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ENHANCING NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA: A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The increasing high level of insecurity in Nigeria over the years has become so worrisome. Hence, the activities of Boko Haram insurgency, ethnic/religions conflicts, kidnapping, armed robbery, unknown gunmen saga etc and other forms of security threats across different states of the federation should be a cause for serious concern of every well meaning individual and government in Nigeria. However, this increasing level of insecurity in the country has been blamed on the inability of government and successive administrations to adequately address the root causes of insecurity such as poverty, unemployment, bad leadership, marginalization, failed policies and programmes among others. Again, it has been observed that insecurity in Nigeria is a reaction of the citizens against government's inability to fulfill their obligations to the citizenry. Therefore, this paper recommends that such challenges like youth unemployment, marginalization and dysfunctional educational and judicial system should be restructured to make them more realistic and in line with the current trends if national security must be achieved and sustained.

Introduction

The concept of national security in Nigeria became a national issue of serious concern during the upheavals that preceded the political imbroglio of 1966 which led to the Nigerian civil war, 1967-1970. This concept gained ascendency and became a household name in our polity at the return to civil democracy in 1999, following the withdrawal of the military from active politics and governance of the country. Accordingly the African Centre for Strategic Studies (2018), defined national security as the aggregation of the security interest of all individuals in the territory of Nigeria. The components of national security according to them are aggregated into elements of state power, including economic and social development, defense, foreign policy, law and order and information management.

However, one cannot fully understand the concept of national security without, first of all, conceptualizing the word security. Hence according to Wikipedia, security is defined as freedom from, or resilience against potential harm (or other unwanted coercive change) caused by others (http://en.m. Wikipedia.org) Nmon (2013), conceptualized security as a total peaceful state of mind of an individual, the group, the state, the nation at a particular point in time and space. He observed that it may not be an absence of violence or some sort of physical assault or some disruptions but a relative peace that can guarantee quality life and social cohesion for survival of the individual, group or nation. Similarly, Mezieobi (2012), noted that the concept of security calls to mind issues that pertain

essentially, to one or a combination of the following whenever it is discussed.

- The defence and protection of national integrity or Nigeria's sovereignty, territorial and political jurisdictions from eternal and internal interference or intervention;
- Personal safety of members of political class who are in control of the helm of affairs of governance, in addition to safeguarding or protecting their office, hence the incredible allocation of funds for security services;
- The security agents or forces protecting the lives and properties of the mass of the defenseless citizenry against the menace of the men of the underworld;
- Forestalling or deterring possible internal attacks or crisis and subjugating insurgency;
- Keeping the security agents on active security alert and readiness at all points in time;
- Checkmating impending or actual internal threats to state or national security or anti-social behaviours by those who are deliberately undermining or sabotaging government efforts;
- Checkmating social problems such as Boko-Haram saga and youth militancy, kidnapping/ abduction that may pose threat to state and national security and distract the political cadre in control of state affairs from active commitment to their functions; and
- Making the environment free from insecurity in order to attract international investment.

Security can further be seen as a state of being free from danger, risk or threat. It also means freedom from anxiety, fear, the safety of a state or organization against criminal activities and attacks like terrorism (Ogheneakoke, 2014). And Otoibhi, (2012) noted that the security interests of any nation must include safety of lives and properties, economic, physiological, mental well-being and the freedom to pursue the attainment of objectives without hindrance. Hence, in the words of Brown (2013), national security is the ability to preserve the nation's physical integrity and territory, to maintain its economic relations with the rest of the world on reasonable terms, to preserve its nature, institutions and governance from outside disruption, and to control its borders. Osakwe (2013), went further to a assert that national security is a condition where our most cherished values and beliefs, our democratic way of life, our institutions of governance and our unity, welfare and well-being as a nation and people are permanently protected continuingly enhanced. National security therefore refers to policy enacted by governments to ensure the survival and safety of the nation-state, including but not limited to the exercise of diplomatic, economic and military power in both peace and war. It also means the freedom from foreign domination and the sustainance of the state through the instrumentality of economic diplomacy, power projection and political power.

Threats to National Security in Nigeria.

Having underscored the importance of national security to the continued existence of the country, let us consider the possible threats to national security in Nigeria with a view to forestall them. According to African Centre for Strategic

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Studies (2018), the most potent threats the Nigeria National Security include:

- Global Challenges.
- Terrorism
- Transnational organized crimes;
- Crude oil theft, or illegal bank erring;
- Nigeria's boarders;
- Climate change
- Communal and enthrone-religious conflicts;
- Pastoralists and formers' conflicts;
- Politics and federalism in Nigeria;
- Governance;
- Poverty;
- Kidnapping;
- Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction;
- Illegal migration;
- Economic changes;
- Financial Crimes;
- Information technology and cyber security;
- Natural, made-man and medical related threats; and
- Environmental security

Hence, these threats adversely affect the country's quest for stability, unity and development. Against this backdrop, Ekpiken and Arop (2020), noted that the paramount concern of every country should be the safety, stability, security and prosperity of individuals and institutions with its territorial boundaries and even its citizens in the Diaspora.

The Concept of Insecurity in Nigeria

Insecurity is a term used to refer to a state or situation of declining safety of lives and properties, apprehension over increasing rate of terrorism, armed robbery, kidnapping, political upheavals, religious conflicts, assassinations, secret cults-related criminal acts, intra and inter ethnic strife, hijacking, riots, demonstrations etc.

Effion and Edinyang (2013), defined insecurity as the state of being subjected to danger and injury. It is a feeling of un-usual nervousness that may be triggered by perceiving of oneself to be vulnerable. In light of the above, Omoroje, Egbule and Emubie (2020), noted that hardly can Nigerias in different parts of the country sleep with their two eyes closed in recent times. Thus there has been a dramatic twist on the wave, dynamics and sophistication of insecurity in Nigeria. They maintained that insecurity which used to be one of the lowest concerns in the hierarchy of Nigeria's social problems has now turned to assume an alarming proportion. In the same vein, Finlntell (2013), observed that at a time, it was expectedthat corruption and power failure should be the country's major problem, insecurity in the country has now taken the centre stage. Similarly, the high level of insecurity in the country is noticeable everywhere in all the regions. For instance, in the North, the nefarious activities of the Boko-Haram bandits are rampant, in the south-south, youth militancy and kidnapping, and in the South-East, the activities of the unknown Gunmen are equally disturbing.

Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

A lot of factors and potential threats to national security have be attributed to the causes of insecurity in the country. According to Simwa (2022), ten causes of insecurity in Nigeria include:

- Unemployment**;**
- Corruption;
- Imbalance in Federal Government Development Policies and Programme
- Weak judicial system;
- Open boundaries;
- High infux of arms;
- Narcotics;
- International slavery and human trafficking.
- Criminal situations and
- Terrorist threats – Boko Haram and Niger Delta Avengers.

Similarly, Ogheneakoke (2014), identified causes of insecurity in Nigeria to include but not limited to the following:

- Corruption;
- Marginalization;
- Social inequality;
- Ethnicity;
- Poverty and greed;
- Loss of value system;
- Religious intolerance;
- Foreign infiltration- insurgency
- Bad leadership;
- Porosity of our boarders;
- Falling standard of education;
- Poor judicial system
- Cultism and cult activities;
- High values for material things;
- Manipulation of electoral processes;
- Lack of trust on security agents;
- Human right abuses;
- Injustice, and
- Lack of transparency

Hence, a review of the state of insecurity in the country will show that all the factors as outlined above tend to aggravate or fuel the high level of insecurity in the country in one way or the other with its negative consequences.

Effects of Insecurity in Nigeria.

The socio-political and economic activities in Nigeria has be married by the endemic twin evil of crime and violence. Again, the recurring failure of successive administrations in the country to address the challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities among others ultimately resulted to anger, frustration, agitations and violent crimes against the Nigerian State by individuals and groups. Such crimes include militancy, kidnapping; bombing, armed robbery, destruction of the government properties, among others. The activities of various militia groups consequently resulted in law income for government from oil revenue, decline in the Gross Domestic Growth Rate, low participation of local and foreign investors in economic development and insecurity of lives and properties (Omoroje, Egbule and Emuebie, 2020). Again, the cost of life and materials resources to insecurity in the country in recent years is unquantifiable. For instance, between 2009 and 2012, about 2000 lives were lost to militia insurgency. Within the first nine months in 2012, 815 people were killed in 275 suspected attacks in 10 northern states, excluding the bombed police headquarters in Abuja. Tens of dozens are still nursing various degrees of injuries.

Moreso, the database of orphans and widows caused by the rampaging sects has grown vastly, swelling the number of internally displaced persons (IDPS) (Finlntell, 2013).

At this point, it is pertinent to observe that the figure as indicated above no longer show the level of loss to lives and prosperities. This is because the number of causalities has grown astronomically. And presently both military and police formations are now being attacked with little or no resistance. In the South-East, Mondays have been declared public holidays and virtually all economic and social activities grounded with countless loss of lives and properties.

Omoroje, Egbule and Emuebie (2020), observed that money from international organizations and funds raised locally from government, non-governmental agencies, charitable organization and individual that should be directed to human capital development had been deployed for the rehabilitation of families of the causalities and renovation of properties destroyed. Besides, yearly, unspecified millions of naira is being paid as ransom for the release of victims of kidnappers, not forgetting the Central Bank of Nigeria N100 Million cash donation N200 million donation from the combined efforts of the opposition governors, and the $50,000 (USD) from the Christian Association of Nigeria (CCAN), America chapter, to reduce the suffering of the victims of regional militia.

Furthermore, as Nigeria struggles with myriad of unemployed youths, companies in their members are closing down operations in Boko-Haram ravaged North and Oil-rich South-South, and relocating to other African countries for loss of lives and properties. The few remaining companies operating on skeletal bases. Similarly, construction workers and expatriates providing specialized services on various projects in these rejoins have fled for safety. This ugly scenario has multiplied the number of unemployed youths roaming the streets and has fuelled the propensity for crime and violent activities thereby depending the existing rate of unemployment and poverty. Again, Freire (1970/2020, lamented that Islamic militants have serially attacked students and facilities in educational institutions in different Northern States in the country (Chibok Girls and Burnin Yadin Boys, Government Schools). Consequently, a lot of schools have been forced to shut down their academic activities. This ugly trend has drastically reduced the teaming number of students seeking admission into academic institutions at different levels (Omoroje, Egbule and Emuebie, 2020).

Similarly, a respondent survey conducted by Finlntell (2013), showed that many students have vowed never to participate in the compulsory one year National

Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Programme if posted to the northern part of the country. It was equally revealed that those who were inadvertently posted to the north immediately redeployed after three weeks of mandatory camping. This development, thus is a negation of the core mandate of setting up the Act of NYSC in 1973. Furthermore, the growth of foreign direct investment in the tourism sector had been adversely affected as some immigration departments of countries in Europe and America have issued warning to their citizens who wish to visit Nigeria to be aware of the security problems in the country. Hence, not only does insecurity in the country affect foreign direct investment, but it also affects business confidence as many companies lost confidence in establishing businesses in the some parts of the country. Again, on a more serious note, foreign countries especially from Europe and America are currently repatriating their citizens from Nigeria as a results of security threat alerts. This ugly trend requires urgent solution to save the image of the country and ensure sustainable development.

Previous Efforts by Government to check Insecurity in Nigeria.

The inability of the security agencies in Nigeria to address the country's security challenges is worrisome considering the high level of insecurity being experienced in different parts/regions of the country. However, over the years, successive governments in Nigeria have adopted several strategies aimed at addressing the challenges of insecurity in the country. These strategies range from the carrots and sticks measures to the use of outright force and periodic critical evaluation of the performances of security agencies saddled with the responsibility of addressing the situation. Some of these security operatives include:

- The National Security Agency (NSA);
- The National Intelligence Agency (NIA);
- The State Security service (SSS);
- The Nigeria Police Force (NPF);
- The Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS)
- The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS);
- The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA);
- The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC); and
- The Nigeria Army, Comprising of the Army, Air Force and Navy.

Furthermore, in 1987, the Directorate of mass mobilization for Social Justice, Self- reliance and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) was established. This programme later transformed into the National Orientation Agency (NOA) under the civilian administration of Ex-president Olusegun Obasanjo till date. Among the objectives of this agency are:

- Encourage informal education through public enlightenment activities and publications;
- Establish appropriate national framework for educating, orienting and indoctrinating Nigerians

towards developing socially desirable attitudes, values and culture which project individual's national pride and positive national image for Nigeria;

- Develop among Nigerians of all ages, sex, socio-cultural values and awareness that will inculcate the spirit of patriotism, nationalism, self-discipline and self-reliance;
- Promote new sets of attitudes and culture for the attainment of the goals and objectives of a united Nigerian State;
- Instill in the Populace, a sense of absolute loyalty to the father land;
- Ensure and uphold leadership by example and;
- Foster respect for constituted authority (Oloya and Egbule, 2016).

Again, apart from the agencies established to redirect the attitudes of Nigerians towards love for the fatherland, the government has set up different Interventionists Commissions and Agencies such as the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA), the Amnesty Programme for Repentant Militants who surrender arms to the military authorities and the North East Development Commission (NEDC). However, in his assessment of these programmes and agencies, Osaghae (1995), noted that although, these programmes were established with the aim of enhancing the development, proper integration and progress of these agitation-prone regions, the many years of practical deprivations, despair and failure of these interventionist policies has overtime created a feeling of frustration among the people. He maintained that the ministry of the Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA) alongside the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the Amnesty Programme and their likes were unrealistic projects and policies serving no useful purpose other than being a conduit pipe for siphoning oil wealth.

Similarly, there has been a proliferation of vigilante security outfits (both private and government owned) in different states in a bid to yield to the quest by citizens to community policing to support the conventional security operatives. For instance, in the South-East, the Ebubeagu Security outfit and in the South West, the Western Nigeria Security Network (WNSN) named Amotekun (Omilana 2020). And in the North the Northern Security Outfit code-named "Shege-ka Fase, which literally means, "I dare you to attack or surrender" (https://daily trust.com.why…). These developments were reactions to the refusal of successive governments in Nigeria to establish state police and the widening state of insecurity in the country.

Conclusion and Recommendations.

Although the attainment of total or absolute security would be a utopia or to say the least, a futile effort as no country in any known human society has ever achieved such an enviable feat. However, the contemporary security challenges in Nigeria calls for a critical review of the elements of national unity and integration, de-emphasize factors that tend to fuel the high level of insecurity in the country and above all, re-examine the effectiveness of the security operatives saddled with the responsibility of enhancing national security in the country. Moreso, it has been observed that the high level of insecurity in the country is a demonstration of bad

leadership, marginalization and frustration and so individuals, groups and ethnic-nationalities are overtly and covertly showing grievances.

In view of the foregoing, this paper makes the following recommendations as panacea for enhancing national security in the country.

- The Federal Government should as a matter of urgency formulate and effectively implement politicies and programmes capable of addressing the root causes of insecurity, in Nigeria – poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, marginalization among others;
- Developing a stable, strict, just and fair judicial system. This will no doubt check the excesses of the executive arm of government.
- Good leadership: The government should make politics less attractive and conscious efforts should be made to select selfless leaders;
- Improvement in the quality of education. Conscious efforts should be made by government to genuinely restructure the nation's educational system to make the recipient acquire relevant skills and attitudes.
- The government should strengthen the nation's security operatives- the Police, SSS, Customs, Army etc. to make them more responsive to their core mandate of ensuring adequate security in the country; and
- Finally, the government should declare State of emergency on terrorism and terrorist activities in Nigeria.

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