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Religion, Politics and the Challenges of Insecurity in Nigerian Development

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Abstract

Since the independence of Nigeria in 1960, there has been series of battles and challenges in its development. This paper examines political insecurity as one of the major challenges facing development in Nigeria. This paper critically examined how political insecurity undermined the development, and how they are intertwined. This paper examined the causes of political and religious insecurity and it's challenges to Nigeria developments. This paper also adopted secondary data as it's methodological approach. It reveals injustices, bad leadership as a result of bad governance and political deprivation responsible for political insecurity which is a challenge to the development in Nigeria. The paper tells us that the problem of political insecurity can be addressed through proactive and sustained policies by the leaders in Government. With this paper, we will understand that several illegal groups, ethnic military groups, religious fundamentalist and fanatics are evidence of insecurity in Nigeria. And it has given birth to series of bombing, murder arson and armed robbery, corruption, injustices that we hear every day, hence they negatively affect Nigerian politically and religiously. It is hoped that the result of this research will provide a viable solution to the current insecurity challenges in Nigeria.

Key Words: Insecurity, Challenges, Religion, Military Coup, Injustice, corruption, robbery, murder, and Politics

2.0 Introduction

Security is an essential component in the life of any society that desire to develop. Nigeria, since her independence in 1960, has been battling with series of development

challenges. This was as a result of insecurity in the country.

Political insecurity can be described as those activities of individual persons or group of individuals which resulted to undermining of

the development of the country Nigeria (Jimoh and Ojalabi, 2006:5).

The political insecurity Nigeria is facing now, ranges from the civil war, military interventions, political assassination insurgencies, terrorism, ethno-religious conflicts, Niger Delta Militant, Boko Haram, Herdsmen and farmer clashes. Kidnapping and electoral and post election violence just to mention but a few (Alfa. 2012:4). Kalu, Ajuzie and Chukwu (2018) argued that insecurity challenges facing development in Nigeria is as a result of poverty, mass youth unemployment. Inequality, bad governance and leadership failure which inevitably generate conflicts that engender political insecurity in political system in Nigeria (Koku, 2017-98.)

Similarly, Adejumobi (2001) opined that lack of commitment to the virtues of honesty, equality, social justices, accountability, trust, peaceful co-existence among co-ethnics and respect for human rights has contributed to political insecurity in Nigeria. In order to address the issue of political insecurity as a challenge to development in Nigeria, this paper will therefore critically examine the causes of political insecurity such as injustices, leadership failure and political deprivation which are responsible for the

political insecurity and recommend how political insecurity can be solved in Nigeria.

This paper will also place the current insecurity in Nigeria in a context by defining and reviewing the causes, effect and the rise in violent incidences which have characterized the Nigerian society in recent times; highlight the challenges, asses it's political, religious, cultural implications to the nation. >

Let us begin with understanding the terms which are frequently referred to in this paper.

3. Definition of Terms

3.1 Insecurity: Insecurity is the state of being subject to danger or injury. The anxiety is experienced when one feels vulnerable and insecure. Michael Ezemonye (2011), affirms the above definition of insecurity as "a state of being not sure and lack of confidence".

To enable us understand this term, we now turn to the meaning of the word "insecure" which the Advance English Dictionary defines as not confident about yourself or your relationship with other people; not safe or protected.

This definition further expounds the meaning of the term to include not just the general meaning, but it touches the

individual person not being confident about himself.

3.2 Nigeria = Nigeria is a republic in Western Africa, with a coast along the Atlantic ocean on the gulf of Guinea. Most of Nigerian states consist of a low plateau cut by rivers, especially the Nitjer and its largest tributary, the Benue. The country takes its name from its chief rivers. Until 1991, the capital was Lagos, the largest city located on the South-Western coast. However, a new city called Abuja, located at the centre of the country became the capital in 1991.

Nigeria has a federal form of government and is divided into 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory.

Robert Stock (2011) opined that; the area that is now Nigeria was home to ethnically Based kingdoms and tribal communities before it became an European colony. In spite of European contact that began in the 16th century, these kingdoms and communities maintained their autonomy until the 19th century. The colonial era began in earnest in the 19th century, when British consolidated its rule over Nigeria. In 1914, the British merged their Northern and Southern protectorates into a single state called the colony and protectorate of Nigeria. Then Nigeria became independent of British rule in 1960.

Nigeria is by far the most populated of African countries with more than one hundred and fifty million people. These people belong to many different ethnic groups. These groups give the country a rich culture, but they also pose major challenges to nation building. Ethnic strife has plagued Nigeria since it gained independence in 1960. Nigeria, apart from being multi-ethnic religious with Christianity, Islam and African religion as the three main religion constitutionally. Nigeria is a secular state.

3.3 Politics - we begin with the word politics. The Dictionary defines it as the activities involved in getting and using power in public life, and being able to influence decisions that affects a country or society. This is that which relates to the state government, the body politics, public administration, policy making in a nation. It is an organized or ordered with respect to government (Collins 2005).

Political therefore connotes activities pertaining to policy, or the administration of the government. For instance, political rights are those which may be exercised in the formation or administration of the government.

3.4 Religious - Religious is that which relates to belief in religion, the teaching of religion or the practice of religion. While

religion with all the controversies surrounding its meaning is defined differently by different scholars depending on their persuasion and perspective of the proponents. For Emile Durkheim religion is seen as an inter-dependent system of belief and practices regarding things which are sacred.

However, for the purpose of this presentation, I wish to accept the definition given by Eleazer Ejalonibu Lawal (2005) that says religion is the attempt to bring the relative and temporary, the painful things in life into relation with what is conceived to be permanent, absolute and cosmically opinionistic (p. 106)

4. Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

This is a dramatic increase in violence terrorism and the like in Nigeria. Today lawless sects are raising the temp of their campaign in various parts of the country. We hear of series of bombings, shooting and killings, kidnappings, armed robbery, arson and so on. These take place from North to South, East to West almost on daily basis.

The phenomenon "insecurity" has been extended to cover other spheres like economic and political insecurity. In this paper, our concentration will treat the topic holistically - as it affects the life and the

property of the citizenry. Let us now examine the causes of this problem.

4.1 Porous borders - the free flow of migrants from other countries to Nigeria through our unguarded borders allows criminals to enter the country without check.

4.2 Proliferation of Arms and Ammunitions- several arms have been seized at our air and sea ports, some in very large quantities. This is not good for the country. These arms and ammunitions end up in the hand of criminals who apply same in their nefarious activities in the country thereby making life insecure for the people of their locality.

4.3 Illegal Armed Group - illegal importation of arms and ammunition has made possession of arms by individual and group very easy. We can name groups like Niger Delta Militants, Oodua People's Congress, Bakasi Boys" MASSOB Boys that possess arms ammunitions.

4.4 Oil Bunkering - Nigeria being one of the largest oil producing nation suffers from the activities of illegal oil bunkering. These activities are promoted by the state of insecurity in the country. These backup with criminals who are ready to die in Nigeria

water ways. This therefore makes coastal areas of our state oil producing unsafe.

4.5 Labor activist - Early in 2012, the Nigerian Labor Congress called for a nationwide strike as a result of increase in the price of fuel by the government. They accused the government of being insensitive to the suffering of the people as well as ignoring the insecurity challenges in the country. Peaceful protest by Labor and other Civil Society Group have severally been high-jacked by miscreants and inflicted pains on people and made life in our cities insecure.

4.6 kidnapping - this is another visible sign of insecurity in the country. The perpetrators of this crime do not spare anyone in this new wave of crime that seems to have supplanted armed robbery and other non-contact crimes. Since this act began in Nigeria, aged, children male and female have been kidnapped for ransom. This has made life unbearable to the citizens. People now live in fear of failing victims to these criminals.

4.7 Militancy - According to criminal law, militancy is violence, illegal force or the illegal use of unjustified force or the intimidating effect created by the threat of this act.

This word became pronounced in Nigeria when the Niger Deltas took up arms against government exploitation and environmental degradation of their area due to oil exploration and exploitation.

This does not only exist in the Niger Delta area. Other parts of the country have witnessed militants who commit atrocities worse than the youths of Niger Delta, whose are given the "brand name" until recently the word insurgency was a lieu to Nigerian Society.

The activities of the militant Islamic sect popularly called "Boko Haram" have opened this chapter of militancy in Nigeria shooting, bombing, kidnapping, arson, car and suicide bombing in various parts of the country are said to be the handiwork of insurgency. These activities, have heightened the speed of insecurity in the nation.

4.8 Fear and Distrust on Government. What the current trend of violence is imprinting on the psyche of Nigerians is that the government security apparatus is capable of guaranteeing the safety and security of it's people. This has therefore impact on the general human security of the people as the situation promotes fear, limits the people's ability to develop economically.

4.9 Unemployment - this rise in crime wave in Nigeria since the mid 1990s was as a result of unemployment, economic decline and social inequality, which are abetted by inefficient and corrupt police and custom forces (Robert stock 2008, Encarta Entry). The idle minds became devil's workshop. These people who are mostly youth are easily recruited into militant group and trained into rob, kill, kidnap, smuggle, high jack to mention but a few. Accurate unemployment rate are difficult to obtain and generally mean in a society where many whose work are marginally employed and where begging is a socially accepted occupation.

4.10 Religious Fanaticism/Extremism - Religious fanaticism and extremism have been among the major cause of insecurity in Nigeria. The recent incidences of attack on churches and Christians in Northern part of the country by Moslem extremists have rendered several states in the North unsafe for life and properties. The damage these extremists have caused can be seen in the following words.

... religion has unleashed on mankind ... It has left in its wake, a heavy tell of destroyed lives and Wanton destruction of property. It has delayed workable Political agreements and brutalized societies ... Religious violence

has been responsible for the collapse of one political order or the other throughout history. It has given rise to assassination and tempted assassination of various Heads of States or government in recent times. Leads to irretrievable breakup of internal harmony, and leads to foreign intervention (Agi, 1996). This is a true assessment of Nigerian situation.

4.11 Wrong Political Ambition - the desire for a political office not evil but to nurse negative reasons for that ambition can result to or doing anything to attain it. Ben Okolo from Johannesburg, South Africa observed that "the current crisis which started in Bauchi and has engulfed other states in the North has elements of theocratic ambition in it: the perpetrators of the violent activities in parts of the country are operating with a hidden agenda. They have the intention of enthroning their own type of government which is selfish, criminal and unpatriotic as Nigerians. With such ambition they can try to make the country ungovernable or insecure.

Electioneering - Election periods in the country seen to be the moment of serious security challenge. Shafin .5. Zurmi (Daily Sun Friday January 21, 2011 p.19).

"While the major political characters intensify their efforts at winning the support of the Nigerian Public, Ordinary Nigerians

are daily becoming more and more apprehensive about the security implications to the country before, during and after the election. The general anxiety over the nation's security is germane and should be a source of concern to the government. Dr. Franz Fanon said "Those who make peaceful change impossible make violent change inevitable".

4.12 Ethnic Violence - We have heard in some area like Plateau and Benue state reprisal attack by ethnic militia unleashing insecurity in these areas. While security in some parts of the country, like the south-south, south-east and the south-west has been compromised, the Northern zone that has always shown a propensity for violent conflict did not disappoint security watchers. Starting with the usual religious / ethnic oriented conflict to the Jos ethnic / Religious/ political conflicts of 2008 till date. The Northern states have shown that security of persons and properties is still far from being realized.

4.13 Desire to actualize ethnic agenda - This has become the phenomenon in Nigeria society today. Because of certain unsatisfactory or unfavourable situation politically, economically, developmentally and so on they would want to be separated from Nigeria. We hear of movement for the

Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in the south, Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) in the South East, Oodua People's Congress (OPC) in the West, Boko Haram in the North, Bakasi Boys', Fulani Herdsmen and Vigilante Group all over the country. Each one of these groups has reasons for their agitation (Michael Ezemonye. Vanguard, Dec., 02, 2011).

5.0 Implications of Insecurity in Nigeria

5.1 Political Implication of Insecurity in Nigeria - The current security situation in Nigeria has forced the political leaders to rethinking national security as Ibrahim Bashir of the Daily Sun puts it. This condition demands Nigeria security agencies to rethink and refocus our national security resources on the unique character of security threat in Nigeria (Ibrahim, Thursday March 24, 2011). Nigerians are daily becoming more and more apprehensive about the security implication to the country before during and after the election. I agreed with Shafu .S. Zurmi that the general anxiety over the nation's security is germane and should be a source of concern to the government." (Daily Sun, Friday January 21, 2011 pg. 19)

The weakness of Nigeria's criminal justice system has been exposed greatly. This has posed a challenge and showed the

ineffectiveness and delay in the implementation of the policy.

General Owoye Andrew Azazi has given some imperative one of which is... the need for a more robust legislation on Anti-Terrorism Act must provide the institutional and co-ordination frame work for combating and eliminating the act of terrorism in and against the Federal Republic of Nigeria ... provide for additional judicial guidelines to the criminal justice system for the effective and speedy prosecution of terrorists and must clearly enable N.S.O. to conduct their Anti-Terrorism measures and activities across many of our national ethnic-centric, religious, political and social biases.

Very important is whether the government will be willing to take the bold step necessary to clearly articulate, communicate and implement whatever policy that is in place. Political instability sometimes results from uncontrollable state of insecurity in a nation.

The growing insecurity challenges in Nigeria are signs of the growing popular discontent with the national political system and indication that past election were not free and fair. Many years ago John Calvin condemned any practice that could harm or oppressed the poorest elements in society as spiritually and politically illegitimate (qtd by Brenda .K. Savage). If the government is

unable to control and solve the problem of insecurity, it means that the government for the common has failed. This is because the basic goal of a civilized society are the survival and security of life and property.

This is very true because when a nation is not secure, it can destabilize the economy, agriculture, governance and increases criminality in the society. It can also destroy the structure put in place by the government for the political stability.

5.2 Religious Implication of Insecurity in Nigeria

The tendency to hijack any form of violence and branding it religious is possible. Based on this, the outsider of religion will give it a bad name in order to hang it. Religious worship places are being desecrated through blood shedding, resulting from indiscriminate bombing of religious worship centres. It scares members away from regular religious worship and fellowship.

Insecurity in a nation will help spread or promote false religious faith and practice. Being in an insecure condition drives people into many religious groups not by reason of believing but for security purposes. In an environment where a particular religion commands majority, the resident would like

to align with the popular religion, there for the sake of securing their lives and that of their relations and possibly their business investments. No business progress in an insecure environment. Economic, religious activities as well as governance can be frustrating on such atmosphere. Religion can play a vital positive role of preaching peace and living it out in an environment that is prone to violence. Dialogue could be used in a warring environment.

5.3 Cultural Implication of Insecurity in Nigeria.

It is believed that the continuous growth and development of ethnic communities into an integrated society based on the Islamic solidarity cemented by increased interdependence and harmonization of shared values and goals will bring about transformation of a relationship between the various ethnic groups. But in a situation where there is insecurity, the desire cannot be materialize.

The incessant taking of life through bombing, shooting and other forms of violence renders the sanctity of life which many African cultures upholds to be baseless.

The problem of suicide bombing which has become a very prominent way of destroying

lives in the country is an act or practice which is condemned culturally in Nigeria. Writing on the abominable practices in Igbo land / culture (Cyril Okorocho) pointed out four of such practices - homicide (including poisoning with intent to maim or kill) suicide; killing a totem animal or an animal dedicated to spirit, stealing and destroying yams especially when planted newly, incest; most of these abominations have to do with life. According to him "if life is summum bonum, then anyone who destroys it is committing a most hideous crime. Indeed." Life is valued in all cultures, suicide is abhorred because of the value place on life.

6.0 Effect of Insecurity in Nigeria

6.1 Increase in Armed Robbery

Ones there is insecurity in a society, there is every tendency that there must be robbery and armed robbery because nobody is checking the excessive nature of human beings. Taking people's property, looting of money with gun or ammunition will be the order of the day. Take for instance since Imo State prison yard was opened for the prisoners to come out, so many homes have been robbed with gun and if the person there in says no the bandits will kill him. Banks are always their target, in so many places, these thieves always go to banks where they think of getting more money.

And whenever they visit any bank, the manager will be in trouble and if he says no, he will lose his life and money.

6.2 Kidnapping

This has been a thorn in the flesh of the society. Everybody is in fear of these kidnappers. The trauma is always much. A situation where by one is being forced to enter into a vehicle with unknown gun men and will be taken into a bush which he did not know and will be tormented for many days or weeks in the hands of wicked men & ladies and will be told a huge amount of money to be paid if not, he will not be released. At times when the ransom is paid, the person will still be killed, because nobody cares - insecurity.

6.3 Poverty

Some of our ladies who have the opportunity to see for the welfare of our state always use the money which was meant for our people, to do another thing. Some of them always hijack the money and send it to another country or state pending when they will come out and they begin to use them thereby keeping the state in abject poverty, hence there will be no money to buy what they want or having access to what belongs to them because of the maladministration of our government.

7.0 Political Insecurity as a Challenge to Development in Nigeria

Security is the first priority between the state and the people, whereby people willingly surrendered their sovereignty to government to oversee the survival of all (Ewetan and Urhie 2014:42). Security is the process put in place to avoid, prevent, reduce or resolve violent, conflicts and threats that originated from other states, non state actors or structural socio-political and economic conditions (Stan, 2004).

For the purpose of this study insecurity can be described as a breach of peace and unity, whether historical, religious, ethnic religious, civil, social economic any political that contributes to the occurrence of conflicts which can lead to destruction of lives and properties (ibid: 43).

Development them say, is the process of social and economic transformation in a society. (Nwamegbo and Odigbo, 2013, Chandlar, 2007) argued that development can never be possible in any society where there is insecurity and anarchy. There is a general believe that development can never be seen in any place where there is problem of insecurity. Therefore, there is a strong connection between political insecurity and development of a state.

The two different concepts cannot be divided, one affects the other (ibid: 2014:45) Omodia and Aliu (2013) state that there is a strong correlation between political security and development. Political security enhances the delivery of public goods and improves condition of living of the people and reduces the potential risk to national security (Akpan 2010:10) Poverty, insecurity and conflict undermines the importance of government on the development of economy and properties.

Therefore, the failure of Nigerian government is geared towards the socio-economic and political development challenges confronting Nigeria. And the spate of violence like political thuggery, assassination, arson and the activities of kidnappers, terrorism, violent, armed robbery, ritual killing, suicide bombing, truncate the development dreams of Nigeria (Omodia, 2015:5.) Therefore, political insecurity constitutes a threat to the development in Nigeria. Also it frustrates business activities and demoralizes local foreign investors and the slow-down in Nigeria's socio-economic development (Ewentan and Urhie 2014:40).

8.0 War

According to dictionary- war is an intense armed conflict between states,

governments, societies or paramilitary groups such as mercenaries, insurgents and militias.

War can be seen as a situation in which people or group compete with or fight against each other.

It can also be seen as an organized effort by the government or other large organization to stop or defeat something that is viewed dangerous or bad. War is generally characterize by extreme violence, aggression destruction and immorality, using regular or irregular military forces.

Warfare refers to the common activities and characteristics of types of war, or war in general. Total war is a warfare that is not restricted to purely legitimate military targets which can result in massive civilian or other non-combatant suffering of casualties.

8.1 Causes of War

- i. Economic Gain - What they will get
- ii. Territorial gain/boundary dispute
- iii. Religion- Muslim- indoctrination- belief
- iv. Nationalism- Independence
- v. Revenge-Tit-for-tat
- vi. Civil war
- vii. Revolutionary war

viii. Defensive war

These fundamentals or primary causes of war. explains why war repeatedly occurs in international politics.

Some scholars also trace war to human nature, biological instinct, frustration, fear and greedy, the existence of weapon and similar factors.

8.2 Types of War

1. Asymmetric War: This is a conflict between belligerents of drastically different of military capability or size

2. Biological warfare: This is the use of weaponized biological toxins or infectious agents such as bacteria, viruses and fungi.

3. Chemical warfare: This involves the use of weaponize chemical weapon was principally used during world war I that resulted in over a million estimated casualties including more than 100,000 civilians.

4. Cold Warfare: This is an intense international rivalry without direct military conflict, but with a sustained threat of it. Including high levels of military preparations, expenditures and developments. This may involve active conflicts by indirect means, such as

economic warfare. Political warfare, convert operation or proxy wars.

5. Insurgency: This is a rebellion against authorities when those taking part in the rebellion are not recognized as belligerents (lawful combatants).

6. Nuclear warfare: This is a warfare in which nuclear weapons are primarily or a major method of achieving capitulation

7. Information warfare: Is the application of destructive force on a large scale against information asset system, against computer and network that support the four critical infract ruction- power grid. Communication finance and transport

8.3 Effect of War

War destroys communities and families and often disrupts the development of the social and economic fabric of the nation.

The most negative effects of war are massive deaths injury, sexual violence, malnutrition, illness and disability.

War also causes post-traum-atic stress disorder- (PTSD) Depression and anxiety are some of the emotional effects not only does war cripple the economy and politics but on the deeper level it daints society and forever alters the cultural identity of those people because they are forced to migrate for the

sake of their safety and a better future carrying their culture with them and in the process altering it.

War causes disruption and destruction of many sorts including that of people identity. This can be especially true with armed conflict where cultural sites and monuments are at greater risk of being damaged intentionally or otherwise, war kills and harms soldiers, war kills and harm civilians' war create refugees.

War harms the natural environments. War's financial cost are enormous. War sets back developments. War empowers the weapon dealers, War distorts truth and so many things, War subverts democracy and promotes tyranny and fanaticism it impoverishes people.

Ravages nature. War is a key note problem much more tractable. War is a bad thing because it involves deliberately killing or injuring people which is fundamentally wrong, abuse of the victims and human right War causes high levels of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and can lead to moral injury as well as deep shame, guilt, anger or anxiety experienced by soldiers as a result of killing or harming others.

8.4 Remedies for Terrorism/War

- (i) The government should identify all issues of injustice, dissatisfaction and address them as a way of minimizing tension in the country and averting possibility of war or insurgency in the future
- (ii) The government should start engaging agitating groups in the country including indigenous people of Biafra(IPOB) O'odua people congress (OPC) Arewa youths and movements for the survival of Ogoni people masop and other groups that are pushing for one political interest or another.
- (iii) Efforts should be made towards orientating Nigerians on the values of tolerance, love and patriotism as one way of becoming good and advancing the peaceful existence and development of the nation Peaceful means of conflict resolution: A dispute peace and security would first of all be tried to be resolved In so many ways.

8.4.1 Reconciliation

Government will try as much as possible to find a way of reconciling with state or country which they are having problem with.

8.4.2 Enquiry

Enquiry should be made in order to find out what the opposition party need so as to stop the war.

8.4.3 Christianity

Christianity can play a role by preaching peace, telling people the danger of terrorism and war. They should preach against war, Hostility, violence and their implications.

8.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

From the look of things in our discussion, we have now discovered that there is a special link between political insecurity and development in Nigeria. This paper also made us to know that there is a strong connection or link between political insecurity and government. This is as a result of recklessness of political leadership, failure of the ruling class to provide purposeful and responsible political leadership which has affected the delivery of public goods and services undermining the process of development.

Therefore, political security is very crucial for creating an enabling environment for development in Nigeria.

Attempts have been made to identify the challenges facing development in Nigeria, which includes political deprivation, injustices, leadership failure as a result of bad government. The elimination of all these

obstacles and vices should be the number one target of governments at all levels as development cannot be achieved amidst of insecurity and violence.

Also, this paper recommends that the problem of political insecurity can be addressed through the tenets of good governance such as accountability, transparency and popular participation in the political process, rule of law, protection of human rights and equality of access to every citizen and groups to the state power and resources. And constitutionalism that have to be strictly observed by the elected or appointed political leader in decision making. With all these, I strongly believe that political insecurity which has been a challenge in the development in Nigeria can be solved.

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