

THE EFFECT OF INSECURITY ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN MAYO-BELWA

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Abstract

The article presents the socio-economic effects of insecurity on the residents of Mayo-Belwa Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Nigeria and indeed the entire North-eastern region. It demonstrates the effect of insecurity in the region as experienced from 2010 to 2020, in which the LGA was underpinned with marks of peace and peaceful coexistence among residents of diverse religious, cultural backgrounds and political affiliations. Mayo-Belwa LGA was also known for its above average socio-economic activities, which served as the main source of livelihood for residents before the rampant cases of attacks on innocent residents, especially those in the rural areas. Sadly, insecurity has hindered food production and crippled socio-economic activities, thus increasing the rate of unemployment in the country as a whole. The article argues that if insecurity is not urgently addressed in Mayo-Belwa and Nigeria as a whole, it could result in massive starvation which could lead to citizens' revolt, resulting in a monumental impact. The article also presents the gravity of insecurity in Mayo-Belwa and other parts of the northern region and country as a whole, caused by Boko Haram and bandits commonly referred to as killer-herdsmen. As part of the discoveries, the farmers can no longer go to their farms to cultivate crops for fear of possible attacks while cultivating their farmlands. Finally, the article research contributes towards bridging gaps in the existing body of knowledge on the reality of insecurity in Nigeria.

Keywords: Insecurity, Socio-Economic Activities, Farmers, Killer Herdsmen

Introduction

Adamawa is a State in North-eastern Nigeria, whose capital and largest city is Yola. In 1991, when Taraba State was carved out from Gongola State, the geographical entity of Gongola State was renamed Adamawa State, with five administrative divisions: Adamawa, Michika, Ganye, Mubi and Numan. It is one of the thirty-six states that constitute the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Adamawa is one of the largest States of Nigeria and occupies about 36,917 square kilometers. It is bordered by the States of Borno to the North-west, Gombe to the

West and Taraba to the south-west. Its eastern border forms the national eastern border with Cameroon.

Topographically, it is a mountainous land crossed by the large river valleys – Benue, Gongola and Yedsarem. The valleys of the Mount Cameroon, Mandara Mountains and Adamawa Plateau form part of the landscape. The major occupation of the people is farming as reflected in their two notable vegetation zones, the Sub-Sudan and Northern Guinea Savannah zones. Their cash crops are cotton and groundnuts while food crops include maize, yam, cassava, guinea corn, millet and rice.

The communities living on the banks of the rivers engage in fishing while the Fulanis are cattle rearers. The State has a network of roads linking other parts of the country. Before it became a State in Nigeria, Adamawa was a subordinate kingdom of the Sultanate of Sokoto which also included much of northern Cameroon. The rulers bear the title of emir (Lamido in the local language, Fulfulde).

The name Adamawa came from the founder of the kingdom, Modibo Adama, a regional leader of the Fulani Jihad organized by Usman dan Fodio of Sokoto in 1804. Modibo Adama came from the region of Gurin (a small village still in existence) and in 1806, received a green flag for leading the jihad in his native country. In the following years, Adama conquered many lands and tribes. In 1838, he moved his capital to Ribadu, and in 1839, to Joboliwo. He founded Yola in 1841 and subsequently died in 1848.

After the European colonization, the rulers remained as emirs and the line of succession has continued till date. On May 14, 2013, President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in Adamawa State due to the Boko Haram insurgency, due to the insurgency most rural societies are not able to achieve development because they lack the basic resources that would bring about development or they are not able to harness and utilize the existing resources that would enable them develop their society. In Nigeria, this has been serious social issue in recent times.

Socio-economic, infrastructure and basic amenities like good roads, quality water supply, electricity, health care, markets, transportation, telecommunication, sports centers, and so on, play a large role on development. And when all these essential and basic amenities are lacking, development can hardly take place. On the other hand, negligence on the part of the government can also affect the developmental process that should take place in the rural areas.

Adamawa State has so far been badly affected by the Boko Haram insurgency. In January 2012, Boko Haram insurgents attacked Gombi, Mubi, and Yola. By 2014, the state had become home to camps housing internally displaced people fleeing Boko Haram attacks in locations including Mubi, Madagali, Askira Uba, Bama, and Gwoza in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe States respectively.

Simultaneously, Mayo-Belwa has the following tribes: Fulfulde, Dong, Gengle, Lamja-Dengsa-Tola, Mumuye, Nyong, Chamba Daka, Teme, Satte and Yandang.

Now according to Olabanji, Olukayode and Ese Urhie "Insecurity affects socio-economic development in Nigeria" (Olabanji, 2014). Available data on the level and dimensions of insecurity in Nigeria reveals an increase over time, which constitutes serious threats to lives and properties, hinders business activities, and discourages local and foreign investors, which in turn stifles and retards socio-economic development. This rising wave of insecurity has not abated but rather assumed a dangerous dimension which threatens the corporate existence of the country as one geographical entity.

This further buttresses the fact that socio-economic development is the primary goal of every well-meaning government, and is essentially dependent on the level of economic activities in a society; the level of economic activities is in turn enhanced by the peaceful co-existence of people. In the absence of security, socio-economic development cannot be sustained as it destroys economic, political, human, and social capital.

Statement of the Research Problem

Mayo-Belwa LGA is an agrarian economy. The area is blessed with arable land for farming and animal rearing. Mayo-Belwa is responsible for about one quarter of the total food production of Adamawa State. (FAO, United Nations: ND) This contributes greatly to the internally generated revenue (IGR) of the State, and by extension, a good proportion of food production in Nigeria. This led to an increased socio-economic activity in the area. However, with the advent of heightened insecurity problems in the area, especially Boko Haram and banditry, farmers could no longer go to their various farms to cultivate crops. This has led to a serious drop in food production in Mayo-Belwa, Adamawa State, and Nigeria as a whole with a consequent increase in the prices of food items across the federation (Samuel Tetteh Partley et.al, Climate-Smart Agriculture in Adamawa State of Nigeria, Food and Agricultural Organizations of United Nations, (www.cgspace.cgiar.org accessed 22/11/2021).

Most literature on insecurity in Nigeria is focused on other parts of Nigeria, this has led to paucity of well scholarly work on the effect of insecurity in Mayo-Belwa, in spite of its economic importance to Adamawa State in particular and Nigeria as a whole, thus creating a gap in the existing body of knowledge of insecurity in the country. This work is therefore aimed at bridging this gap in the existing body of knowledge on insecurity in Mayo-Belwa.

What is Insecurity?

Insecurity is defined as a breach of peace and security; whether historical, religious, ethnic, regional, civil, social, economic, and political, that contributes to recurring conflicts, and leads to wanton destruction of lives and property. Insecurity is a critical issue that has hampered industrialization and sustainable development in Nigeria in particular and Africa at large. Nigeria which is perceived as the giant of Africa has witnessed an unprecedented incidences of insecurity ranging from the activities of Fulani Herdsmen; Boko Haram Insurgencies, Armed Robber Attacks, kidnapping, political/religious crisis, murder, destruction of oil facilities by Niger Delta militants, Child Abduction/Trafficking etc. Other crimes committed by this Islamic sect include; destruction of vehicles; burning of Churches, police stations, schools, hospitals, clinics, shops, army barracks and residential houses; abduction of expatriates. (Ndubuisi-Okolo Purity et.al., 2019:7).

Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

Therefore, it is crystal clear that the state of insecurity in Nigeria is largely a function of government failure and lackadaisical attitude towards the poor masses (Ndubuisi-Okolo Purity et.al., 2019:7). There are several causes of insecurity in Nigeria, they include:

1. Manipulation of Ethnic and Religious Differences

Ethnic and religious conflicts arise from mutual suspicion and distrust among various ethnic groups and among the major religions in the country. The different ethnic groups across Nigeria often allege neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalization, nepotism and bigotry. This often brings about ethnic clashes and religious conflicts.

2. Widespread Systemic and Political Corruption

Corruption is responsible for governance failure in Nigeria; and insecurity in Nigeria is mainly a function of government failure. Corruption has created massive unemployment in the country, which has in turn worsened the insecurity situation in Nigeria. Mismanagement of resources has brought about massive poverty and lack which is also a factor in the insecurity challenge facing the country.

3. Struggle for Resources

The Niger-Delta crisis in Nigeria for instance, and the herdsman-farmers conflicts are classic examples of violent resource struggle in Nigeria.

4. Pervasive Material Inequalities

A major factor that contributes to insecurity in Nigeria is the growing awareness of inequalities in life chances leading to violent reactions by a large number of people.

6. Unemployment and Poverty

Unemployment and consequent poverty among Nigerians, especially the youths are a major cause of insecurity and violent crimes in Nigeria. Youth's unemployment has contributed to the rising cases of violent conflict in Nigeria. Without job creation, how does the government address poverty, and inequitable distribution of wealth among citizens?

7. Weak Security System

This is a major factor responsible for the level of insecurity in Nigeria, and this can be attributed to a number of factors which include inadequate funding of the police and other security agencies, lack of modern equipment, poor welfare of security personnel, and inadequate personnel.

8. Porous Borders

The porous frontiers of the country, where individual movements are largely untracked have contributed to the level of insecurity in Nigeria. As a result of the porous borders there is an unchecked inflow of Small Arms and Light Weapons into the country which has aided militancy and criminality in Nigeria. The porous nature of our borders has aided the uncontrollable influx of migrants, mainly young men, from neighboring countries such as Republic of Niger, Chad and Republic of Benin responsible for some of the criminal acts.

9. Terrorism

One of the most fundamental sources of insecurity in Nigeria today is terrorism. In Nigeria, terrorism is traceable to religious fanaticism particularly in Islam dominated states of Nigeria. Terrorism in Nigeria started with the notorious Islamic sect in the Northern part of Nigeria called Mataisine during Shagari civilian regime which was aborted by a military coup in December 1983 led by General Muhammadu Buhari. In recent times terrorism has assumed a political undertone and is being spearheaded by a faceless Islamic insurgents based in the Northern region of Nigeria called Boko Haram. Although terrorism has its root in Islamic fanaticism, it is now driven by factors such as inequality, poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy.

10. Corona virus and Other Health Challenges

Corona virus pandemic which took the whole world unaware as early as February 2020 and shutdown the socio-economic activities of Mayo-Belwa and the world at large.

Effects of Insecurity in Nigeria

Social, economic, and political development is the aim of every responsible government. However, all this depends on the peaceful co-existence by people. In the absence of security, development is untenable because insecurity destroys economic, human and social capital. For instance, the insurgency in Northern Nigeria has almost crippled economic activities in the region.

Similarly, activities, of Niger Delta militants in the oil-producing Southern part of the country poses serious threats to the economic health of the region in particular, and Nigeria in general. The security crises in different parts of Nigeria is destroying existing infrastructure and preventing a peaceful environment for the development of further infrastructure, and a safe environment for economic activities by individuals. Indeed, no nation can achieve sustainable development in an environment of insecurity.

One of the major setbacks we are faced with in Nigeria is that there has been a rising wave of insecurity since 1960 and this situation has hindered socio-economic activities by discouraging local and foreign investors who would have contributed to national development.

The only solution for insecurity challenge in Nigeria is for the Nigerian government to govern in a way that fosters development. Development in this

context consists of creating an economy with relevant social, economic and physical infrastructure for business operations and industrial growth, to provide gainful employment, functional and useful education, and quality health care system for the people. Furthermore, there is the need for government at all levels to ensure that rising poverty indices are reversed to ensure that Nigerians meet their basic needs (Onifade et.al.,2013)

According to Bavier, a writer who frequently visits the northern region, the Federal government has completely lost control of the North-east, despite deploying thousands of troops and establishing a Joint Task Force. He said, it looks like this insurgency has broken out of the North-east. And what is more worrying is that there's not a whole lot of visible efforts from the federal government to calm things down (2011:35).

From the foregoing, one can see that Nigeria has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity. Inter, intra-communal and ethnic clashes, ethno-religious violence, armed robbery, assassination, murder, gender-based violence, bomb explosions have been on the increase led to a general atmosphere of siege and social tension for the populace.

Furthermore, between 2009 to date over 3,000 souls both military and civilians have been lost in the purported holy crusade; this has greatly paralyzed government plans in mapping out an efficient strategy in combating insecurity. Despite soaring security budget, insecurity still pervades the country.

Consequently, Insecurity has taken various forms in different parts of the country. In the South-West, armed robbers have taken over, while in the North, cross-border bandits operate with ease.

Likewise, in the South-South region, there are rampant cases of kidnapping. Also the incessant wave of crime and armed robbery attacks, all point to the fact that insecurity is fast becoming a norm in Nigeria and has suddenly become attractive to certain individuals in seeking to resolve issues that could have ordinarily been settled through due process.

Today the incidence of police brutality, corruption, violence, murder, and abuse of power has punctuated almost every aspect of society. Armed robbers in Nigeria operate almost freely, using deadly weapons without being challenged and detected by the police and where the police are informed, they give excuses for lack of weapons to fight back. It sometimes seems as though a massive mutual aid is being granted to criminals by some police.

Apart from the aforementioned, incidences of shooting of innocent people in retaliation to policing policies has also constituted a serious problem that has impeded police efforts to curb crime in the Nigerian society.

Nigeria as a nation-state is under a severe internal socio-economic and security threat. As a more general level, the threat has social, economic, political, and environmental dimensions. Each of these dimensions has greatly affected the nation's stability, and can be traced to the ethnic militia armies, ethnic and religious conflicts, poverty, terrorism, armed robbery, corruption, economic sabotage, and environmental degradation.

Problems of Insecurity in Nigeria

1. Fear among Citizens

Every one who hears of terrorism, is first of all concerned for their own safety, and then the safety of family and properties. Fear among citizens can hamper economic growth and development since the economy cannot improve if all citizens stay locked within the four corners of their houses while trembling in fear.

2. Loss of Lives

Not only is the killing of people an infringement on human rights, it is also a violation of God's commandment. Humans are not allowed to murder fellow humans but in the absence of efficient security, innocent lives get lost. People get killed in bomb blast following terrorist attack, some fall victims to cultist clash while others get hit by bullets from armed robbers robbing places. Countless number of students have fallen victim to stray bullets all because of our faulty security systems.

3. Loss of Properties

In the past, we have heard of cases of vandalism of properties by militant groups until amnesty was granted to them. Back then, they blew up pipelines and caused oil spillage which disrupted the order of the ecosystem, leading to death of fishes in rivers, death of crops, destruction of farmlands and land pollution.

4. Discouragement of Industrialization

Industrialization is a prerequisite for economic growth and development. Highly developed countries are in fact, highly industrialized and technologically

advanced countries. Industrialization is also necessary for curbing unemployment and reduction of crime rates.

Now, for an industry to thrive properly and efficiently, the working and environmental conditions must be favorable, people must be free to walk and talk without harboring fear of getting bombed or shot at, at any time.

No investor would want to risk his life and money by coming to invest in a country where the security level is apologetic. Hence, insecurity in all respect hinders industrialization.

5. High Emigration and Migration Rate

Attacks by Boko Haram have displaced about 2.3million Nigerians from their homes. In 2012, two days after the declaration of a state of emergency in Nigeria, Boko Haram released an ultimatum to southern Nigerians living in the north, where they were given three days to leave. Three days later, they began a series of small-scale attacks on Christians and members of the Igbo ethnic group, causing hundreds to flee. The problem of insecurity here, was the increase in migration and emigration rate. Those who can afford to fly out of the country will do so while those who cannot, will migrate to safer states.

6. Discouragement of Immigration

People who travel also take their safety into consideration. How safe a country is, determines how often foreigners will come. This can affect industrialization and economic growth and development. A sensible foreign investor considers his life first before money; the outcome here will be the paralysis of investment by foreigners in Nigerian industries.

7. Increased Crime Rates and Social Vices

Insecurity has a direct relationship with crime rates and social vices. The more insecure a place is, the more people will have access to it and the more criminal acts people will commit. There will be increased cases of extortion, murder, robbery, rape, drug dealing and abduction etc.

8. Overpopulation and Environmental Pollution

In the quest for safety, people tend to migrate from the endangered area to the safer ones. Increased migration overtime, will lead to overpopulation and one of the issues associated with overpopulation is environmental pollution. Gutters turn to incinerators and dump trucks, bridges and flyovers become a home for the homeless etc. (Adagba, O, Ugwu, 2012:77).

Conclusion

Factors affecting economic growth in Nigeria are social and economic issues which include corruption, poor infrastructure, inflation, and worth of the naira, etc. Therefore, to ensure sustainable economic growth, the government should watch and manage those factors, create price stability and an enabling environment for the private sector which is the engine of growth to thrive. This article gives us a situational reality of the Nigeria socio-economic dilemma, which forms part of the crux of the matter this Thesis seeks to address. Nigeria no doubt is the giant of Africa, blessed with lots of human and natural resources, the fourth largest producer of oil in the world, famous for many initiatives and endeavors. Blessed and considered the most prosperous in the African continent in terms of skills and many learned individual, yet her socio-economic growth is hampered by these catalogues traumatic and horrific issues.

The Boko Haram insurgence in Northern Nigeria and activities of other militia groups in other parts of the country pose serious threat to the economic growth of these regions. The security crises in different parts of Nigeria is destroying existing infrastructure and preventing a peaceful environment for the development of further infrastructure, and a safe environment for economic activities to be carried out by individuals to give them an economic empowerment that will enable households not only to cater for their present generations, create wealth, but also to provide for future generations.

Any environment inundated with crime and insecurity is always accompanied with tensions and abundant anxiety. The elimination of these threats and enemies of man should be the number one program of the governments in Nigeria. This will give rise to human development and a habitable environment for us all. Apart from the government's role, all hands should also be on deck to eliminate this monster of insecurity in Nigeria.

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