For Nnoli (1981) development could be seen as a dialectical phenomenon in which the individual and the society interact with their physical, biological and inter human environments transforming them for own betterment and that of humanity at large and being transformed in the process. This view or conception of development according to Okolie (2009) pointedly improves man's potentials and capacities and subsequently eliminates and/or reduces poverty, penury, inequality, unemployment and generally enhances the condition for human existence and self-reproduction. Development therefore, could be seen as the process of empowering people to make the best use of their potentials and the ability to exploit nature to meet daily human needs. It can also be seen as a process by which quality of human lives and capacity to surmount daily needs are considerably improved.

Since the end of the Cold War, security and development concerns have been increasingly interlinked (Chandler, 2007:362). In fact, no sustainable development can be achieved in the atmosphere of conflicts, crisis and war and Nigeria is not an exception. Understandably, security and development are two different concepts but tend to affect each other, making both concepts inseparable. This relationship has recently triggered debates on security – development nexus (see Chandler, 2007; Stan, 2004).

Security Dimensions and its Implications on National Development

Ogheneakoke (2014) identified a plethora of factors as causes of insecurity in Nigeria. These include, but not limited to the following: Corruption, marginalization, social inequality, ethnicity,

poverty and greed, loss of value system, religious intolerance, foreign infiltration – insurgency, bad leadership, youth unemployment, porosity of our borders, falling standard of education, poor judiciary system, cultism and cult activities, high value for material things, manipulation of electoral processes by political parties, lack of trust on security agents, human right abuses, injustice, and lack of transparency

The socio-political and economic landscape in Nigeria has been shattered by the endemic twin evil of crime and violence. The abysmal failure of successive administrations in Nigeria to address challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities, ultimately resulted to anger, frustration, agitation and violent crimes against the Nigerian state by individuals and groups. Such crimes include militancy, kidnapping, bombing, armed robbery, destruction of government properties, among others. The activities of various militia groups consequently resulted in low income for government from oil revenue, moderating the gross domestic product growth rate, low participation of local and foreign investors in economic development and insecurity of lives and properties of the citizens (Finintell, 2013).

More concisely, Jega (2002:35) captures the symptoms that cause insecurity in Nigeria when he observed that Nigeria is one of the nations in the world whose political landscape has been inundated, suffused with and deeply enmeshed in spectrum of recurring complex conflicts ranging from resource, communal, to political and ethno-religious conflicts . The implication of all these setbacks is poor implementation of policies, rising unemployment, hardship, economic and political stagnation that gives rise to the present threatening insecurity which seems to be developing beyond the capacity of state. As Nigeria struggles with the army of unemployed youths of about 33%, companies in their numbers are closing down operations in Boko-Haram ravaged north and oil-rich south-south, and relocating to other African countries for loss of lives and

properties. And the few remaining companies operate on skeletal bases. Construction workers and expatriates providing specialized services on various projects in these regions have fled for safety. This development has multiplied the number of unemployed youth roaming the street and has become an easy tool for violence. This scenario has not only deepened the existing unemployment rate but also paints a gloomy picture of poverty and hindered development

The inability of the security agencies to address the country's security challenges has raised some critical questions on the preparedness of Nigeria to attain desired political, social and economic heights in the nearest future. It further poses serious threats to the unity and corporate existence of Nigeria as a sovereign state (FinIntell, 2013). Over the years, successive governments in Nigeria have adopted several measures aimed at addressing challenges of insecurity in the country, ranging from the carrots and sticks measures to the use of outright force and periodic critical evaluation of the performance of security agencies saddled with the responsibility of handling the situation. There has been a proliferation of vigilante security outfits (both private and government owned) in the states, in a bid to yield to the call by citizens to adopt community policing to support the conventional security apparatuses. This comes against the backdrop of the refusal of successive government in Nigeria to establish State Police to compliment the efforts of the Nigerian Police Force, which is controlled by the National government and which they reasoned lacks grass root touch.

Although the achievement of total or absolute security would be a mirage or to say the least an exercise in futility, as no country in the world or any known human society has achieved such an enviable feat. The contemporary security challenges in the country have not only raised critical questions bordering on the formulation, implementation and execution of Nigeria's philosophy, and internal security policies, but also the effectiveness of the security agents to perform their statutory responsibilities with patriotism.

Conclusions and Recommendations

From all indications security is a big challenge in Nigeria's effort to develop and Boko Haram insurgency and Banditry has compounded the existing threatening security situation in Nigeria. While it could be true that security is a major issue globally, Nigeria's security situation has over the years deteriorated owing to poor governance, political desperation and government inability to deliver the needed dividend. To this end, there is need for government and stakeholders to explore alternative avenues (basically dialogue) rather than force to finding lasting solution to the security lapses and the menace of terrorism if actually Nigeria wants to develop. This is because use of force approach appears to have been inflaming the crisis and diverting attention from the fundamental issues that nurtures and propels the insurgency. Doing this, demands that governments in the North should retrace their steps to deliver dividend of democracy in lieu of the present elitist-centered distribution of state resources. Federal government should also complement this effort knowing full well that hardship and poverty could induce crisis and that financial viability of rebellion sometimes serves as motivation for engagement.

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- The Federal Government (FG) should formulate and effectively implement policies and programmes capable of addressing the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria – such as high level of illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, dearth of infrastructural facilities, uneven development, among others.
- The government should phase out the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) and establish a more viable and result-oriented agency or even radically declare a state of emergency in the educational sector of the country. This we hope will be capable of addressing the problem of mass illiteracy leading to abject poverty among large population of Nigerians, particularly those residing in the rural areas.
- The government should resuscitate the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and reposition the agricultural sector so as to play active role in job creation for Nigerian youths. This is where quality vocational education/skill acquisition comes into play, establishment of technical schools and polytechnics should be given priorities when educational policies are being formulated.
- There is a need for collective security arrangement by all levels of government in Nigeria Federal, State and Local governments. The current arrangement where security apparatuses are totally in control by the central/federal government needs to be looked into and redressed. This is where the issue of community policing comes into focus. This security configuration should produce a committee at village, community, local, state and federal levels with the responsibility of providing sensitive security information for security agencies at their areas of operation. This will ultimately assist in identifying criminals, their sponsors and hideouts in the country.

- Last but not least, the FG should reorganize 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/crises by hoodlums in the country.

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