
POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT AND NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Poverty and unemployment is one of the most serious problems facing Nigeria like many other countries in the world. However, there is also a growing level of security challenges facing the country, which calls for serious concern. . The incidence of poverty is one of the reason that occasioned kidnapping and robbery. Virtually all kidnapers in Nigeria usually demand for large sum of money from the victim relatives as a condition for freedom. Also the rising level of unemployment in the country can be attributed for the increase in security challenges in the country. Many school leavers and employable adults are unable to secure jobs and the government is unable to act fast enough in finding a solution to this problem. This paper argues that the poverty and high rate of unemployment in the country is directly responsible for the increasing security challenges in Nigeria. For sustainable development to be achieved, the government must urgently address the issue of poverty and unemployment crisis facing the country so as to be able to adequately tackle her security challenges. The paper suggested various measures the Nigerian government can put in place to arrest this situation.

Key Words: Nigeria, security Challenges, causes and way forward

Introduction

The history of Nigeria runs parallel to the history of Nigerian education, because of the realization by the early nationalists that the country could not develop without a proper grounding in a national education system that can guarantee the production of the desired high quality workforce without which national development is impossible. According to Agbonika and Agbonika (2013) security can be said to be a state of being or existence that is free from danger, fear, threat, anxiety and uncertainty. From this explanation, security actually surpasses every facet of human endeavour. By implication security embraces the persons, material and information from every form of danger. It appears that Nigeria is experience insecurity; this is as a result of fear, threat, anxiety and uncertainty in the country as a whole. It has been observed fundamentally, no one and place are considered totally safe within the country. While those in the Southern parts of the country grapple with

kidnapping and other violent crimes, Nigerians in the North live in utter terror not knowing where and when the next set of bombs will explode.

According to Ezeah and Osayi (2014) security can be conceptualized as the knowledge and attitude members of a society possess regarding the protection of their lives and properties. Thus, being security aware means that one understands that there is the potential for people to deliberately or accidentally attacks steal damage or obtain information that will be to the detriment of the community. Experience has shown that the country's security challenge took a terrorism dimension with the 1st of October 2010 bombing near the Eagle Square in Abuja, venue of the country's 50th independence celebration. Since then, series of bomb attacks have occurred in several parts of the country including: Suleja in Niger State, Jos, Kaduna, Maiduguri, Bauchi and Kano.

According to Robinson, Obayori and Kingsley (2014) national security exists in two forms which are; the internal and external. Internal security is the act of keeping peace within the territory of an independent nation by upholding the national law and defending against internal security threats. On the other hand, external security domain has to do with how the country security is affected by its foreign policy and the nature of the geo-political circumstances surrounding it. For instance, Nigeria was at some time at cross- road and was dagger drawn with Cameroun over Bakassi peninsula. However, relative peace can be said to have been restored with the ceding of Bakassi pursuant to the judgment of the international Court of Justice on October 10, 2002.

Security challenges operate a revolving-door policy these days. As soon as one goes away, another turns up. Since Nigeria has returned to democratic system of government, the security situation in the country deteriorated drastically. Arguably, considerable progress has been achieved in the areas of freedom of speech and liberty, but series of resource based conflict (e.g., Niger Delta militant, ethno-religious crisis, Jos crisis and communal conflicts) persisted. The climax of these security threats is the insurgence of a group called Boko Haram sect in the Northern Nigeria. Thus, a considerable effort to end the violence and ensure peace has been in mirage.

Experience as shown that poverty is one of the factors responsible for insecurity in Nigeria. Poverty is said to be worse than incurable diseases. The incidence of poverty is one of the reason that occasioned kidnapping and robbery. Virtually all kidnapers in Nigeria usually demand for large sum of money from the victim relatives as a condition for freedom. Similarly, Ilo (2008), argued that poverty is the greatest source of civil strife in Nigeria, in that when people are hungry and lack basic necessities of life, they are easily prone to violence.

Lack of institutional capacity resulting in government failure has also led to security challenges in Nigeria. Fukuyama (2004), described insecurity as the corrosion or breakdown of institutional infrastructures. The

foundations of institutional framework in Nigeria are very shaky and have provoked a deterioration of state governance and democratic accountability, thus, paralyzing the existing set of constraints including the formal and legitimate rules nested in the hierarchy of social order. Evidently, as Igbuzor (2011), observed the state of insecurity in Nigeria is greatly a function of government failure, or can be linked to government failure. This is manifested by the incapacity of government to deliver public services and to provide for basic needs of the masses. The lack of basic necessities by the people in Nigeria has created a pool of frustrated people who are ignited easily by any event to be violent. The argument here, is that, Nigeria has the resources to provide for the needs of its people, but corruption in public offices at all levels has made it impossible for office holders to focus on the provision of basic needs for the people. He described the Nigerian situation as a 'Paradox of Plenty'. A situation where the country earns a great deal of revenue through oil sales, but fails to use these earnings to meet the needs of her people and to develop infrastructure as well as the economy. When these situations exist, crime rate is bound to rise and the security of lives and properties cannot be guaranteed.

It has also been observed that high rate of unemployment could necessitate security challenges in Nigeria. Unemployment is a situation whereby people who are willing and capable of working at the prevailing wage rate could not get any work to do. Unemployment is one of the terrorism and socio-security challenges that have been identified by governments over the years. Nowadays in Nigeria, unemployed youths have been used as thugs during political campaigns as well as in the time of crisis. But is quite unfortunate that Nigeria government has not design a workable policy of resolving the menace of unemployment. This is because in spite of all the laudable efforts of government at addressing the problem of unemployment, unemployment still remains a major problem in Nigeria. Such that between 2001 and 2016 Nigeria's unemployment rate is about 23.9 percent, (Obayori, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

Experience has shown that Nigeria has been combating with security challenges for over some decades now. No one and place are considered totally safe within the country. While those in the Southern parts of the country grapple with kidnapping and other violent crimes, Nigerians in the North live in utter terror not knowing where and when the next set of bombs will explode. It has been observed that virtually all kidnapers in Nigeria usually demand for large sum of money from the victim relatives as a condition for freedom. Poverty as said to be the greatest source of civil strife in Nigeria, in that when people are hungry and lack basic necessities of life, they are easily prone to violence.

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Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine poverty, unemployment and security challenges in Nigeria.

Specifically, the study:

- i. Examined security challenges in Nigeria.
- ii. Examined poverty and security challenges in Nigeria.
- iii. Examined the roles of unemployment and security challenges in Nigeria.

A Review of Related Literature

Various scholars across the globe have postulated differing viewpoints on the concept of security; according to the United Nations Development Programme (1994) human security could be defined as protection from hidden and hurtful disruptions in the daily activities, at homes, offices or communities. In otherwords, security is the state of being safe and secure from danger, it could also be protection from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression. For the Commission on Human Security (2003), human security is the protection of important aspect of human lives in a way that would enhance human freedoms and fulfillment. Human security encompasses freedom from want, harm, fear and the freedom to take appropriate actions without any form of hindrance. It is also the assurance of future wellbeing and freedom from threat.

Williams (2008) sees security from the socio-political perspective averred that security involves the capacity to pursue, cherished political and social ambitions. Security can also be perceived as socio-political in nature as without security there can be no political stability and consequently social activities will be in chaos. Oyekan (2018) argued that there is a connection between security and survival. He further reported that security is a basic condition for the survival of human beings. Thus, security is synonymous to freedom from danger, fear and doubt among others.

Aiyedogbon and Ohwofasa (2019) argued that security is any laid down procedures toward the protection of persons and property against hostile persons. It is a situation where by a conducive atmosphere is created within which people in the state can go about their normal daily activities without threat to either their lives or properties. Thus, security encompasses all approach toward safeguarding human as well as material resources in the state against all forms of aggressions or violent conduct.

Omoyibo and Akpomera (2012), avowed that security in Nigeria is synonymous to an individual who put iron bars across his or her windows which eventually prevents the individual from escaping a fire outbreak. For

them, the only condition for the maintenance of peace and the guarantee of security is by upholding law and order. By this, state could be secured against threats which may include low-level civil disorder, crime, organized violence, or even an armed insurgency (El-Rufai, 2012).

Nigeria's Security Challenges

In recent times, Nigeria has been facing several security challenges. These include rise in armed robbery, kidnapping, and insurgency by the Niger Delta militants, ethnic conflicts, and recently, activities of the Boko Haram sect. Hundreds of Nigerians and some foreigners resident in the country have been killed as a result of one violent crime or the other, while property worth millions of naira has also been lost to insecurity in the country (Nwosa, 2014). Fundamentally, no one and place are considered totally safe within the country. While those in the southern parts of the country grapple with kidnapping and other violent crimes, Nigerians in the North live in utter terror not knowing where and when the next set of bombs could explode (Aiyedogbon and Ohwofasa, 2019). The country's security challenge took a terrorism dimension with the 1 October 2010 bombing near the Eagle Square in Abuja, venue of the country's 50th independence celebration. Since then, series of bomb attacks have occurred in several parts of the country including Suleja in Niger state, Jos, Kaduna, Maiduguri, Bauchi and Kano. The country has also witnessed several ethnic and religious crises which appear to be escalating at an intolerable scale. These crises and criminal activities individually and collectively create insecurity and breach of the peace that are likely to or indeed affect legitimate social and economic activities in the country (Ewetan 2019). These security challenges have the very damaging consequence of giving the signal to the rest of the international community that Nigeria is not a safe and secure place and as such not suitable for economic investment and activities. This is particularly important in view of the efforts being made to create the desired atmosphere to attract foreign investment (Muhammad and David, 2019).

Insecurity is a risk factor which investors all over the world dread, as security uncertainty is

not only considered a bad omen for business, it sends warning signals to investors to take their investible fund to another country where there is adequate or a semblance of security. Also, the general state of insecurity in the country is sending a wrong signal to the international community about traveling to Nigeria. Many international agencies and countries have intensified their warning to their citizens of the risks involved in traveling and doing business in some parts of the country (Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt, 2015).

Poverty and Security Challenges

There is no single 'correct' or universally accepted definition of poverty. Generally, poverty is viewed as a state of being poor. In the preindustrial era the popular notion of poverty was that it was 'God given' while with time it was viewed as a product of an individual's inaction, laziness, lack of intelligence (Giddens 1981; Malumfashi 2008). Poverty constitutes a danger to prosperity all over the world with its causes ranging from lack of resources, an extremely unequal income distribution, to conflict among others. Defining poverty remains a problematic term and the debate relating to what it constitutes, how it is measured and how it is to be tackled, rages on. In the first place, the difficulty in defining poverty arises from the fact that different poverty definitions span different spheres of concerns which may not all be easily measured. Secondly, there is the issue of the universality of the definition of poverty. Definitions and measurement indicators applied in one type of society may be difficult to transfer to other societies, without serious modifications (Muhammad and David 2019)

Unemployment and Security Challenges

Unemployment is a global phenomenon whereby eligible workforce of a nation is disengaged in the service of the nation. It is not only a serious economic issue but has social implications that affect almost all countries and all people either directly or indirectly. The world and most particularly developing nations like Nigeria are currently facing serious job challenge and widespread decent work deficits, a development that is capable of increasing the spread of poverty.

According to Njoku and Ihugba (2011) unemployment contributes to low GDP and leads to increase in crime and violence, psychological effect, adverse effect on health and political instability. There have been several researches on unemployment and its causes in developing countries, especially Nigeria. Scholars have identified the following as the major causes of unemployment in Nigeria as well as other developing countries; neglect of agricultural sector, rural-urban migration, wrong impression about technical or vocational education or training, corruption with its attendant grave embezzlement, rapid population growth, low economic growth and activities, low investment and many others have identified as a menace to unemployment in the country.

Also, leadership and managerial problem, lack of political will, outdated school curriculum making Nigerian graduates unemployable, poverty, lack of adequate youth development programmes, increase in the supply of educated manpower as a result of producing more graduates than available jobs and more painfully, the gradual collapse of manufacturing sector (Adesina, 2013; Salami, 2013; Nwanguma, et al. 2012; Adebayo, 1999; Alanana, 2003; Echebiri, 2005; Ayinde, 2008; Morphy, 2008; Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010; Okeke, 2011; Njoku & Ihugba, 2011 and Anyadike, et al. 2012). The most popular cause of unemployment as found by these scholars is rapidly growing urban labour force arising from rural-urban migration. Rural-urban migration is mostly explained in terms of push-pull factors which include the pressure resulting from man-land ratio in the rural areas and the existence of serious underemployment arising from the seasonal cycle of climate

Egunjobi and Adenike (2019) investigated between economic growth and unemployment in Nigeria with the use of a 31-years data ranging from 1970 to 2000, which thus revealed the existence of a robust positive relationship between poverty and unemployment. In the same manner Aiyedogbon and Ohwasao (2019) discovered the existence of a robust positive relationship between poverty and

unemployment in their study on poverty and youth unemployment in Nigeria 1987 to 2011.

Again Siyan (2019) empirically studied the implication of unemployment on the poverty level in Nigeria from 1980 to 2014. The findings of the study revealed the existence of long run positive relationship between poverty and unemployment.

Egunjobi & Adenike (2014) studied the nexus between economic growth poverty and unemployment in Nigeria with the use of a 31-year data ranging from 1970 to 2000, which thus revealed the existence of a robust positive relationship between poverty and unemployment. In the same manner, Aiyedogbon & Ohwofasa (2012) discovered the existence of a robust positive relationship between poverty and unemployment in their study on poverty and youth unemployment in Nigeria 1987 to 2011, with the use of Ordinary Least Square (OLS) estimation technique. Again, Siyan et al. (2016) empirically studied the implication of unemployment on the poverty level in Nigeria for 1980 to 2014 with the use of VEC for short-run analysis, Johansen co-integration technique and Granger causality with thus revealed the existence of long-run positive relationship between poverty and unemployment and bi-directional Granger causality between poverty and unemployment.

Akwara et al. (2013) examine the relationship between unemployment, poverty, and insecurity in Nigeria. The study thus discovered that unemployment causes poverty, while poverty causes insecurity. In contrast to the above findings, Ogbeide & Agu (2015) investigates the causal relationship between poverty and inequality in Nigeria with the use of Granger causality and time series data from 1980 to 2010, which thus revealed the absence of Granger causality running from unemployment to poverty, instead the existence of one-way causality from poverty to unemployment.

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Conclusion and Recommendation

Inadequate economic growth is the main cause of poverty, unemployment and insecurity in Nigeria. Nigeria economy has a very narrow and weak base, depending mostly on exportation of petroleum crude oil as a major source of income; the agricultural base of the economy had been frustrated and marginalized. High rate of unemployment has also exacerbated the level of insecurity in Nigeria.

Poverty is especially in the urban area has been made severe by low labour absorption capacity of the nonagricultural sector, especially manufacturing, which is as a result of limited growth of investment and technological innovation.

In combating security challenges in Nigeria, the following recommendations were made:

- Provision of basic facilities: There is a need for the provision of basic facilities which will invariably reduce drastically

the rate of poverty in the country. The most debilitating is the lack of basic infrastructure. If the issue of power supply is solved, there is assurance that the manufacturing sector will be resuscitated. These will lead to the flourishing of small and medium scale enterprises, translating into the creation of more jobs

- Diversification of the Economy: Nigeria is over-dependent on oil, which is subjected to global oil price fluctuation. Apart from the fact that the country has so many other mineral resources yet to be explored, the country should venture into other sectors like agriculture, tourism and entertainment. It is noteworthy that revolutions in the ICT sector especially regarding mobile communications, created a lot of jobs in Nigeria.
- Nigeria needs to adopt a skill-oriented education principle to train skilled technical manpower, to build and maintain its critical infrastructure to drive the economy and also, to create employment.
- There is also a need to promote sound morals and ethical values in the country.

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