



Insecurity and Human Development in Nigeria: The Role of Government Policies and Interventions

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Abstract

Insecurity in Nigeria has been a persistent challenge that hampers the country's progress towards sustainable human development. Despite the implementation of various policies and interventions by the government, such as the National Security Strategy and the Safe Schools Initiative, insecurity remains a significant issue due to root causes like poverty, corruption and unemployment. The study aimed at examining the effects of insecurity on human development and the impacts of government policies and intervention in Nigeria. The study adopted the social exchange theoretical framework. It also applied a combination of content analysis and secondary methods of data collection. The study found that, to effectively address insecurity and promote human development, there is need for increased political will, transparency, accountability, and collaboration among security agencies. The study recommended that government should implement targeted interventions to address the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria.

Keywords: Human development, governance policies, insecurity, intervention, add one more

Introduction

Insecurity has become a widespread issue impacting societies worldwide, resulting in significant challenges, including the proliferation of arms. The spread of arms has intensified the effects of insecurity, leading to increased violence and instability in numerous regions including Nigeria. In Nigeria, insecurity has been a persistent issue affecting human development. The country faces numerous security challenges, including terrorism, banditry, and communal conflicts, often fueled by the availability of arms (Onuoha, 2020). Insecurity is a multifaceted concept that has been defined in various ways by scholars and institutions. It encompasses a state of vulnerability and uncertainty, often marked by a lack of safety and protection.

Nigeria has witnessed the effects of insecurity in various ways especially the attacks on police formations, army barracks, schools, churches, mosques, markets, social gathering and farm from the hand of the deadly monster called Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen and their attack on communities has continue with impunity and Nigeria government seem helpless. The other groups are Oodua People's Congress (OPC), Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Niger Delta militants, Fulani herdsmen and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

Statement of the Problem

Insecurity has become a major issue in human development, in most developed nations in the world like Nigeria. The ongoing battle with Boko Haram, which has claimed several lives, and the growing prevalence of kidnapping are just some examples of the concerns plaguing the nation. According to Howells (2019), insecurity limits economic growth and development in most developed nations. A secure environment is essential for businesses to thrive and for individuals to engage in economic activities without fear. However, in countries where there is a high level of insecurity, businesses are unable to operate at full capacity, which leads to a decrease in productivity and economic growth.

This is evident in nations like Nigeria, where the constant threat of terrorism and kidnapping has deterred foreign investors and hindered economic progress. Thus, insecurity is a continuous threat in the society especially its effect on human development and no empirical studies have been established in Nigeria on how government policies and interventions can alleviate the condition of the people. It is against this backdrop, that this study focused on the role of government policies and interventions in promoting sustainable human development in Nigeria. The **main aim** of the study is to examine the effects of insecurity on human development and the impacts of government policies and intervention in Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

The concept of insecurity and its impacts on human development in Nigeria

Insecurity is a major challenge that affects human development in various aspects including economic, political, social, and psychological well-being. In Nigeria, insecurity has been a persistent issue that has hindered the country's progress in achieving sustainable human development. Insecurity in Nigeria has been attributed to a range of factors including poverty, corruption, political instability, ethnic and religious conflicts, and inadequate law

enforcement. Oftentimes, these factors intersect and exacerbate insecurity in the country. According to Ope-Davies *et al* (2018), the root of insecurity in Nigeria can be traced back to the colonial era when Europeans used divide and rule tactics to maintained control over the country, creating deep-seated ethnic and religious tensions that have persisted till today. In this paper, insecurity is conceived as a situation where human and national security of a state or nation is affected by internal or external forces or interests exacerbated by the formers' weak institution, military and/or human resource development conditions.

The relationship between security and development has also been a key focus of scholarly inquiry. Duffield (2021) argued that security and development are inextricably linked, with underdevelopment often leading to insecurity and vice versa. Development in this study is seen as the process of change and growth over time. It also refers to different aspects in different contexts, including economic, social, psychological, and physical changes. While there are various definitions of development, the focus on human development has gaining more attention from scholars in recent years. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2022), human development is about creating an environment where people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative, and fulfilling lives. or achieving specific goals, but also about creating opportunities for individuals to pursue their own goals and aspirations.

Nigeria is currently engulfed in a plethora of civil unrest and serious situation of insecurities including but not limited to the following dimensions. In their own various ways, each dimensions or patterns of insecurity poses different risk to the well-being of citizen in the country (Table 1). The dimensions and patterns listed in Table 1 are inexhaustible as there are other dimensions of insecurity in the country.

Table 1: Dimension, patterns and manifestations of insecurity in Nigeria.

	Dimensions/Patterns of Insecurity	Manifestations
1	Kidnapping	Hostage taking, kidnapping of school children and passengers on our various roads. As a result of kidnapping, parents are afraid to send their children to school.
2	Herdsmen and Farmers clash	Attack, killing of farmers and the destruction of their crops. As a results farmer no longer go to farm due to the fear of been attack by herdsmen.
3	Secessionist agitation for self-determination /resource control	Secessionist agitations arises as a result of the Nigerian state's fragility, with reference to perceived marginalisation, injustice, exclusivist policies of government and the unequal distribution of national resources. Some of these groups includes MEND, Niger Delta Liberation Front and Oduduwa Republic agitators, IPOB and MASSOB etc.
4	Banditry/Armed robbery	Banditry and armed robbery are the actual or threatened use of arms, that is, any instrument of force/coercion/violence, to dispossess people of their material belonging. Its manifestation includes, rape, burning and destruction of houses, murder and exploitation of environmental resources.

	Dimensions/Patterns of Insecurity	Manifestations
5	Militancy	Its manifestations include, economic sabotage in the form of pipeline vandalism, piracy, illegal bunkering, oil theft, kidnapping of mostly expatriates for ransom, targeted attacks on government facilities.

Authors Compilation, 2024.

Impacts of Insecurity on Human Development in Nigeria:

The effects of insecurity on human development are in different ways. They include the following;

a. Effects on Infrastructural Development:

Infrastructures in any society are regarded to be facilities and services that are necessary for a society's fundamental functions. They include the production of electricity, gas, and oil; telecommunications; water supply; hospitals; and transportation networks (such as railroads, airports, etc.). They could also include the provision of banking and other financial services as well as services related to human development. Despite the huge infrastructural deficit in the country, the Federal Government has continued to spend more on security and debt service due to the high rate of insecurity in the country. In the year 2023, the Federal Government budgeted N2.98tn for defence and security while only N1.24tn was allocated for infrastructure. This shows that 13.4 percent of the entire N21.83 budget is to tackle insecurity and 5.7 per cent was for infrastructure (punch, April, 2023).

b. Effects on the Environment:

The activities of Armed militants in the Niger Delta and Banditry in the Northern region have significant impact on the security of the citizens. In Niger Delta for instance, militants' activities have caused serious environmental degradation and pollution due to attacks on oil facilities and illegal oil bunkering (Oxford Research Group, 2017). This has negatively affected agriculture, fishing, and other livelihoods, exacerbating poverty and contributing to social unrest in the region. Banditry, particularly in the Northwest and North-Central regions, has led to a rise in kidnappings, armed robberies, and attacks on communities (BBC News, 2021).

c. Effects on educational development:

Insecurity in the country has affected our education system. According to Adegbalet al (2018), he stated that insecurity has negatively affected educational development and access to basic services, resulting in lower human development indicators in these areas. Insecurity also has a significant impact on the economic development of Nigeria. The constant threat of violence and instability has created an unfavorable business environment, hindering investment and economic growth (Adeola, 2019). Schools in Nigeria have come under serious attacks by insurgents, kidnappers and Headers who have weakened the security architecture of the country for over a decade (Table 2).

Table 2. Challenges to educational development in Nigeria 2019 - 2024

Year	School/Institution	Location/State	Nature of Incident	Victims	Outcome	Source
2019	Government Secondary School, Kente	Taraba State	Communal clash	2 school children killed	School building were destroyed and students displaced	Daily Trust, 2019
2020	Government Secondary School	Katsina State	Abduction	344 students abducted	School closed down	Guardian, 2020
2020	Dandume Secondary School	Katsina State	Abduction	80 school children abducted	School closed down	BBC, 2020
2021	Government Secondary School, Kangara	Niger State	Abduction	42 school children abducted	School closed down	Guardian Newspaper, 2021
2021	Government Science Secondary School, Jangbe	Zamfara State	Abduction of pupils	317 school children abducted	School closed down	BBC, 2021
2022	College of Forestry Mechanization, Igabi	Kaduna State	Abduction	39 students abducted	School closed down	BBS, 2022
2022	Nigeria Defence Academy, Zaria	Kaduna State	Abduction	Two military officers killed, one abducted	Security was tightened around the school	Punch Newspaper, 2022
2023	Imo State University	Imo state	kidnapping	19 students kidnapped and 3 injured	Panic, suspension of classes	Blueprint Newspaper, 2023
2024	Rivers State University (UST)	Rivers State	Attack on student	2 students brutalized and injured	School closed down while protest continued	Sun Newspaper, 2024

Source: Authors compilation, 2024.

Government policies and interventions to address insecurity in Nigeria

The Nigerian government has implemented various policies and interventions to address insecurity in the country, they include:

a. National Security Strategy (NSS):

The National Security Strategy (NSS) is a comprehensive document that outlines the policies and interventions of the Nigerian government in addressing insecurity in the country. It serves

as a blueprint for national security and guides the actions of government agencies and security forces in maintaining peace and stability. scholars have analyzed the role of NSS and its impact on the prevention of insecurity in Nigeria. In the view of Ochiagha *et al* (2019), the NSS serves as a guide for key decision-makers in implementing proactive measures to prevent insecurity in Nigeria. This strategy emphasizes the need for intelligence gathering, collaboration between security agencies, and the use of technology in addressing security challenges. The authors argue that the implementation of the NSS has led to a decline in the number of terrorist attacks in the country. In 2019, there was a 50% decrease in terrorist attacks compared to the previous year (Global Terrorism Index, 2020). This shows the positive impact of the NSS in reducing insecurity especially kidnapping and other heinous crime in Nigeria.

b. The National Counterterrorism Strategy (NACTEST):

The National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) was first established in 2013 by the Nigerian government as a policy framework to combat terrorism and other related security challenges in the country. According to Adibe et al (2019), the strategy is centered on four key pillars: prevention, protection, mitigation, and resolution. One of the key interventions of NACTEST is the establishment of the Joint Task Force (JTF) in the Northeast region of Nigeria, which has been mostly affected by terrorist activities. The JTF is a combination of military and law enforcement agencies and local vigilante groups working together to combat insurgency and terrorism in the region. According to Onuh (2016), the JTF has been successful in carrying out various operations that have resulted in the arrest of terrorist leaders and the disruption of their activities.

c. Safe Schools Initiative:

The Safe Schools Initiative (SSI) was established in 2013 as a response to the alarming rate of attacks on schools by the terrorist group Boko Haram. It is a government policy and intervention aimed at ensuring the safety and security of schools, students, and teachers in conflict-affected areas in Nigeria. The initiative is a collaboration between the Nigerian government, the private sector, and international partners, with the primary goal of creating a conducive and safe learning environment for children. The SSI has implemented various measures to achieve its objective, including providing armed police protection for schools, training teachers on emergency preparedness and response, and constructing safe learning spaces. According to the UN, the initiative has reached over 26,000 children and trained more than 4,500 teachers since its inception.

Theoretical Framework/Methodology

The study adopted the social exchange **theory** propounded by George Homans in 1958 as its theoretical framework. The Social Exchange Theory is relevant to this study because it explains the underlying reasons behind the prevalence of insecurity and how it has impacted on human development in Nigeria.

The country has been plagued by various forms of insecurity such as terrorism, armed robbery, kidnapping, and communal clashes which has led to loss of lives and properties. These forms of insecurity have also led to displacement of people, and disruption of economic

activities. According to the Social Exchange Theory, people engage in these criminal activities because they expect to gain something of value in return. For instance, terrorists may engage in attacks and kidnappers may abduct people with the expectation of monetary rewards. This theory helps to understand the motivation behind the actions of these individuals, and in turn, enables policymakers and security agencies to develop effective strategies to combat insecurity in the country. The desktop or secondary sources of data collection was adopted. The secondary method includes government gazettes, technical textbooks, specialized journals and the internet.

Results and Discussion

1. Effectiveness of the various policies and interventions in mitigating the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria

There has been improvement in reducing insecurity in certain areas, but has not been fully effective in addressing the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria. This study has identified some of the root causes of insecurity to include the following;

(a) Poverty:

One of the main reasons why these policies and interventions have not been fully effective in addressing the root causes of insecurity is the high rate of poverty and unemployment in the country. According to the World Bank, Nigeria has one of the highest poverty rates in the world, with about 40% of its population living below the poverty line (World Bank, 2021). Poverty is closely linked to criminal activities as individuals and groups turn to illegal means to survive and meet their basic needs. Despite efforts by the government to reduce poverty through poverty eradication and empowerment programs, the impact has been limited due to corruption and mismanagement of resources (Mbachu & Odoh, 2015).

(b) Unemployment:

Unemployment, especially among the youth, is another major contributor to insecurity in Nigeria. The lack of job opportunities has led many young people to turn to criminal activities, including armed robbery, kidnapping, and cybercrime, as a means of survival. The Nigerian government has implemented various programs and initiatives to address unemployment, such as the National Social Investment Program and the Central Bank of Nigeria's Youth Entrepreneurship Development Program. However, a lack of proper implementation and sustainability has hampered the effectiveness of these programs.

(c) Political instability:

Political instability is another significant factor contributing to insecurity in Nigeria. The country has a long history of political unrest and violence, including electoral violence and conflicts between different ethnic and religious groups. These conflicts have been fueled by corruption, inadequate governance, and weak institutional structures (Obadare, 2017). The lack of a stable political environment has made it challenging to effectively implement policies and interventions aimed at addressing insecurity.

2. Challenges in the implementation of these policies and interventions, and how they can address or promote human development in Nigeria

Corruption: One of the major challenges in the implementation of government policies and interventions to address insecurity in Nigeria is corruption. According to (Mbachu and Odoh (2015), corruption is pervasive in all levels of government, and this has affected the successful implementation of security initiatives and programs. Corrupt practices, such as embezzlement of funds meant for security agencies and procurement of substandard equipment, have weakened the capacity of security forces to combat insecurity effectively.

(a) **Inadequate Funding:** Inadequate has also been a significant hindrance to the successful implementation of government policies and interventions to address insecurity in Nigeria. According to Seyi (2019), there is a significant gap between the required budget for security agencies and the amount actually allocated to them. This insufficient funding has led to a lack of equipment and resources, low morale among security personnel, and inadequate training, all of which have contributed to the persistence of insecurity in the country. Furthermore, inadequate funding has also resulted in delays in implementing programs and initiatives, reducing their effectiveness and impact.

(b) **Weak Institutions of Government:** Weak institutions and structures have also hindered the successful implementation of policies and interventions to address insecurity in Nigeria. According to Mbachu et al (2015), there is a lack of coordination and collaboration among different agencies responsible for security, leading to duplication of efforts and inefficiency. This weak institutional structure has also made it challenging to hold those accountable for security failures, resulting in a lack of transparency and accountability in the security sector.

Conclusion

Insecurity has been a persistent issue in Nigeria that has hindered the country's progress towards achieving sustainable human development. The government has implemented various policies and interventions to address this pressing issue, including the National Security Strategy (NSS), the National Counterterrorism Strategy (NACTEST), and the Safe Schools Initiative, among others. These policies and interventions have had some impact in reducing insecurity, but they have not fully tackled the root causes of insecurity in the country, such as poverty, unemployment, and political instability. The effectiveness of these policies and interventions has also been hindered by challenges such as corruption, inadequate funding, and weak institutional structures. In order to address these challenges and promote human development in Nigeria, there is a need for stronger political will and commitment from the government to effectively implement these policies and interventions.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are drawn from the engagements thus;

1. Government policies should prioritize addressing food insecurity through improved access to nutritious food and social safety nets to ensure the well-being of vulnerable populations.

2. Interventions should focus on improving access to education and healthcare services for marginalized populations, particularly in rural areas, to promote human development and reduce poverty.
3. Government should implement targeted interventions to address the root causes of insecurity, such as unemployment and underemployment, to create sustainable economic opportunities for all citizens.

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