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## **Insecurity and Socio-economic Development in Nigeria**

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### **Abstract:**

*Nigeria's security issue is the state's principal purview as enshrined in the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended). Section 14(2b) specifically provided that the welfare and security of citizens shall be the primary purpose of government. Unfortunately, despite this lofty provision, the Nigerian government has failed in its constitutional responsibility to provide a secured and safe environment. To this effect, Nigerians in recent times have witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity ranging from Banditry, Assassination, Kidnapping, car snatching, religious uprising, and ethnic violence. This constitutes a serious threat to National security, hinders business activity, and retards the Socio-Economic Development of the country. With heavy reliance on secondary data derived from journals, textbooks, magazines, newspaper publications, and internet searches, this study will evaluate the impact of insecurity on the socio-economic development of Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Insecurity, security, development, and social economic development

### **1. Introduction**

The entire security architecture of Nigeria is presently faced with challenges due to the increased waves of criminal activities and general insecurity posing a serious threat to the country's corporate existence. Nigerians in recent times have witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity. This is contrary to the provision of section 14(2b) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended). It puts the welfare and security of citizens as the primary responsibility of the Nigerian government. Despite the constitution's provision, banditry, assassination, kidnapping, car snatching, religious uprising, and ethnic violence are the order of the day.

To this end, insecurity seriously threatens National security, hinders business activity, and retards the Socio-Economic Development of the country. This will have a great consequence. It is because socio-economic development in Nigeria and anywhere in the world has always been tied to a peaceful environment. Imhabekhai (2019) observed that a peaceful environment would allow the government to improve the social welfare of its people and place a high premium on the elimination of poverty, provision of infrastructure, health care, and striving for political, economic, and religious advancement of the country.

To Garga (2015), socio-economic development in Nigeria has been blighted by the twin evils of crime and violence perpetrated by individuals or groups against the Nigerian state. Consequently, this has resulted in low income from oil revenue, reduction in Gross Domestic Product growth rate, and low participation of local and foreign investors. At the same time, the government often dissipates energies and resources toward crisis management at the expense of socio-economic development in the country. Thus, there is a need to examine the impacts of insecurity on the socio-economic development in Nigeria.

### **2. Conceptual Clarification**

The concepts of insecurity and socio-economic development used in this paper need to be conceptualized for better understanding.

### **3. Insecurity**

While conceptualising insecurity, some scholars emphasised the presence of threats to peace, stability, national cohesion, and political and socio-economic objective of a country.

According to Beland (2015), insecurity is a state of fear or anxiety due to the absence or lack of protection. Insecurity is also regarded as a state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is a condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Besides, insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune.

Achumba (2013) sees insecurity as a breach of peace and security, whether religious, social, economic, or political, that contributes to recurring conflicts and leads to the reckless destruction of lives and properties.

#### 4. Socio-economic Development

Socio-economic Development as a concept is a victim of definitional pluralism. However, attempts have been made by some erudite scholars to conceptualise the term.

The United Nations (2008) defined socio-economic development as a process that increases people's opportunity of choice and a better future.

According to Naomi (1995), socio-economic development embodies all attempts to improve the conditions of human existence in virtually all ramifications, especially in the areas of social infrastructure and economy. To him, therefore, socio-economic development involves not only economic growth but also some notions of equitable distribution, provision of health care, education, housing, and other essential services to improve the citizens' quality of life.

Chrisma (1984) views socio-economic development as a process of societal advancement, where improvement in the well-being of people is generated through strong partnerships between all sectors, corporate bodies, and other groups in the society.

Oboedchi (2005) asserted that a socio-economically developed society is the one that succeeded in providing a source of living for the majority of its inhabitants. In such a society, a premium is attached to eliminating poverty and providing food, shelter, and clothing to its members.

To Odeh and Oloye (2014), socio-economic development hinges on three major pillars: economic, socio, and environment. Therefore, many nations have adopted these three pillars to sustain their growth and development.

To this effect, Obi and Nweke (2010) have rightly observed that socio-economic development in its actual meaning denoted the action and initiatives taken by a country to improve the socio-economic conditions of its citizens.

#### 5. The Impact of Insecurity on Socio-economic Development in Nigeria

The World Bank (2006) and United Nations Development Programme (2014) observed in their various reports with respect to Nigeria's scenario that achieving socio-economic development would remain a mere wish that may be difficult to achieve in Nigeria if the spate of insecurity is not properly curtailed. According to them, despite Nigeria's massive earnings from oil, 70% of her estimated 160 million populations live below the poverty line. In addition, the poor state of infrastructure, dilapidated roads, epileptic power supply, lack of access to potable water, poor health care services, poor sanitation, massive poverty, hunger, malnutrition, and unemployment are evident in Nigeria.

Empirical evidence from the findings of the United State National Security Advisor, Susan Rice (2007), revealed that Nigeria is one of the African countries with unprecedented Security challenges and the highest number of destitute people. According to her, Nigeria, being the largest economy in Africa, does not translate to the well-being of her citizens as a result of insecurity in the country. This is reflected in the performance of her macro-economic indicators, investment inflow, and the country's social and economic performances.

For instance, as of 2020, over \$40.6 billion worth of foreign investments have been diverted from the Nigerian economy as a result of insecurity, according to the Global terrorism index. This had implications for job creation and economic prosperity as purchasing power declined. As a result, Nigeria is now regarded as the world's poverty capital and has an estimated 91 million people living in extreme poverty, which is projected to reach 106.6 million by 2030.

Telecommunication companies were not left out as MTN. A South Africa-based Multinational Mobile Telecommunication Network company operating majorly in African countries, including Nigeria, projected a possible disruption in service provided due to rising insecurity challenges.

Human capital development also met with a hitch as schools in the North shut down to avoid recurring cases of kidnapping. However, Odu and Adebayo (2014) observed that human capital development has many economic benefits in increasing the productivity of an individual and a group, thus stimulating a country's national growth and socio-economic development.

The insecurity challenge also affected other sectors in government revenue allocation as the security budget continues to increase yearly. Data from BudgitIT shows that in 2020 the Federal Government allotted N1.78 trillion for security expenses which is approximately an 83.7 percent increase from the amount allocated for the same in 2015.

Besides, as major regions and states in Nigeria became the hotspot for activities threatening peace and security, people were forced to move to safer locations within and outside the country. Consequently, places like Abuja, Lagos, etc., are gradually becoming home to migrants resulting in overpopulation of select places.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed that it decelerated consecutively from April, 2021. But unfortunately, insecurity also contributed to Nigeria's inflation performance. However, this failed to reflect the reality in the market as prices of goods and food items surged significantly.

Rising violence in the country has cost Nigeria 11 percent of its GDP with N119 billion. Similarly, projects worth N12 trillion were abandoned across Nigeria due to insecurity and other challenges, according to data from TownTalk solutions.

In the same vein, the global peace index for 2021 compiled by the Institute for Economics and Peace ranked Nigeria 146th out of 163 countries, while among Sub-Saharan African countries, the country was ranked 39th out of 44 countries examined in the region.

Violent crimes such as armed robbery, assault, car hijacking, kidnapping, hostage-taking, banditry, and rape are commonly reported in Nigeria.

Therefore, the US Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, and the Canadian Government advised against traveling to Nigeria.

According to Sodipo (2014), insecurity affects socio-economic growth by drying out investments, increasing unemployment, and dwindling government revenue.

Hoffman (1995) describes an underdeveloped country as:

- A country characterised by poverty, with beggars in the cities;
- A country that is lacking in industries or factories of its own,
- A country with insufficient roads, insufficient government services, poor communication, and insufficient social infrastructure

As he puts it, this allusion clearly describes present Nigeria.

## 6. Recommendation

Global institutions and economic experts have advocated that for there to be socio-economic development in Nigeria in the face of insecurity, major policy interventions are pertinent:

Firstly, good governance has been seen as an antidote to Insecurity in Nigeria. Oluwarotimi (2012) stated that good government is the panacea for the security challenges that are bedeviling Nigeria. To him, good governance can guarantee peace and security in present Nigeria. Oluwa (2010) observed that good governance is the primary function of an efficient, visionary, transparent, trustworthy, and credible leadership whose driving force is an improvement in the collective well-being of the citizens through:

- Well-conceived and effectively implemented economic policies and
- Human development programmes.

Besides, the Nigerian government should change its strategies in tackling all forms of insecurity in Nigeria. Since the current counter-terrorism strategy is not working, it has given kidnappers, bandits, and terrorists an edge over the Nigerian military.

Moreover, the Nigerian security agents should be trained in counter-terrorism and sun corruption to effectively contain insecurity.

Finally, Akintayo and Adiat affirmed that the nefarious practice of policy formulators is a major factor in police failure to curtailment of insecurity. Policymakers in Nigeria formulated policies and programmes with inherent flexibilities to allow loopholes for unwarranted gains, institutionalise corruption, and prevent an effective fight against insecurity in Nigeria.

## 7. Conclusion

Though the Nigerian government is making frantic efforts to curtail the wave of insecurity in Nigeria, the resulting effects are not sustainable, with insecurity still on the high side which hindered the socio-economic development in Nigeria.

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