

## Security Challenges in Nigeria and National Transformation

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**Abstract:** *National transformation in Nigeria is advocated for structural development. Usually, structural development leads to changes in all sectors of the economy. However, in most cases structural development can only be possible if the security situation in the country is handled with all seriousness. But in the situation where security issues such as insurgence, theft, kidnapping, abduction, to mention but a few are handled with lukewarm attitude, transformation and structural development will be aborted. This is because when there is security threat in the country, money meant for such developments are often diverted into fighting such threats in the country. Therefore, the paper x-rays the causes of insecurity in Nigeria, the cost and the effects of insecurity and security challenges and national transformation. The paper recommended that strong and good governance, prudent financial management, and legal system devoid of corruption, nepotism and impunity should be embraced in the country if national transformation is to be sustained.*

**Keywords:** *Transformation, security, insurgence, Corruption, Nepotism and impunity*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

After the Nigeria civil war in 1970, security situation in Nigeria has been relatively stable. People had peace and can move freely from one part of the country to another without harassment or molestation. Live was easy going. No problems among different ethnic groups living together. Everybody struggled to make two ends meet. Lives and properties of people were secured because of the alert of security agents like the police, the soldiers and different societal vigilante groups. People feared causing problems because of the wrath of the law. Security in the country was highly maintained. However, the case of insecurity was noticed in Nigeria as far back as the year 2000 in some local governments' areas in the country but the negligence of this evil act by the constituted authority then made it spread to different part of the country. May be the governments then were unable to realize its adverse effect at long run. Recently, their actions have constituted a lot of threat to the entire population and seem to have worsened with high security agents in the country. The question is with the existence of this ugly trend, what then is security in the country?

Security according to Nwagboso, (2012) is the act of being safe from harm or danger, the defense, protection and preservation of values, and the absence of threats to acquired values. Security is about survival and the condition of human existence. Security also exists when people live together in a certain environment without disturbance or violent.

In the same vein, Adejumo (2011), states that security is the act of keeping peace within the governing territories. This is usually done by upholding the national law and defending the internal security threats in different areas of the country.

Accordingly, Adebakin,(2012) also viewed security as freedom from danger or threats, and the ability of a nation to protect and develop itself, promote and cherish values and legitimate interests and enhance the well being of its people. This can be maintained through internal security system. Usually, internal security system in any society is very important because it is use to prevent violence and criminal activities in different societies. Internal security also ensures freedom of people from any criminal disturbances and ensures the absence of criminal tendencies which can undermine internal cohesion and co-operate existence of the nation and its ability to maintain its core values and meet the legitimate aspiration of the people.

In general terms, security is the act of seeing the survival of all and sundry in the society. It is the search to avoid, prevent, reduce, or resolve violence and conflict in any society. Usually, general peace and security in any society is associated with lack of violence, absence of civil disorder and insurgency to mention but a few. However, this study attempts to discuss the causes of insecurity and violence in Nigeria, the cost and effects of insecurity, security challenges in Nigeria and national transformation

## **2. CAUSES OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA**

The cause of insecurity in Nigeria according to Okereke (2012) can be distinguished among the following factors;

### **2.1 Internal Security Disorder**

Usually, internal security rest on the authority of interior minister and defense minister in the federation. They are to initiate and supervise the mode of operation by the police and other security agents in the country to ensure that peace and harmonious living exist in every nooks and crannies of the country. More so, in different states and local government areas of this country, the governors and chairmen as the chief security officers are to maintain and sustain the security situation in their territory. This can be done by making sure that the law enforcement agencies deployed to their areas do their work diligently. However, in most cases, many of these security agents according to Iygeal (2012) sometimes seem to be ignorant of what is happening around them but depend on information from the general public before there action. Sometimes, some of them may hear about violence and criminal activities but for the fear of death may neglect their action resulting to security disorder by some security agents in the country. Usually, this type of security disorder is very disastrous to the security situation in the country.

### **2.2 Poor System of Governance and the Concentration of Political Power to the Center**

In any economy, government activities are expected to agree with norms and aspirations of the people within the area of governance. This is because, for effective administration to take place, government is challenged to focus attention mostly on programmes and policies that have direct bearing on the teaming population. However, more often than not, some political office holders use to neglect their promises during campaign after being elected into power and concentrate on activities that can enriches their pockets. This poor attitude and negligence, often results to anger among people and leads to insecurity in many part of the country (Iygeal 2012). Also, most of the government functions are concentrated at the seat of the government which is usually in the headquarters either of the federal, state or local governments. In this case, high security may be maintained in the center while people living in the hinterland are left with little or no protection.

This according to Nwagboso (2012) can create a lot of security threat to the hinterland.

### **2.3 Weak Judicial System, Injustice, Nepotism and the Culture of Impunity**

According to Fukuyama (2004), some people commit all manner of crimes and get away with it scot- free. For instance, a rich man or some people in high authority can commit a lot of atrocity and get away with it because of nepotism and impunity but ordinary person is punished for a trivial offense. This type of favouritism in Nigeria legal system is detrimental to professionalism of legal practice for better service delivery (Okorie 2011).

### **2.4 Bribery and Corruption**

Bribery and corruption according to Fukuyama (2004) is one of the major problems confronting Nigeria economy. Most people that occupy strategic positions in the administration of this country take advantage of their positions to loot the treasure of the government without query of molestation. In fact, most of them embezzle through inflated contracts to an increasing army of party loyalists who have neither the desire nor the competence to execute their contracts, to over invoicing, consumption of escalating salaries of grossly over-staffed and unproductive public servant and a host of others without queries or harassment. This type of practice have made some elites to believe that justice can be bought or sold in this country depending on one's bargaining power (Nwadiakor (2011

### 2.5 State of Origin/ Indigeneship Syndrome or the “Quota System”

Most Nigerians identify themselves with their tribe or state of origin rather than as a Nigerian anywhere they live or find themselves. Usually, a person born and bred in an area and whose parents and grand-parents are also born in that area but are originally from another place, are still seen as none indigene. Such people may be tolerated in the place but in most cases they may not be entitled to some of the privileges with the ‘owners’ of the land. Also, the quota system syndrome in Nigeria society has generated a lot of problems in employment opportunity and political appointments. This is so because most political appointments and employment opportunities in the country according to Okorie (2011) are based on god fathers and whom you know instead of the so called quota system. From this scenario therefore, the indigeneship and quota system syndrome has a lot of threat in security situation, most especially if there is agitation between indigene and none indigenes on political appointment and employment opportunity in certain area. This can trigger a lot of anger and result to violence and clash in some areas of the country (Okorie 2011).

### 2.6 Wasteful Resources

Iygeal (2012) also states that some individuals in Nigeria are power-brokers and are stronger than the government. They see themselves as untouchables and boast about themselves. Even if contracts are awarded to them in any part of the country, such contracts are paid for without execution. Likewise because of personal aggrandizement, some political office holders award contracts to themselves without execution. This attitude leads to wasteful resources by the government. Sometimes if the government uses force on them to return such money embezzled using law enforcement agents like the Police, Economic & Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) etc, permission and clearance or permission have to be obtained from their so-called godfathers or powerful individual involved (Onouha 2011). Likewise, unscrupulous money-bags and criminals are celebrated because of their wealth without asking how and where the wealth is acquired (Okorie 2011). This behaviour results to a lot of wasteful resources in the country.

### 2.7 Religious Fanatics

Most religious groups in Nigeria both Islamic and Christian religion preaches peace and unity but some religious extremist believe that violence and destruction is the only way to achieve heaven. Good example of this set is Boko Haram insurgency. Current and general state of insecurity in most part of the country today is weighted to different report of Boko Haram (Ezeoha 2011). However, the first serious stage of insecurity in the country was that of Niger Delta crisis, since that was resolved, several acts of bombings and killings in all nook and crannies of the North by some religious extremist, Boko Haram results. Also, the carnage between ethnic Birom and the Hausa/Fulani in Jos, and the political violence that followed immediately after the 2011 Election, mostly in the Northern part of the country, have further cemented the insecure state of the country (Okorie 2011). Starting with the usual religious/ethnic oriented conflicts, to the Jos ethnic/religious/political conflict of 2008, regrettably, the Northern states have shown that security of persons and properties is still far from being secured (Bello (2012). However, one may believe that there are elements of theocratic opinionated ambitions in the current crisis which started in Bauchi and engulfed other states in the North. This is so because the demand by the fundamentalist groups Boko Haram's for the removal of western behavioural pattern may have been masterminded by some unscrupulous elements in the country which is ridiculous to the entire nation.

### 2.8 Political Praise Singers

Political praise singer sometimes aggravate anger on the populace when they see that the praises and encomium poured on some political office holder does not commensurate with the work they do in the society. Thus, such anger could result to violence and destruction of lives and properties in such area (Okorie 2011). Such crises have happened in different part of this country. Usually, the political praise singers are often sponsored by some people in power who used dubious means to gaining power. In this case therefore, the political praise singers use such praises to confuse the populace about the activities of the governance. This attitude is very disastrous to the development of the country because it encourages some people in governance to divert funds

meant for development into private pockets at the expense of human and capital resource development.

## **2.9 Unemployment**

Unemployment situation in Nigeria is worrisome. Most educational institution in the country turns out thousands of graduates every year but there are no institutional arrangements for their employment (Okorie 2011). However, in a bid to survive, many of them are agitated and that results into violent and criminal activities against the society. Such criminal activities include militancy, kidnapping, bombing, armed robbery, destruction of government and private properties, among others. In fact, violent, conflicts, whether social, political or environmental according to Adejumo (2011) have seriously contributed to the crises situation in terms of loss of human lives and material capital. Nigeria in the last four years has experienced the breach of peace in some geopolitical zones of North-Eastern States of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe and Some parts of North-West States of Kaduna, Kano, Jigawa and Zamfara to mention but a few (Suleiman 2012). All these violent and conflicts have contributed to the state of insecurity in the country. There have been losses of lives, livelihoods, destruction of infrastructure and natural resources as a result of violence in so many communities. Employment opportunities which are out of place has weakened social safety and caused a decline in the capacity of the state to provide services to sectors like health, education and indeed security for the people (Onouha (2011).). Likewise, the peace and security and indeed wellbeing of the people have been seriously tampered with. From this scenario therefore, the cost and effect of insecurity in the country can never be underestimated.

## **3. COST OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA**

Insecurity which used to be one of the lowest concerns in the hierarchy of Nigeria's social problems has now assumed an alarming proportion. This is because insecurity is like a sore in a man's lap which if not well treated expands gradually to the man's waist. This may have been the reason while the case of insecurity at present is very difficult to handle thereby costing the government a lot of money. However, the costs of insecurity according to Tella (2012) include the followings:

### **3.1 Loss of Revenue to the Government**

The loss of life and material resources as the result of insecurity since the past few years according to human Rights Watch has been so alarming. From security monitoring agency report, between 2009 and 2012, about 2,800 lives had been lost to militia insurgency (Adejumo 2011), Also, within the first nine months in 2012, 815 people were killed in 275 suspected attacks, and more than 60 police stations were attacked in 10 Northern states, excluding the bomb of the police headquarters in Abuja (Adebakin 2012). The data base of orphans and widows caused by the rampaging sects has grown rapidly. Because of this, Money from some international organization and funds raised locally by the governments, non-governmental agencies, charitable organizations and individuals which are supposed to be channeled to human capital development have been deployed to the rehabilitation of families of the casualties and the renovation of properties destroyed by the insurgences thereby causing a huge loss of revenue to the government (Adejumo (2011), Adebakin 2012). Consequently, the activities of these various militia groups has resulted to low income for government from oil revenue, moderating the Gross Domestic Product growth rate, low participation of local and foreign investors in economic development and insecurity of lives and properties of the citizens.

### **3.2 Loss of Income to Individuals and Groups in the Society**

The activities of insecurity in Nigeria have caused a lot of havoc to individuals and groups in different societies of this country. For instance, every known and then, unspecified millions of naira is being paid as ransom for the release of victims of kidnappers in different parts of the country. Likewise, huge amount of money is lost every day to army robbers and venders in different areas of the country (Bello 2012). This incidence results to huge loss of money and material resource on individuals and groups in the country. It also has negative implication to national development.

### **3.3 Increase in Budget Allocation**

Budget allocation to fight insecurity in Nigeria has been on increase over the years. Hence, there is percentage increase of annual budget allocated to different security agencies on yearly basis. Here, infrastructure and human capital development are almost forgotten while; capital expenditure is almost the least. Budget allocation to fight insurgency according to Igbuzor (2011) has increased tremendously while a lot of money has been sorted for from the western world to fight of insurgency in the country. Usually, this type of deadweight debt has negative effect on the economy.

## **4. THE EFFECT OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA**

Insecurity in any economy is very devastating and always disastrous. The effects according to Babangida, (2012) include the followings:

### **4.1 Close Down and Low Operation of Existing Companies**

Some of the companies operating in Nigeria especially the foreign companies have closed down and moved to their countries and other West African countries. While the existing ones are operating at low capacity rate thereby leading to retrenchment of employed youths under their pay role. This according to Babangida, (2012) has further compounded the problem of unemployment among the youth in the country which may gloomy to further violence. This scenario has not only deepened the existing unemployment rate in the country but has also increased the rate of poverty.

### **4.2 Close Down and Reduction of Admission to Educational Institutions in Some Part of the Country**

Education institutions which are seen as pivot of national development has turn down to be a place of fears and threats in many part of the country. Most educational institutions especially in the Northern part of the country have been closed down for the fears of Boko Haram ,while some universities in the country especially university of Maiduguri has reduced its admission policy because of the fears of the insurgency (Bello 2012). University education according to (Onouha(2011) is a pace setter for human resource development but insecurity has led to depreciating value of education in many part of the country. Usually, security threat many result to close down of many educational institutions or some operating at low capacity thereby reducing the production of human resource needed for structural development in the country..

### **4.3 Reduction of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Members to Some Part of the Country.**

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Programme meant to familiarize fresh graduates to service in the nation and as an act of socialization in different part of the country has turn out to be a thing of fear and threat. A lot of students according to Adebakin (2012) 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. Thus, the number of National Youth Corps members being posted to Northern part of the country have over the years reduced drastically because of the fear of insurgency Adejumo (2012).This action has negative effect as regards the aim and objective of National Youth Service Corps in the country and hence, national development.

### **4.4 Reduction of Direct Foreign Investment in Tourism**

The growth of foreign direct investment in tourism sector which use to be one of the major source of revenue to the government has drastically reduced. Some immigration departments of countries in Europe and America have issued warnings to their citizens who wish to visit Nigeria to be aware of the security problem in the country (Adejumo 2011). The issue does not only affect foreign direct investment in the country, but also business confidence as many foreign and domestic companies may have lost confidence in establishing businesses in the country.

### **4.5 It Discourages Entrepreneurial Development in Many Part of the Country**

So many entrepreneurs especially the non- indigenes of the North have vertically vacated their businesses in fear of insurgency in some Northern part of the country to different cities and towns in Nigeria. Likewise it has been reported that many business men and women have equality left

the areas in fear of the threat and violence to their places of abode (Igbuzor 2011). This type mass movement has negative implications on entrepreneurial development in the country.

#### **4.6 Loss of the Respect of Nigeria in the Eyes of the International Community**

Due to insecurity and violence in the country, the respect and prestige of Nigerians' in the eyes of international community may have probably been damped. This is because many countries may look at Nigeria and Nigerian as rebellious criminals and may disassociate themselves from them in terms of bilateral relations and business partners in fear of dupe. Its continuity may also have negative affect all the indices of development and the quest for millennium development goal, and vision 2020 may turn out to be a mirage Tella (2012).

Having identified the causes, cost and effects of insecurity in national transformation, it is pertinent to note that security issues in the country are the bedrock through which national transformation revolves. This is because transformation or structural changes can only occur in the country if the country is peaceful and law abiding. For this to happen, the collaborative efforts of those in governance have to be properly justified. For instance, peace and unity brings about harmonious existence between the three arms of government, i.e. the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. Likewise, such peace and unity can be extended to all parts of the country through proper functioning of the security agents which in turn can resolve security challenges in the country and enhance national transformation.

### **5. SECURITY CHALLENGES AND NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION**

Nigeria economy is faced with many challenges as a result of political crises, economic degradation, unemployment, poverty, insecurity, corruption, wasteful culture and indiscipline. It is believed that the only way these challenges can be tackled is through proper security functioning in the country, which in turn can enhance national transformation. National transformation according to Okorie (2011) is a unidirectional and irreversible change in dominant human economic activities. It is a multifaceted and multidimensional change affecting every component of the individuals and groups in the society.

In the same vein, Bello (2012) stated that national transformation is a change in any economic activity. It is the act of transforming or the state of being transformed. Transformation involves various developmental strategies aimed at causing complete or radical change in the life of individual, organization, community or the nation. Transformation is a complete change in somebody or something.

Likewise, Okorie (2012) opines that national transformation is a complete change in social, economic, and political condition of a nation that can be used to improve human condition in any society. This implies that national transformation addresses all aspect of economic limits, such as political, economic, social and environmental issues.

Following the above assertions therefore, national transformation is necessitated by the need of a nation to correct the flaws in the country's drive for development especially where there is absence of long –term perspective, consistency and commitment to agreed policies (Adejumo 2011). It has been envisaged that the culminating effect of these flaws has been growth and development without a harmonious improvement in the overall welfare of the citizens. However, for this country to be effectively transformed, strong and good administrative structure has to be instituted in all elements of the economy. Such administrative structures according to Nwadiolor (2011) include the followings:

#### **5.1 Strong and Good Governance.**

National transformation is possible in Nigeria when individuals and human leaders are transformed from their wrong culture off doing things. This can be achieved when individual and group are branded and are decisive in tackling the developmental challenges in the economy. Such developmental challenges according to Suleiman (2012) include poverty, unemployment, and prudent management of public funds, insecurity, and deplorable state of infrastructure. Strong and good governance will be able to make amend and bring the economy into the apex of development. Usually, good and strong administration occurs when all the administrative organs of the government are focused on the programmes and policies of the government and make sure

that all the irregularities in the economy are tackled without prejudices. However, critical policy of governance will be able to maximize the benefits citizens drive through effective and efficient use of public resources, prudent financial management and fiscal discipline. To attain this goal, the economy is expected to be peaceful and lawful since this will bring happiness and fulfillment to the citizens (Adejumo 2011),

### 5.2 Justice and Judiciary

The judiciary as a powerful organ of government is supposed to oversee prosecution and improve on professionalism in legal practice for better service delivery. This can be achieved if there is strong and good governance. The judiciary according to Nwadiakor (2011) is meant to achieve greater independence in terms of efficient service delivery by eliminating all forms of prejudice and corrupt practices in the administration of the country. This occurs when there is collaboration effort between the judiciary and law enforcement agencies in making sure that there is peace and harmonious existence of people and property in the country.

### 5.3 The Legislatures

The legislatures are to be proactive in their legislative duties and independent with executive and the judicial arms of government. Their policy focus is expected to create a dynamic and constitutionally effective public responsive legislature that will enhance and promote greater transparency and accountability in the use of public funds, promotion of greater public interest in the scrutiny of legislative actions, and inform public debate on any crucial issues that affect the citizens (Suleiman (2012).

Following the above discussions, it is important to note that nothing is wrong with Nigeria as a nation, but the problem is Nigerians and its culture of governance. However, if people and its culture of governance are branded and reformed it will imbibe in them the spirit of sportsmanship and decisive action in tackling security challenges for effective national transformation. In furtherance to the above discourse, the following recommendations are proffered.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Firstly, political system of government that gives more power to the federating units rather than concentrating power to the centre should be embraced in the country. This is because the system of government which we call federation and claim to practice in the country is diluted and adulterated. Corruption seems to over shadow federalism which if not properly handled may result to more disorder in the country.

Secondly, our judiciary system in the country needs to be strengthened to ensure that justices are dispensed no matter the persons involved. Nepotism and culture of impunity which characterize Nigeria government should be jettisoned in our political history. Nigerians should be ruled as egalitarian society instead of two set of rules i.e. one for the rich and the other for the poor. Anybody who commits an offense must face the wrath of the law no matter the hierarchy or position in the society. This if properly entrenched into Nigeria politics will ensure proper accountability in governance.

Thirdly, Political praise singers must be abolished in the culture of our politics. This will accord the political office holder the opportunity of facing the work they were elected to do instead individual aggrandizement. In this case, any political office holder who involved him or herself in this practice should be impeached or prosecuted in the court of law. This if applied in our political system will make the political office holders to seat up and face the target of which they elected for. Political praise sings are very dangerous to the political system because they often divert the attentions of people from dubious acts of governance.

Fourthly, concerted efforts should be made toward eliminating corruption and corrupt practices in the country. Accountability should be the watch dog of Nigeria government. Likewise, the Economic and Financial Crime commission EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) should be made autonomous and should be devoured of interference or intervention by any high ranking officer or money bags or god fathers in the Federation. Anybody who commits an offense should be prosecuted according to the law.

Sixthly, the political institution in Nigeria needs to be strengthened and encouraged. The issue of rigging election to come into power must be stopped instead, the election system should be geared towards making sure that fair and free elections are always conducted. This will ensure the election of patriotic and scrupulous individuals into key positions in the country.

Seventhly, unemployment which has become a conundrum in Nigeria's economy must be seriously tackled and curtailed. The private sectors should be encouraged and supported by government to create job opportunities for the teeming population especially the youths in the country. Government should also ensure constant supply of electricity which in turn enhances employment opportunities and increases productivity.

Lastly, there is the need for collective security arrangement by the federal, state and local governments in Nigeria. This arrangement should produce a committee at federal, state, local, village, and community levels, and be charged with the responsibility of providing sensitive security information for security agencies at their areas of operation. This will ultimately assist in identifying criminals, their sponsors and hideouts in the country. Also, the Federal Government (FG) should identify and tackle the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria, such as poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, infrastructural decay, uneven development, among others and reorganize the country's intelligence system and build a capable and more proactive security apparatus to man them. This will add more values in checking incessant bombings, robbery, kidnapping and violence, crimes/crises by hoodlums and others. More importantly, Our Police and other security agencies have to be well-equipped and trained and re-trained to tackle present day security challenges.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

In this present state of insecurity, Nigeria needs good governance to achieve its desired objective. Usually, Good governance exists when people who are put in positions of authority are allowed and are committed to discharge their duties without fear or favour. This is when they are prepared to serve with zeal and patriotism. In all, since Nigeria is made of thirty six states and federal capital territory, with each state having its Governor, each state should also be able to control its Security agents while the federal government controls the machinery of their operation. This if properly coordinated and controlled will definitely enhance proper security in the country and give room for advancement and development in the country.

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