

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Development of any nation lays credence to its socio-economic development. The fact that it is people centred, it affects the wellbeing of the people. When there is failure to address unemployment, inequality and poverty, security challenges is inescapable. Nigeria experiences this problem despite socio-economic schemes and programmes established by the government. The study adopts Relative Deprivation Theory by Tedd Gurr and recommends that government should create sustainable and result oriented poverty and unemployment eradication programmes and policies, there should be viable institutions that can check corruption and mismanagement of the programmes and schemes, revitalizing and rebuilding of infrastructure like power and creating the enabling environment for enterprises. The study concludes that socio-economic development of Nigeria is at a low ebb and of which gives way to the existential security challenges in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: *Socio-economic, Development, Security*

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, the evolution of human society has been driven by the need for survival, safety and economic independence. It is in this regards that nations ensure the well-being of their citizens through deliberate investment in socio-economic development. The indices of socio-economic development which include literacy level, employment opportunity, poverty level and health status of citizens among others are central to economic independence and prosperity of nations. For instance, education is one of the fundamental factors of development as no country can achieve sustainable economic

development without deliberate prioritization and investment in human capital development. It enhances people's productive capacity and plays a crucial role in the attainment of economic independence of citizens and by extension, the nation. When the citizens are educated, they are less likely to engage in risky behaviors that jeopardizes their lives. Education enhances employment opportunity and reduces poverty rate in a country. After sixty years of nationhood, Nigeria still ranks among the poorest countries in the world, with low socio economic indicators such as literacy rate, life expectancy, death rate, poverty rate, and mortality rate among other developmental index reports. In 2021, the unemployment rate in Nigeria is estimated to reach 32.5 percent. This figure is projected to increase further in 2022. Chronological data show that the unemployment rate in Nigeria rose constantly in the past years. In the fourth quarter of 2020, over 33 percent of the labor force was unemployed (Varrella,2021).

The situation has led to security challenges like the Boko Haram insurgents, banditry in the North, militancy in the Niger Delta, armed robbery and widespread kidnapping among others with grave consequences on security in Nigeria.

National security entails the protection of the lives and property from all forms of internal and external threats arising from natural or man-made causes. It involves freedom from poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and all forms of retardation that threatens human survival. The increasing rate of insecurity in Nigeria has severally been attributed to low socio-economic development in most developing countries. The situation is even more worrisome in Nigeria arising from high rate of youth unemployment and increasing poverty rate that threaten national security in the country. This has been blamed on the inability of the Nigerian state to adequately provide socio-economic development to engage the teeming youth population in productive ventures.

The low effort of socio-economic development in Nigeria has led to increasing rate of unemployment, poverty, diseases, hunger, illiteracy and ever increasing crimes rates in the country. These factors of insecurity arising from poor socio-economic development constitute serious threat to lives and property of the citizens and thereby impacting negatively on the entire embodiment of national security. When people are idle in any society, majority often take to criminal activities in the quest for political and socio-economic independence and in the process impinge on national security. Thus, several stakeholders have raised concern on the effort of government towards accelerating the pace of socio-economic development to enhance national security in Nigeria.

Government has been making efforts by establishing programmes and schemes to address poverty and unemployment. Since the return of democratic rule in 1999, there has been Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Small and Medium Scale Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), though a global effort, had its first objective premised on eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, Youth Enterprise With Innovation in Nigeria" (YOU WIN)", The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Anchor Borrowers' Programme (ABP), etc. Where Nigeria is today in the attainment of the objectives of these programmes can best be described as abysmal because poverty, unemployment and inequality are near an emblem in Nigeria as Abdu (2005) observed that less than 20% of the target beneficiaries have benefited through this schemes.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Socio-economic Development

It is pertinent to open up the definition of socio-economic development with what Dudley Seers said of Development. Seers (1967, cited in Erin, 2011) noted that:

'The question to ask about a country's development are three: what has been happening to poverty, what has been happening to unemployment, what has been happening to inequality. If all of these decline from high levels, then beyond doubt, this has been a period of development for the country concern'(p.3).

Socio-economic development is the process of social and economic development in a society. It encompasses both growth and development. It is measured with indicators, such as Gross Domestic Product, life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment.

Socio-economic development is a process that seeks to identify both the social and the economic needs within a community, and seek to create strategies that will address those needs in ways that are practical and in the best interests of the community over the long run. The general idea is to find ways to improve the standard of living within the area while also making sure the local economy is healthy and capable of sustaining the population present in the area (Wisegeek, n.d.).

Socio-economic development also entails the creation of jobs by focusing in human capital development. The provision of school infrastructure for education and health services. This would, forsooth, position the nation having the population provided with employment thereby wading off unemployment, poverty and inequality. The life expectancy will appreciate as a result of the adequacy of policies in health service provision.

Security

According to Mcnamara (1966) 'security is not military hardware, though it may include it. Security is not military force, though it may involve it. Security is not traditional military activity, though it may encompass it. Security is development. Without development, there can be no security. A developing nation that does not in fact develop simply cannot remain "secure." It cannot remain secure for the intractable reason that its own citizenry cannot shed its human nature'.

This postulation has provided the criticality of socio-economic development as a fundamental element in ensuring national security which in sum, bothers on well-being and generally survival of the people. Tranquility is achieved when the citizenry are gainfully engaged in activities that would meet their daily needs. This makes departure from unemployment and subsequently poverty possible and guarantees order in the nation.

Ogunbanwo (1990, p. 10) opined that in the African context; "Security is more than military security or security from external attacks. For many of the 4 billion inhabitants in the developing countries, security is conceived as the basic level of the struggle for survival... Therefore, in order to provide an integrated African security assessment, the non-military dimensions of security should be added. Henceforth, African security as a concept should be applied in its broadest sense to include economic security, social security, environmental security, food security, the quality of life security and technological security.

However, the submissions may have captured, partly the extant phenomena in the national security in Nigeria. Nigeria is not faced with any external aggression, though must be part of its strategic prognosis, internal aggression is basically what Nigeria is faced with. This brings to the fore the necessities of improving the socio-economic status of Nigerians to be part of national values, interest by which the survival of the people is enacted and assured.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Relative Deprivation

Gurr (1970) explains this hypothesis with his term "relative deprivation," which is the discrepancy between what people think they deserve, and what they actually think they can get. Nigeria with its situation of high youth bulge is faced with growing needs for survival especially with the existential adversity occasioned by socio-economic dysfunction. Where unemployment, poverty and inequality become the recurrent decimal, the system can only prepare a fecund for discontent. This results in a reactionary manner and precipitates disorder in the system. Mcnamara (1966), stated that if security implies anything, it implies a minimal measure of order and stability. Without internal development of at least a minimal degree, order and stability are simply not possible. They are not possible because human nature cannot be frustrated beyond intrinsic limits. It reacts because it must.

Gurr further summarized the nitty-gritty of the hypothesis: Discontent is caused by perception of relative deprivation and violence is more likely if: discrepancy is large; discontent is intense, the state is perceived to be responsible, violence is appropriate (justifiable) and effective, rising expectations unmet, unwarranted decline in well-being. The prevalence of kidnap for ransom, armed robbery, insurgency and militancy, position 'relative deprivation' theory as veritable in analyzing Nigeria's security. Quite a number of armed robbers in Nigeria are graduates who could not find employment,

take to crime in order to make ends meet. From the confession and testimony of Boko haram members, they only need pittance to carry out the heinous and ferocious crime.

The government in Nigeria is the major employer of labour and that is why the perception of who is responsible for unemployment is the government and so government installations and equipment become targets too as experienced in the 'EndSars' protest which saw Nigerian youth violently protesting against police brutality and mis- governance while destroying public property and vandalizing silos.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted qualitative method in the inquest. Krippendorff (1980) defined content analysis as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context. Therefore the data collected for the study were from secondary sources: internet materials, books, journal articles, periodicals etc.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

An overview of Security Challenges in Nigeria

Nigeria security situation is worrisome as it is enmeshed in violent crimes, kidnapping, political assassination, electoral violence, armed robbery, banditry, Boko haram insurgency, Niger-Delta militancy and trans- border crimes. The actors in these criminal activities are fraught with young people. The Nigerian society has for long been harbouring and courting poverty, unemployment and inequality which inevitably put the nation in a precarious security condition. Poverty and unemployment inevitably increase the number of people who are prepared to kill or be killed for a given course at token benefit. This explains why all ethno-religious crises and indigenes/settlers conflicts that ever occurred in Nigeria have large followers (in terms of turnout of jobless people, including the under-aged in armed conflicts) as fighters, suicide bombers, and terrorists(Ejikeme, 2012 , pp.19-35).

Kidnapping in Nigeria is such that it has spread from Niger Delta to all the Eastern, Western parts and the entire country. This category of people are not militants but Nigerians who cease other people against their will for purpose of monetary ransom or for political reasons. For example, Abati (2009, pp. 205-216) reported a case of kidnapping in Kaduna of a Canadian Rotarian visiting Nigeria. Mrs. Julie Ann Mulligan was abducted on the street of Kaduna by armed men who demanded a ransom of N100 million. The kidnapers use dangerous weapons which they threaten to use at slightest provocation. Kidnappers in the Niger Delta make use of sophisticated weapon to the extent that they invaded the terminal and overpowered about 40 soldiers on guard at a facility (Emmanuel, 2006, pp.205-216). In the South West, a former federal minister and presidential flag bearer, Chief Olu Falae was kidnapped from his farm and later released. The Chibok Girls , Kankara School students, Kaduna State School of Forestry students, Green Field University students' abduction for ransom are some among many cases. Their activities have caused serious injuries, both for civilians and security personnel; notwithstanding the loss of huge fortune as ransom.

The Boko Haram issue started as an insignificant agitation of an Islamic sect with a strange commitment to non-conformist standards of social organization in Muslim-dominated Bauchi and Borno states. It began in Bauchi State on July 26, 2009 and since that time, the group has extended its activities to other Northern states as well as to other parts of Nigeria. Unlike the militants in the Niger Delta that were driven by purely economic goals, Boko Haram is driven by proclivity in religious conviction, political aspirations and social practice. Specifically, its ultimate goal is to make Nigeria an Islamic State and uphold only sharia laws (Walker, 2012). The recruits of the sect are mostly youths from the northern parts of Nigeria that are dissatisfied with the economic, political and social status quo. They include unemployed youth, stark illiterates, and refugees from neighbouring African countries. Thus, the sect explores the social-economic negativities of the country to recruit and radicalize its members (Nicoll, 2011, p. 1-3).

Eso (2011) observed that the push factor to recourse to terrorism in the bid to influence public policy is beyond sectarianism. He buttresses this by arguing that most of the attacks of the sect have been focused at the state and its institutions, plus the civilian populations. It has launched attacks on military institutions such as military barracks, police stations (including the Force Headquarters in Abuja); and have also swooped on educational institutions at all levels, government establishments, places of worship (both churches and mosques) and have assassinated key political figures, statesmen and religious leaders that oppose their philosophy. The strategies have included kidnapping, targeted killing, assassination, suicide bombing, bombing with Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), VBIEDS, ambush, and drive-by shooting.

The activities of the groups in the Niger Delta manifested in diverse ways such as militancy, kidnapping, killings, bombing, hostage taking, demolition of oil and gas facilities, pipeline vandalisation, illegal oil bunkering (Duru, 2012). The militants launched attacks on the Shell Petroleum Development Corporation (SPDC), Chevron and TotalFinal Elf (IFE) staff and facilities. MEND killed oil workers at Chevron, TotalFina Elf (IFE), damaged a rescue helicopter sent to rescue employees, killed naval officers, injured soldiers, attacked police stations like the Mini-Okoro Elenlewo and killed some officers on duty, attacked five star hotels, and carried out a bomb attack on the Eagle Square, Abuja on October 1, 2010 during the fifty year anniversary of independence. Between 1999 and 2007 a total of 308 hostage incidents were recorded in the region (Ogbonnaya & Ehigiamusoe, 2013).

Armed robbery is the crime that could be said to be the most frequent in Nigeria. They either block highways or carry out attacks in the neighbourhood. And most times these attacks are fatal resulting to loss of lives notwithstanding properties and personal effects of victims. Banditry is the new wave of criminality operational in and ravaging Northern Nigeria.

Unemployment and its criticality to Security in Nigeria.

Nigeria has a huge number of human resources which should serve as source of development to the nation but has become a source of insecurity. This is one of the resources that are the key drivers of socio-economic development. Awogbenlu and Iwuamadi (2010) observed that Nigeria has a youth population of eighty million representing 60percent of the total population of the country from the man power board and federal bureau of statistics. Fifty four (54) million of them are unemployed while one million,six hundred thousand (1.6 million) of them are under employed.

Adegoke (2015, pp.13) stated that unemployment is a global phenomenon whereby eligible workforce of the state is deprived in the service to the country. It is not only a serious economy issue but also has implications that affect almost all countries and all people either directly or indirectly. It causes social disquiet and is the harbinger of the spate of crimes, perennial youth unrest and unstable socio-economic structure that have bedeviled several states. The existence of unemployment becomes a fundamental stimulus for crimes and violent activities. Civil strife is a common denominator in Nigeria. Adegoke (2015, pp.13) stated that in recent times, Nigeria has been facing several security challenges such as violent crimes, kidnapping, insurgency by the Niger delta militant, ethnic conflict, religious conflict, political assassination and the activities of Boko Haram sect.

Oluwaseun (2013, pp.8-20) opined that unemployment has been a major problem in most countries in the world. Nigeria, as a developing country is witnessing high rate of youth unemployment which has become one of the major threats to its national security. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2004-2008, cited in Oluwaseun, 2013, pp.8-20) recent statistics show that unemployment rate in Nigeria has increased to 23.9 percent during the first half of the year 2011. In addition, to the already daunting statistics of over 43 million unemployed youths, an additional 1.8 million people joined the long queue. This, according to Oluwaseun, was attributed to fresh entrants to the job market and worker layoffs across all sectors of the economy in the year. He also adduced that one of the major reasons for unemployment is that the growth of education has far outstripped the growth of the economy in which the supply of jobs cannot meet the demand of the graduates moving out of the tertiary institution.

Chukwuma (2013) observed that youth unemployment is only a symptom of a long and enduring problem in respect to national security. Unemployment, perceived in some discourse as the major, if not the main, threat to national security need to be re-evaluated or put in historical perspective. There is the need to look elsewhere, to explore other possibilities in the relationship between youth unemployment and national security. If anything, youths that have engaging jobs or not can perpetrate or be used to perpetrate violence and thus threaten national security. It is not solely unemployment that project youth violence as having a direct connection to national security threats. It is in education, wealth disparity and display, urbanization, bad governance, corruption: identity factors such as religion, ethnicity, geographical groups, political groups that the threats to national security domicile. Chuwuma, however debased and sought de-emphasis on the predication of unemployment as wholly the source of national security challenges.

Iwu (2015) in his investigation observed that Unemployment is largely blamed for the intractable security challenges in Nigeria. More worrisome is that population growth adds 4.5 million youths into the labour market every year that largely begs for the public sector attention as presently conceptualized. That is the demographic trends in Nigeria has to be juxtaposed with the unemployment rate.

Gidado (2012 cited in Akpan, 2015) said in 2011, the youths in some countries in North Africa and indeed the Arab World changed the course of their history through agitation for their improved welfare through employment which later led to

uprising that brought down governments in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen etc popularly referred to as Arab Spring. Even though the unemployed youths in Nigeria have not subverted the government, they have been able to express discontent with the system by taking to violence and other criminal activities that put the entire nation in insecurity straits. The EndSars# saw a unanimous protest from the youth in Nigeria which began from peaceful to violent. Death toll was high and wanton destruction of public property up surged.

As McNamara rightly warned:

‘Any society that seeks to achieve military security against the background of acute food shortage, population explosion, low level of production and per capita income, low technological development, inadequate and inefficient public utilities, and chronic problem of unemployment, has a false sense of security’
(cited in Nwolise, 2006 pp 350).

In buttressing this, McNamara posited that what is most significant of all is that there is a direct and constant relationship between the incidence of violence and the economic status of the countries afflicted. Thus, nations seek to achieve national security must try to avoid poverty and unemployment among others.

Poverty/ Inequality and Security in Nigeria

The poverty levels by zones as at 2008 shows that South -South has 35.1%; South East 26.7%; South West 43.0%; North Central 67.0%; North East 72.2% and North West has 71.2% as well (Soludo, 2008). Nigeria’s situation tells the precarious condition the people are living and how high the rate of poverty is. With this statistical expression, it is critically germane to say by ratio that out of ten Nigerians, eight are poverty stricken.

Poverty and unemployment are popularly known as the twin evil. It is not possible that where there is poverty, there is no unemployment and vice versa. The two phenomena are unarguably benchmarks for inequality that breeds discontent thereby instilling proclivity for violence. Murtala (2012) said poverty creates pervasive and widespread inequality. Poverty also exposes the state and individuals to danger in the form of increased criminal behavior, deprivation, denial, and lack. This capture the essence of Nigeria’s experience of widespread poverty. According to the UNAP (1999) cited in Owen and Nwakamma (2015) Nigeria’s Human Poverty Index (HPI) was only 41.6%, which places the country among the 25 poorest nations in the world.

According to Murtala (2012) mass poverty is synonymous with failure in security in all states of the globe and Nigeria is no exception. He reviewed past poverty alleviation policies and programmes embarked upon by various Nigerian governments, problems associated with these programmes since independence (1960) to date (2010), and concluded that Nigeria needs to make a fundamental shift away from policies and institutional arrangements that promote aggrandizement and more toward policies, programmes and institutions that promote efficiency, sustainable, and broad based growth and poverty alleviation. This becomes imperative since continues increase in poverty has serious implication on the national security.

Poverty does not just occur; it is influenced by economic policies that relate to employment. In the same vein those policies impact on inequality where there exist low level employment, it means resources not equitably distributed thereby creating polarizing the social strata. Ejikeme (2012, pp.19-35) observed that inequality among a people in a society is sustained by how the wealth of the nation is being generated and distributed among the competing factors, individuals and/or groups of people in the society. A malfunctioning distributive system or inequality in the distribution of available resources within a society, even where the country is endowed with abundant resources, there is every tendency that few privileged people in positions of authority would be enjoying the best living conditions at the detriment of the majority who would be languishing in a state of abject poverty.

Impact of low Socio-Economic Development on Nigeria’s Security

Ewetan and Urhie (2014, pp. 40-63.) examined the pertinent issue of insecurity in Nigeria and its implication for socio-economic development. Available data on the level and dimensions of insecurity in Nigeria reveals an increase over time, which constitutes serious threat to lives and proper ties, hinders business activities and discourages local and foreign investors, all which stifles and retards Nigeria's socio-economic development. This rising wave of insecurity has not abated but has assumed a dangerous dimension which is threatening the corporate existence of the country as one geographical entity.

This country has also witnessed several ethnic and religious crises which appear to be escalating at an intolerable scale. People seldom transact business freely in market or any other business rendezvous because of fear of terrorist activities in form of detonation of implanted bombs or suicide bombing. This has reduced economic activities thereby telling negatively on Gross Domestic Product. Aside the various violent crimes committed as a result of the high rate of unemployment and poverty and the gulf between the rich and the poor in Nigeria, the Nigerian economy suffers. The budgetary allocation to defence and security is higher than Agriculture and education which are fundamental to human development (Jah,2019).

The institutional and programmatic frameworks by government to remedy socio-economic deficits in Nigeria.

The case of poverty in Nigeria now does not need any Needs Assessment exercise to be carried out in order to know its extent and impact on the society. From 1999 to date, the nation has been having one policy, institutional and programmatic arrangement or the other solely towards the dissipation of poverty and unemployment. The poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) was an interim measure put in place in 2000 to address the problems of rising unemployment in the society and to increase the productiveness of the economy. In 2001, Federal Government established the National Poverty Eradication Programme. For reason of job creation in 2003 the government created National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) as one of the reform policy entrusted with the responsibility to establish, supervise small and medium term scale enterprise development agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) and National Agency for Poverty Eradication Project (NAPEP). In the year 2000 United Nations convoked a meeting known as Millennium Summit which formed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with its first objective premised on eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. On the 11st of October 2011, President Goodluck Jonathan established an empowerment programme aimed at empowering over 100,000 Nigerian youths financially to establish their own businesses and to be self-reliance. The programme, tagged, "Youth Enterprise With Innovation in Nigeria" (YOU WIN)". The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) established the Anchor Borrowers' Programme (ABP) in November 17, 2015.

From the pedigree and the way these poverty alleviation programmes, institutions and policies are crafted, it has been expected that creation of job is the priority which in turn would solve the poverty scourge and correct the widening inequality in Nigeria. This job creation by prognosis is supposed to have achieved an appreciable mileage but surprisingly poverty, unemployment and inequality still briskly exist and tremendously increasing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Government should create sustainable and result oriented poverty and unemployment eradication programmes and policies. This will help to reduce drastically the ugly incidences of high poverty and unemployment rate. Coupled with this is the need for political will to implement the programmes. There should be viable institutions that can check corruption and mismanagement of these programmes and schemes. Revitalizing and rebuilding of infrastructure like power which becomes a necessity as it flourishes the informal, service, manufacturing and industrial sectors of the economy. These sectors will be boosted if there is adequate power supply; creating unquantifiable employment opportunity for the teeming populace. Government should create a more workable monitoring scheme of the rate of poverty, inequality and unemployment. This will trigger quick responses and precise planning to tackle the menace head on. An atmosphere of ease of doing business and creating the enabling environment for enterprises to thrive will have more employment which will reduce poverty and inequality, and subsequently mitigate the security challenges in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The socio-economic development of Nigeria is at low ebb requiring the political will of Nigerian government at all levels to be committed to being innovative in creating workable programmes to solve the problems of poverty, inequality and unemployment. The absence of socio-economic development gives way to the existential security challenges in Nigeria.

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