Insurgency and Socio-Political Economy of Nigeria

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Abstract: *Since independence in 1960 Nigeria has being on the move from military to civilian government with diverse challenges. The 1990 turn of event in Nigeria witness the inauguration of civilian government duly elected from the president down to the local government level, after sixteen years of military rule. The emergence paved the way and raise hopes and aspirations of Nigerians for an improved living standard given the trying and difficult times Nigerians were subjected to during authoritarian rules. The socio-political economy of Nigeria has had to contend with ash conditions which led and still leading to deterioration of living standards. The safety of lives and property has being threatened more than ever before. This development has tended to undermine the corporate existence of Nigeria as a state. The increasing role of massive youth unemployment, collapse of industry such as manufacturing industries, infrastructural decay to match rising needs of ethnic clashes, assassinations and kidnappings created high sense of insecurity. These have tasked the capabilities of institutions to the extent that the credibility of leaders towards the socio-political economy of Nigeria state has being seriously eroded. The feature of contemporary Nigeria seriously detracts the national objective in achieving in becoming one of the twenty leading nations on the global scene by 20:20:20. This hydra headed monster is capable of eroding Nigeria's relevance amongst comity of nations. Thus, it is the position of this paper that Governments at all levels should collectively fight against insurgency that has deterred socio-political development in Nigeria.*

Keywords: Development; Growth; Insurgency; Socio-Political Economy

1. Introduction

Nigeria is one African country that is experiencing high level insecurity, especially domestic that has threatened its socio-political economy. This hydra headed monster affects both developed and developing societies. Albinus,(2012) gave an insight into the precarious state of Nigeria nation by saying "within the last few years, heightened socio-political economic insecurity in Nigeria has arguably fuelled the crime rate, leaving unpalatable implication for the nation state, nation's economy and its growth". The endemic twin evil, crime and violence, has constituted itself a cog in the wheel of Nigeria's socio-political and economic development. Nigeria's insecurity is Man-made, as political leaders' inability to address challenges of poverty, unemployment and equitable distribution of wealth amongst the ethnic nationalities ultimately fuelled anger, agitations ,crime and violent against the Nigerian State by some individuals and groups. Such criminal behaviors include; militancy, kidnapping, bombing, armed robbery, destruction of government properties, among others (Albinus ibid as cited in Akindiy, 2014). Nigeria is sitting on a keg of gunpowder that can explode if things are not put right within the shortest possible time. The North witnessed insurgency; kidnapping in the South-East and South-South of Nigeria; ritual killing in the South-West; and political and non-politically motivated assassinations across the country. The regionalized structure of insurgency has also given rise to regionalized unlegislated security formation in the country in a bid to curtail the alarming rate of insecurity (Albinus, Ibid.). According to Udeh, 2013, as cited in Akindiyo, this disturbing sense of insecurity poses a daunting challenge towards Nigeria's effort at national economic development and consequently put to questioning the level of Nigeria's preparedness to be ranked among the twenty (20) developed countries of the world by 2020. The threat of socio- political economy instability in Nigeria seems to have been overcome given the smooth transition from one elected leader to another from 1999 to date. A stable socio-political atmosphere is a catalyst for development. Etymologically, the Nigerian military had hitherto being a major source of socio-political economy crises and it attendant consequences that have bedeviled the nation building from independence. Hence, the yearning for civilian rule, believing it to bring about the desired good governance, promotes socio-political economy and development. Embracing democracy, after sixteen years of military rule brought respite and raised expectations of a conducive, atmosphere for government to strive and improved living standards in Nigeria. This feeling was anchored on the belief that politically elected government would be able to facilitate security for the masses in terms of being responsive to the needs of the people, providing investment friendly environment through the instrumentality of the rule of law. Given this background, it would not be out of place to attempt a conceptualization of the issue of security. Conventionally, security has been associated with militarist tendencies or the application of force to suppress any action that tends to undermine governance or a particular interest. This approach to the issue of security has however been challenged by insurgency across Nigeria. This is further deduced from the admonition of a former World Bank President, Robert McNamara thus:

Any society that seeks to achieve adequate 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 (Anonymous, 2005:8).

In the same light, *The South Magazine,* in one of its editorial comments contends that, 'The threat to national security is not from neighbors. The predators of security are poverty, inequality and exploitation' (*Editorial, 1989:8)* in spite the favorable resource endowment, the nation has experienced

unprecedented socio-political crises which have tended to undermine the corporate existence of the nation. The increasing rate of youth unemployment, kidnapping, ritual killings, worsening health conditions, collapse of manufacturing industries, decaying social infrastructure as well as the widening socio-political economic gap among the citizens, sectarian and ethnic clashes and assassinations, created high sense of forlorn hope among Nigerians. The level of insecurity in Nigeria is worrisome and has place Nigeria in an imbalance to achieving vision 2020. It has further undermines Nigeria's competitiveness amongst the comity of nations seeking to represent Africa in the proposed enlarged permanent members of the Security Council.

1.1 Governance and Insecurity

The relevance of governance lies on the foundation that it would serve as a facilitator in advancing the cause of members of its constituent units. It must be embraced by the society which is made up of various individuals with various qualities, in human feelings and consequently varying interests. These qualities and weaknesses account for the variations in the levels of socio-political economic attainments. It therefore a divergent ingredients that lead to conflicts. In order to advance human civilization, there is need to moderate in all sphere. The relevance of the social contract theory by Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), in his work *The Leviathan,* argued that organized government came into being with the primary objective of instituting social order, in contrast to the state of nature where anarchy was prevalent. Hobbes averred that life of man was 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short' (Appadorai, 2004:22 and Wayper, 1974: 54) as cited in Lateef .A (2013). John Locke (1632-1704) had a more liberal approach towards the basis of the constitution of the political society. He argues that 'the end of government' is 'the good of the community' (as cited in Wayper, 1974:75) as used in Lateef (2013). In other words, government should exist to promote the welfare of the people. In the same line of thought, Harry Eckstein identifies the functions of the state as distributive, regulative and redistributive. He however isolates the redistributive as the key essence of the State, adding that the redistributive is the most conflict-laden realm, 'the realm of winners and losers, of haves and have-nots' (Eckstein 1979:17) as used in Lateef (2013). This position reinforces the fact that the main function of government is to serve a mediatory role by reconciling the differences among the people, as a means of ensuring harmony. It must be appreciated that in a developing state like Nigeria where poverty is common place, it is apparent that the machineries of government be deployed to ensure that resources are duly distributed. When governance is rooted on equity, the bases of friction and conflict can easily be monitored and resources would be directed towards socio-political and economic development. Desirable governance is driven by the objective of equitable distribution of 'public goods', which are education, access to health facilities, employment opportunities, checking poverty, reducing socio-economic inequalities and guaranteed fundamental human rights of the citizen. Governments' failure to guarantee socio-political and economic values have been attributed to the source of violence, insurgency and destruction of lives and property.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Development: Development like any other concept is a complex issue, with many different and sometimes contentious definitions. Until fairly recently, great reliance was placed on Gross National Product (GNP) per capita income as convenient index of development. An alternative approach has been created by the United Nations Development Programmed (UNDP), with their Human Development Index (HDI) focusing on measures of health, life expectancy, education and access to resources. Development is a process that engenders growth, progress and positive change. It also includes physical, economic, environmental, social and demographic components. Human development is defined as:

enlarging the range of people's choices – increasing their opportunities for education, health care, income and employment, and covering the full range of human choices from a sound physical environment to economic and political freedom. Human development is concerned both with developing human capabilities and with using them productively. The former requires investments in people, the latter that people contribute to GNP growth and employment. Both sides of the equation are essential" (UNDP, 1992, P.2)

Security: Like any other terminology, it doesn't lend itself to easy definition. However, from the conventional usage of the word, security means safety or freedom from danger; and protection from external attack or infiltration. This is security defined from the militarist point of view, but even at that, security involves but does not just mean defense (Nwolise, 2006) as cited in Akindiyo (2014). (MCNamara, 1983) has long warned that; *any society that seeks to achieve adequate military security against the background of acute food shortage, population explosion, low level of production and per capita income, low technological development, inadequate and efficient public utilities, and chronic problem of unemployment, has a false sense of security.* He goes further warning against the perpetration of poverty in a country, as it is the harbinger of unrest, internal upheavals, violence, and escalation of extremism. For developing societies, he urges political leaders to note that without development there can't be national security. In his words: *In a modernizing society, security means development, security is not military hardware, though it may include it; security is not a military force, though it may involve it; security is not traditional military activity, though it may encompass it; security is development, and without development there can be no security. A developing nation that does not in fact develop simply cannot remain secure for the intractable reason that its own citizens cannot shed its human nature… that is what we do not always understand and what governments of modernizing nations do not always understand (MCNamara, Ibid).* As a framework of analysis, frustration-Aggression Theory will be applied. The theory posited that social movements occur when frustration leads to collective, often aggressive behavior.

2.2 Effects of Insurgency in Nigeria

The criminal activities of individual or corporate entities, creates insecurity and breach of the peace that are likely to or indeed affect legitimate socio-political economic activities in the country. These criminal behaviors have given rise lack of confidence amongst comity of nations, which has further pose challenge to investment and development. It also deters potentials of realizing the transformation agenda of President Muhammadu Buhari. The rates of terrorist bombings, kidnapping, armed robbery attacks on banks as well as other violent crimes have culminated to massive loss of the nation's human resources. This ugly trend poses a threat to the future of the nation's agricultural productivity level, private sector investment volume, petroleum sector growth, manpower and overall economic development. According to the Human Rights Watch, (Albinus), about 2800 lives were lost to terror-related violence between 2009 and 2012; within the first nine months in 2012, 815 people were killed in 275 suspected attacks by the Boko Haram group and this represents more than the total number of deaths recorded between 2010 and 2011 combined. The organization states that 211 police officers were killed while over 60 police stations in at least 10 northern and central states were attacked by the terrorist group apart from the police headquarters that were bombed in Abuja. Relatively, it is needless to say that social cohesion amongst the various component units is a desideratum in the process of national political development. This feeling of alienation and mutual distrust as a result of rabid competition for power and positions among federating units in Nigeria state has been eliciting widespread discontent and loss of confidence in governments' program and policies with a dire consequence on political stability and by extension democratic consolidation which is a sine qua non for good governance and development. This is almost practically unattainable under the present security challenge in Nigeria state. Despite Nigeria striving with the teeming youth unemployment, companies in their numbers are closing down operations in the north and relocating to other African countries for fear of loss of lives and property. Workers, both local and expatriates had fled the region. This development has multiplied the number of unemployed youth roaming the street and has become an easy tool for violence and further insurgency in Nigeria. This scenario has not only deepened the existing unemployment rate but also paints a sober picture of poverty. Yearly, unspecified millions of naira is being paid as ransom for the release of victims of kidnapping; not forgetting the Central Bank of Nigerian (CBN) N100 million cash donation, the N200 million donations from the combined effort of the opposition governors, and also the $50,000 from the Christian Association of Nigeria, America chapter, to reduce the suffering of the victims of regional militia (www.myfinancialintelligence.com). Ordinarily, these are funds which could have been channeled to human capital development rather than rehabilitation of families of the casualties and the renovation of properties destroyed as a result of insurgency.

2.3 Thematic Explanation of the Causes of insurgency and insecurity in Nigeria

Scholars across the country have identified several causes of insecurity in Nigeria. Onyishi, 2011; Jega, 2002; Lewis, 2002; Ali, 2013; Okorie, 2011; Salawu, 2010; Ezeoba, 2011. According to them, the crises of insurgency and insecurity in Nigeria could be traced back to the economic crisis in the early 1980s during the falling commodity prices, OPEC price increases, privatization, economic liberalization, deregulation, currency devaluation, cold war era politics and Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). It was against this development that Emeka (2011) opined that the emergence of ethnic and militia groups in Nigeria with most of them termed to be violent and terrorist groups. Among these groups he stated were; the Ogoni Youth, Niger Delta Volunteer Force, (NDVF), Odua People Congress (OPC), Arewa Youth Consultative forum, Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MASOP), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), Egbesu Boys of Africa (EBA), Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV), Isoko Nationa Youth Movement (INYM) etc. As a result of this, it set the stage for terrorist violence in Nigeria, more especially the militants in the Niger Delta, who adopted terrorist tactics to fight the government, who, they believe, are agents of foreign capital, domination and tools for exploitations. Similarly, there was also the Tiv-Jukun crisis, Zangon-Kataf, Maitatsine religious crises in Kano in 1980, 1983 in Maiduguri, Yola and Gombe. Today, we see the emergence of the Boko-Haram Movement which started in Borno and Yobe states. The group later, due to their criminality and terrorist activities termed as one of the deadly terrorist organization ever witnessed by the western world and was alleged to be off shot of Al-Qaeda. Gradually, Boko-Haram spread to cover all part of the northeastern states like Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states and they had part of their own fair share of the evil effects of terrorism attacks. This has in the last six years been characterized by insurgency and terrorist activities. Furthermore, Insecurity challenges can also be traced to the early years of military rule as put forward by Olabanji, O. E. (2014:) that:

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 hand 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. He further observed that, during this time, there was also the army of unemployed youths, some of whom lost their jobs during the civil war. The level of insecurity assumed dangerous dimensions in the prolonged years of military rule as well as the return of Nigeria to democratic rule from 1999 to date. It was during this time that politicians procure arms and light weapons for personal defense and political thug ery. As a result, some of these arms and light weapons got into the hands of unemployed youths who used them for deviant purposes. According to some scholars, Boko-Haram insurgency and terrorist activities were alleged to have been attributed to some factors. Among which are corruption, unemployment, poverty, poor government policies, weak judiciary system

etc, as pointed out by Nweze (2004). He further identified some factors enhancing insecurity in Nigeria to include among others things: poor leadership, ethno-religious crises, socio-economic inequalities, small arms and ammunition trafficking, rural-urban migration and external influence among others.

2.4 Corruption, Poverty and Insecurity

Corruption has remained one major causes of insecurity in the country due to diversion of public resources to private individuals. This has made it necessary for the government, non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and stakeholders to ensure that the war against corruption be won in all ramifications. Although some efforts were made to address these problems in the past; as used in Charas etal (2015), for example, the previous governments, both Military and Democratic had tried to focus attention on good governance, prudence, transparency and accountability through a number of ways, such as establishing Code of Conduct Bureau by the Murtala Mohammed administration in 1975, Ethical Revolution by Shehu Aliyu Shagari's civilian administration in 1979, War Against Indiscipline and Corruption by General Muhammadu Buhari's administration in 1984, Mass Mobilization for Self Reliance, Social Justice and Economic Recovery by General Ibrahim Babangida in 1985 , Failed Banks Tribunal by General Sani Abacha in 1994, Anti-Corruption Bill by Olusegun Obasanjo in 2000. Similarly, in 2007, the administration of Umaru Musa Yar'adua made it a cardinal policy to observe Rule of Law to enhance public accountability and stamp out corruption in Nigeria. Yet, corruption in Nigeria has become institutionalized thereby translating into wider economic, political and social inequality. In addition, weak judicial system aided corruption, inequality that has translated to insecurity in Nigeria. There is a relationship between corruption, unemployment and insecurity. Adegbami (2013) as cited in Charas (2015), opined that, idle mind; they say is the devil workshop so as the rate of unemployment continues to rise, so also the wave of crimes and its attendant effects. The Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) cited in Ogah et al., (2011) puts unemployment in Nigeria at about 23.9 per cent and still rising.

3. Methodology

The study adopted descriptive research approach and data were obtained basically from secondary sources. Descriptive research is chiefly concerned with finding, describing and interpreting "what is". This method does not aim at discovering new phenomena, but is "concerned with conditions or relationship practices that prevail; beliefs; points of view or attitudes that are held; processes that are going on; effects that are being felt; or trends that are developing" (Best 1970:116 cited in Apere 2006)

Descriptive research as the name implies, seek to quantitatively and qualitatively describe the nature of a particular problem or topic. Descriptive research as a major research approach, enhance qualitative policy decision making since it creates a clear picture of a particular situation or population which promotes its understanding. It also serves as a pre-requisite to inferences and generalizations (Robinson 2007).

4. Conclusion

Insurgency is a hydra headed monster that has affected the socio-political economy of Nigeria. Insecurity assume several forms, ranging from terrorist bombings, kidnapping, armed robbery attacks on banks as well as other violent crimes that have culminated to massive loss of the nation's human resources and other development enablers. This ugly trend poses a threat to agricultural productivity, private sector investment volume, petroleum sector growth, manpower and overall economic development. Insurgency has been fuelled by a number of issues ranging from corruption, unemployment, inequality and poverty. A hungry Man is an angry Man, just like the case of Nigeria where there is mass unemployment, inequality and poverty, occasioned by greed and corrupt political leadership, thereby encouraging insurgency and insecurity. The findings of this work correspond to the Frustration-Aggression Theory that social movements occur when frustration leads to collective and often aggressive behavior.

Based on these findings, the study recommends that political leaders should be responsible and accountable to the citizens of Nigeria. Government should restructure its agencies towards curbing the menace of corruption, poverty and inequality through implementations of policies geared towards employment creation; revamp the educational sector for more employable and productive graduates in the economy.

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