

SECURITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA SINCE 1960

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that development is about the human person. It is an overall process and not a one-sided affair. Man cannot claim to be developed when his life is insecure. Guaranteeing the socio-economic and political wellbeing of citizens is the greatest assurance of attaining security for the state or society. Therefore, there is no amount of security consciousness, orientation, provision of security gadgets or even massive investment on security that will make us 'secure' until there is justice, equity, fair play, and adequate attention to the less privilege in society, Nigeria and indeed, African countries will never know peace and the pace of economic development will remain at a snail pace.

In the light of the above, the paper recommends that; education be made compulsory and free from primary up to the University level. It is shameful for Nigeria that the level of literacy and awareness is declining even in the twenty first century, due to rising inflation and high cost of acquiring education. Second, gainful employment opportunity be created so as to engage the millions of unemployed youths who have become restless. If this is not done, certainly, the incidence of espionage, armed robbery, arson, pipeline vandals, drug peddling, piracy, cultism, kidnapping, assassination, murder, examination malpractices, bunkering, terrorism, and other crimes will continue to bedeviled the Nigerian nation.

The research questions are; what could be done to curb the insecurity situation in Nigeria? How can Nigeria join the league of technologically advanced countries? How can the level of socio-economic welfare of the citizens be improved? The paper would rely on primary and secondary sources in research.

Introduction

Security can be defined as the act of preventing unlawful entrance or exit of a premises. It could also be defined in professional terms as the prevention of unlawful possession or to protect a person, people or place from attack. It is also the protection of life and properties from intruders, attack, trespassers or theft. Security simply implies safely. Security is defined from the word 'secure' (A.S. Hornby, 2000:1063). The concept of security is as old as mankind. It originated when the first man and woman (Adam and Eve) were prevented from entering the Garden of Eden. It follows that God himself initiated the concept of security (R.C. Fuller, 1979::7). With rapid technological advancement man has invented and manufactured highly sophisticated security gadgets and equipment. Security personnel now have at their disposal gadgets such as circuit television, burgle, fire alarms, car alarms, mutual-aid shcheme, anshunt locks.

In Nigeria security measures taken so far by establishments and security operatives have failed to arrest or even minimize crime rate. On the contrary crime rate continue to soar to the extent that it beats the imagination of authorities concerned at all levels. What is responsible for this? This study will reveal the fact that Nigeria is like a man sitting on a keg of gun powder that could explode any moment. This is evident by the series of agitations by states, regions and groups some of whom are becoming restless. It will appear that no amount of security preparedness will quell crime in Nigeria except the right context is provided.

The Antecedents of Insecurity in Nigeria

The fear of insecurity in Nigeria is on the increase. Violent crime in Nigeria could be traced back to the period from 1960 to 1970. When Nigeria gained independence In 1960, a federal structure was bequeathed to her by the British. It appears that the federal structure bequeathed to Nieria at independence violated Professor K.C. Wheare's tenets of federalism that one part should not be greater than the sum of all other parts (**F. Adigwe, 1979: 253**). In the words of Hamilton, a federation is 'an association of states that formed a new one', or as Dicey puts it, it is a political contrivance intended to reconcile national unity with the maintenance of the state rights as operates in the United States of America (U.S.A.), Canada, Austria, Switzerland and Russia (**Appadorai, 1975: 495**).

After the Nigerian civil war in 1970, large quantities of arms were imported into the Nigeria for the use of the military. Some of these arms got into the arms of the civilians. Soon after the civil war these arms were used by civilians and ex-military men for mischievous purposes such as armed robbery. Also, some ex-military men found themselves unemployed in the labour market decided to commit the gun at their disposal to robbery. There was also the army of unemployed youths some of whom lost their job during the civil war. Many industries and business establishments shut down during the war while some were affected by the destruction caused by the war. Workers of such companies found themselves unemployed at the end of the war. Thus, for these reasons, armed robbery phenomenon in Nigeria came to the increase immediately after the Nigerian civil war (**Ime Bassey, 2002: 38**).

Also from the 1970s, University undergraduates became key actors on campus. They reacted to military violence by becoming violent to protect themselves from fear and military dictatorship. Some of these militant youths were used by families disgruntled against the government of the day. There was also another form of campus violence in which students organized themselves against other group of students and the university administration. They held secret meetings mostly at nights on how to carry out their plans. These types of campus violence were identified as cultism (**Ime Bassey, 2002: 64**).

On the campuses of Nigerian tertiary institutions there were crimes related to the phenomenon of physical assault, murder, arson, armed robbery, rape, kidnapping, assassination etc. These crimes are often carried out for various reasons but most common purpose for carrying out these crimes in Nigeria is to obtain money by threat or black mail, assassination is carried out most commonly on individuals unsympathetic to the cause of some other persons or group. Terrorism is the use of threat or violence for the purpose of publicizing the existence of violence or cause of a

particular group. Terrorism is also used as a measure of persuasion or coercion for political motives. It is a tool used to accomplish specific goals **(Pedro Imadojs, 1993:68)**

The fear of insecurity in the federation among some Nigerians in the years of military rule beginning from 1970, prompted the antecedent of militarization as people procure arms and light weapons to defend themselves against what they saw as military oppression, dictatorship and victimization of themselves and their own people. Some of these arms and light weapons got into the hands of some unemployed youths who used them for deviant purpose.

Since independence, Nigerians have lived under the insecurity of agitation for true federalism, fiscal, federal or political restructuring. These agitations are clearly part of the clamor for a new federal system that grants states greater autonomy than is the case at the moment. Some groups like PONACO, led by elder statesman, Chief Anthony Enahoro, is pressing for a sovereign national conference at which Nigerians would decide their preferred system of federalism **(A. Adamu, 2005: 19)**.

Functionalist among sociologists regard youth violence as a functional necessity and submit that it is a disequilibrium which is corrected in due course. Youth violence is regarded as a counter-revolutionary force against societal transformation and that this generally destructive rebellion is transmitted because the youth will adjust with time **(K. Babarinde, in J. Ogunye et al (ds, 1998: 37)**. The Marxist school on the other hand regard the youth as a historical vanguard that exist to ensure liberation from all shackles of oppression and all undemocratic forces within the society. They also postulate that youth violence is not negative as it is often regarded since they rise against injustice and poverty, and try to assert certain status positions for themselves. **(K. Babarinde, in J. Ogunye et al (ds, 1998: 37)**.

Studies of disorder have also established a link between violence and industrial urban centres and explained the phenomenon as an anomie, that is, a breakdown in the norms of the society. While some researches attributes youth violence to peer group influence and other psychological factors associated with growing up. Others emphasized the impact of economic factors such as Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) as a trigger of violent reaction among the youth **(K. Babarinde, in J. Ogunye et al (ds, 1998: 37)**.

Nigeria is currently living under the threats of social friction posed by these agitations. Until these issues are addressed and with utmost care and tact by all stake holders, Nigeria may know no peace. According to Abdullahi Adamu:

The agitation for resource control is evidence that we are uncomfortable with the present constitutional arrangement. The agitations are a demonstration of the fact that it had become necessary for the federal government to re-adjust itself to the demands for constitutional changes. The absolute right of the federal government to exercise absolute jurisdiction over mineral rights for instance have become a hindrance of some of these mineral resources **(A. A. Adamu, 2005: 25)**

The constituent units of the federation meet officials of the central government every month to share nationally collected revenue in accordance with a revenue sharing formula which is unacceptable by the component units **(A. A. Adamu, 2005: 18)**

Insecurity and Economic Development in Nigeria Since 1960

At independence in 1960, the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria recognized certain national objectives which are expected to integrate the individual for the purpose of promoting good governance and welfare of all persons. These objectives are: a free and democratic society, a just and egalitarian society, a united, strong and self-reliant nation, a great and dynamic economy and a land of bright and full of opportunities for all citizens. The philosophy behind these principles is to integrate the individual into a sound and effective citizen with the goal of self realization of the human self which will create a better relationship and national consciousness.

Fifty two years after independence Nigerians are disillusioned about these principles and their leaders who have failed to deliver the good governance, secure the welfare of persons on the principles of freedom, equality and justice and the purpose of consolidating the unity of the people. Nigerians are amazed and dismayed about their leader's display of power, affluence and financial recklessness. The socio-economic structure to make the citizens feel compel to be patriotic are lacking. There seems not to be any indication to end of poverty.

Leadership failure and the socio-economic insecurity arising from misrule of the country's polity has prompted Nigerians to begin to feel more and more of fending for themselves to the extent that some citizens procure arms and light weapons to defend themselves. The political class in Nigeria is dependent, parasitic and very corrupt in nature including its style of mal-administration. From the 1980s, as a result of the mismanagement of the economy unemployment became a key factor in the labour market even as the cost of living rise beyond the reach of the low income earners. Crime, violence and insecurity will continue to reign supreme because there appear to be a leadership conspiracy over the mass majority of the peoples of Nigeria in particular since 1979 when the country returned to democracy in the Second Republic.

The 1979 constitution which contains some 'fundamental objectives of state policy' just like the international covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and other international human rights instrument, relates generally to individual welfare in the society. The various provisions proclaim the significance of the rights of the citizens to include; rights to social security, right to work, free choice of employment, just and favorable remuneration, right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing, right to education etc. These rights are achievable in Nigeria because the country is blessed with human and natural resources which include some of the best quality crude oil in the world, the best quality iron and steel in the world (**Bako, 1998: 118**).

The individual in Nigeria is left with the arduous task of providing for himself in respect of food, clothing, water, security, house, mobility, education and other basic necessities of life. To the individual the government is a distant entity that is virtually not responsive or sensitive to the plight of the ordinary citizen. With this disposition he takes laws into his hand and abuses every opportunity that comes his way. The mass majority of the people are not to be blamed for the state of insecurity for there is an antecedent which dates back to the the period since

independence and more so in the 1980s, when the standard of living of Nigerians degenerated so low as a result of mismanagement of the economy by the political class. Prices of some essential commodities rose beyond the reach of the low income earners. **(Bako, 1998: 118).**

The rights of the minority ethnic groups is kept in abeyance not as a matter of official policy but emanating from deep rooted resentments disaffection caused by largely direct political interference. Such disaffection usually results to serious tension and communal clashes and religious violence as in parts of the country in recent times.

Coupled with the above is the neglect of basic needs such as education, health, housing transport and food. The health sector is characterized by soaring cost. The general hospital which used to be the savior of the common man's life in times of ill health is now as expensive as the privately owned hospitals. Public hospitals are poorly equipped which is why the rich and those who held political positions often travel abroad for medical attention when they are ill. According to report of Pediatric Association of Nigeria (PAN) about 55 percent of Nigerian children below the age of five years die of malnutrition **(Daily Times 15/4/1998)**

Indeed, food, housing and clothing are some of the basic needs of humanity. Nigerians have not been elevated beyond the basic needs perspective. Even the basic needs are luxuries to many Nigerians. Other socio-economic needs of man such as ownership of a vehicle which is a mere necessity for mobility are the preserve of the privileged few. Basic needs are recognized as human needs and not as human right. Justice Kayode Eso described human right as:

Thomas Hobbes **(S. Mukherjee & S. Ramaswamy, 2007: 166)** regards self preservation as a supreme right. This notion he borrowed from the Greeks, who contended in the law of war and peace (1625) that all individuals had a right to preserve themselves and that, all other things being equal, no one could ever be blamed for doing what they did in order to survive. Both Grotius and Hobbes considered the right of self preservation as a sufficient basis for morality, at least in its minimalist or natural sense.

From a numeral perspective, Karl Marx analysed the economic mode of production, the way people actually lived and engaged in production. In the German ideology, Marx and Engels wrote:

We must begin by stating the first premise of human existence, and therefore of all history, the premise namely that men be in a position to live in order to be able to "make history". But life involves before every other thing else eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing and many other things. The first historical act is this, the production of the means to satisfy those needs, the production of material life itself. And indeed, this is an historical act, a fundamental condition of all history, which today, as thousands of years ago, must daily and hourly be fulfilled merely in order to sustain human life **(S. Mukherjee & S. Ramaswamy, 2007: 358).**

The security measures taken against crime so far by both the government and private establishments include; installation of metal fence, push button, lock-lever, handle-locks, electronic recording systems, fence detection sensors, central station system, surveillance systems, video by satellite, guard shelters and above all the numerical strength of the military and paramilitary (police, army and other security agents) have been increased.

Conclusion

We have seen in this study that there has been a rising wave of insecurity in Nigeria since the country obtained independence in 1960. In spite of the anti-crime innovation of the 21st century, crime has continued to be on the increase. Some of the crimes which have taken shape beyond modern day expectations include kidnapping, bomb-blast, advanced fee fraud, (419), assassination, murder, drug peddling, pipeline vandals, currency trafficking, prostitution, examination malpractices. The study highlights the fact that despite the security measures put in place by private and public organizations crime rate is unabated. The study noted that unless the standard of living of Nigerians is up-graded and the gap between the rich and the poor is narrowed crime wave will continue to rise. The study has shown that agitations by groups and state constitute part of the security threat in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Crime rate in Nigeria will be on the decline if the following measures are put in place:

First, it is important that education is made compulsory at all levels – from primary up to university level. This measure would go a long way to improve the level of awareness and increase the literacy level. The more people are educated the more security conscious they are of themselves and their environment.

Second, gainful employment opportunity be created by government at all levels (state, local and federal government) so as to reduce the number of idle people because an idle mind is a devil's workshop. The present situation where the government is asking young unemployed graduates of institutions of higher learning to go back to farm is unacceptable as such leaders would not allow their own children who are graduates to become farmers.

Third, leadership responsibility and accountability be ensured through declaration of assets, prosecution of corrupt leaders, dismissal and imprisonment of corrupt public officials.

Fourth, an efficient transportation system should be put in place to ease the deployment of security operatives and their over-all well-being be taken care of so that they will not be tempted to connive with criminals.

It is also recommended that government should create more and better opportunities for citizens to improve and develop their potentials whether they acquired western education or not. If this is done the incidence of Boko Haram (militant religious fundamentalism) would be averted to a greater degree.

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