



Insecurity, Poverty and Development Challenges in Nigeria

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Abstract

Worldwide, insecurity poses a big challenge to developed and developing nations, ironically, in the twenty first century; but developing nations has poverty to contend with in addition to insecurity. This paper examines insecurity and poverty challenges and implications on economic growth of Nigeria. The study was designed as ex-post factor research, using time series data sourced from official and government publications; spanning from 1999 to 2023 (4th Republic). The variables used for the study were sourced after adequate considerations of extant literature and objectives of the study. (Government expenditure on defense, education, health and inflow of foreign direct investment were the independent variables while Economic Growth is used as proxy for GDP - dependent variable). Among the findings are that insecurity/poverty has the potential of social dislocation, displacement of businesses, stagnation of business activities, and significant influence on Economic Growth and Economic Development of Nigeria; and concluded that national insecurity/poverty eradication must be of high consideration as business activities thrive in a secure environment, which ultimately ensures sustainable economic growth and development. We therefore recommend effective measures to be taken by the federal government to deescalate insecurity by first purging the armed forces of the so called repented Boko Haram members that were absorbed into our military. There is no point playing the Ostrich; since there were proven cases of insider leakage of planned military operations against Boko Haram. A synthesis of composite security management approach model and two-way approach model in addressing the ills of insecurity in ensuring Nigeria economic sustainability is equally recommended.

Keywords: Insecurity, Poverty, De-escalation, Annihilation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Sixty three (63) years after Nigerian independence, she is still very weak economically. Back through 1960s to early 1980s, Nigerian economy comparatively could be described as “golden age”. Despite military coups, security of life and property which is the primary function of any government were secured. Nowadays, the rising wave of insecurity has assumed a dangerous dimension which is threatening the corporate existence of the country and the ravaging plague of poverty has continued to stunt the ability of its people to develop and improve their living condition (Abga, Mogaji and Gambo 2023). Nigeria has all it takes to develop one of the greatest economies of the world yet the unpleasant development indicators have led to Nigeria being rated as one of the world poorest countries (World Bank). Consequently, the World Bank has classified Nigeria as a paradox, rich country poor people. The big question is, where did we get it wrong?

In 1953, the precursor for insecurity in Nigeria was born; the first major ethno-religious chauvinism swept through Kano, where Muslem youths of northern extraction attacked and killed Igbos leaving in Kano on religious grounds. This heinous and many more ethnic religious crimes were treated with kiddy’s glove and perpetrators were not prosecuted and punished accordingly, hence the emergence of these sects: Maitatsine, Sarasuka, Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna lidda awati Wal-Jihad (also known as Boko Haram), Mite Allah, both in the north and the likes (Dantala 2014); Niger Delta Avengers in the South South and latter Eastern Security Network (ESN) in the East. As we discuss, Boko Haram has metamorphosed into more deadly and sophisticated force that has captured a large part of Northern Nigerian territory hoisting their flag (Maina, Magaji and Gambo 2023). Displacing farmers from their farm lands, driving away fishermen from Lake Chad; thereby creating artificial food scarcity and serious insecurity challenges.

Over the past decades Nigeria has witnessed unprecedented security challenges occasioned by the activities of ethno-religious chauvinism, Fulani Herdsmen colonization of indigenes farmland and kidnapping - in the northern region, kidnapping and resource control agitation, by the militants in the southern region of the country; political assignation, ritual killings in the western region, these social menaces imping's on the security of lives and property of both Nigerians, foreigners and prospective investors (Maina et al, 2023; Gbolahan 2023). The notion that poverty breeds insecurity has been a contentious issue within academic arena. Some scholars believed that there is a direct link between poverty and insecurity (Maina et al 2023). Whereas, others argued that 'insecurity' is caused by other factors. Empirical evidence suggests that poverty and inequality breed conflict, ill-feelings and insecurity. However, large numbers of critics and academic prowess have been committed to disproving the notion that poverty has a direct impact on insecurity in the world (Abga, Magaji and Gambo 2023; Kanbur 2007). Therefore in response to the apparent gap in literature; this paper seek to add to knowledge from Nigerian perspective by bridging the established gap in knowledge.

The protagonists argued that poverty has no correlation with conflict, however, felt such factors such as ethnicity, religion, political instability and resource control are important causes of insecurity (Ajodo-Adebanjoko 2014; Collier 2000 and Kufour 2012). What is the cause of insecurity in developing nations and Nigeria in particular? Is it ethnicity, resource control agitation, religious intolerance or bad governance? Insecurity is a state of being subjected to danger or threat. Most scholarly articles on insecurity in the Cold-War era focused on the traditional approach to security which is state-centric. Insecurity was therefore conceived as threats to the state and the need to defend the state from such threats which accounted for the race for arms and nuclear weapons. The survival of the state as an entity instead of that of individuals was usually the pre-occupation. The security landscape has however changed and in the post-Cold War era scholars now place emphasis on the security of the individual. Security issues therefore include those of a political, strategic, economic, social, or ecological nature. Scholars however are divided on the relationship between poverty and insecurity. While one group believes that poverty is both a cause and consequence of insecurity, another group believes poverty causes insecurity, while yet a third group thinks that poverty is the result of conflicts.

The inception of insecurity/crisis in Nigeria dates back to the pre-colonial era. As most of the crisis that the country is experiencing have their origin from that period; particularly the sweeping of these ethno religious crises under the carpet at that time and many more deadly riots remain the main factor for the emergence of more sophisticated armed group like Boko Haram which have captured, seized and hoisted their flag in a large area of Northern part of Nigeria; displacing farmers from their farmlands from both Northern and Southern Regions and fishermen from the Lake Chad region. Thereby creating artificial food scarcity and hunger.

Ewetan & Urhie (2014) adds that the importation of large quantities of arms into the country for the use of the military during and after the Nigerian civil war, some of which got into the hand of the civilians also contributed to the insecurity in the country. Poverty could be one of the courses of insecurity in Nigeria but ethno religious crises and ethnic chauvinism from history remain the major factor. Security experts in Nigeria are of the opinion that Boko Haram atrocities are not the manifestation of increased poverty in the North but an Islamic terror group having the agenda of Islamising Nigeria. The gruesome murder of CAN Chairman (Reverend Lawan Andimi) in Michika Local Government, Adamawa State and the killing of fifty (50) Christian worshippers at St Francis Xavier Catholic Church, in Owo - Ondo State on Pentecost Sunday buttresses this fact (Ngwoke and Akabike 2022). Poverty is generally widespread in Nigeria; a situation where millions of youths are jobless is an invitation to strange religious doctrines like Boko Haram, Sarasuka, and their likes (idle brain, it is said is the devils workshop). The youths have to be in school, and the young adults among them have to be in factories working (Babalobi, 2011). The multiplier effects of these are felt everywhere in the economy. According to Obi (2015) the causes of insecurity in Nigeria include selfishness, greed, injustice, do-or-die politics (money politics), love for money, wealth, treasury looting, revolt, repression, immorality and ignorance. Consequently, Nigerian national security threat increased phenomenally which prompted increase in National budget allocation on security and criminalization of terrorism by passing Anti-Terrorism Act in 2011 (Ndubisi, Mgbatogu and Nzewi 2022). Despite government effort at ensuring security in Nigeria, the level of insecurity in the country did not improve as Nigeria has consistently ranked low in the Global Peace Index (GPI). The 2023 GPI ranking placed Nigeria at the 144th position out of 163 most peaceful nations. This no doubt buttresses worsening insecurity situation in Nigeria.

The increase spending on security is being neutralized by Boko Haram infiltration in the Nigerian armed forces – therefore the increase in security allocation and the passing of anti-terrorism act in 2011 has no effect on insecurity in Nigeria. Worsening insecurity is evidenced in unabated attack by Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen at will in any part of the country, even as we discuss; amorphous kidnapping, armed robbery and banditry, among others, is witnessed at people's homes, schools, churches, business places, marketplaces, the police stations where people usually run to for safety and even the government house. In one of the recent cases of insecurity, armed men alleged to be robbers broke into the homes of two key advisers to President Muhammadu Buhari in the perimeter of the presidential villa (Agbakwuru 2021). This incident of robbers' invasion compelled Ibrahim

Gambari, the chief of staff to the Nigerian president, and Abubakar Maikano, an admin officer, to flee from their residences in the presidential villa. This shows that no place is safe from insecurity attacks in Nigeria. The insecurity challenge in Nigeria in the past 3 years has assumed more threatening dimensions with the current increasing state where kidnapping has become the order of the day. At the same time, the lives of innocent citizens, foreigners and even members of the nation's security personnel are destroyed daily (the killing of 25 soldiers in Niger State in August 2023 and 17 soldiers including a colonel in Delta State in March 2024; the kidnapping of 276 Chibok girls in 2014; kidnapping of 287 primary and secondary school children in Kuriga LG march 2024). According to the report released by Skill-Based Morgen (SBM) Intelligence, 10,366 people in Nigeria lost their lives to insecurity in 2021 (Daka, Akubo and Agboluaje 2022). This report shows a worsening state of insecurity in Nigeria when compared with the statistics of the death rate of 2,000 lives from insecurity in 2018, as recorded by the Global Terrorism Index (2019). Their report further shows that Nigeria rose from 36th to 3rd place in the terrorism index during the period 2002–2018. The insecurity situation has also led to the destruction of individual and government-owned property, as citizens' businesses and government institutions are burnt down daily.

Conceptual Analysis of Insecurity

Scholars conceptualized security to mean absence of threats to peace, stability, national cohesion, political and socio-economic objectives of a country (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013; Olabanji and Ese, 2014). Other scholars (Omede, 2012; Ali, 2013; Achumba and Akpor, 2013) suggested that security is an ongoing state involving ability of the state to combat threat on its core values and interests. Insecurity on the other hand, means different things to different people; including: danger, hazard, and uncertainty, lack of protection and lack of safety (Okonkwo, Ndubisi and Anigbogu 2015). All these terms have been used to explain insecurity, which ultimately refer insecurity to mean a vulnerable state of harm and loss of life, property and livelihood. Hence insecurity is a state of fear stemming from absence of protection from attack or threat or lack of freedom from danger - these of course are physical insecurity.

Conceptual Analysis of Poverty

The concept of poverty has been defined by different authors from different perspective, but there is no universally accepted definition of poverty. Generally, poverty is viewed as a state of being poor. In the pre-industrial era the popular notion of poverty was that it was 'God given' while with time it was viewed as a product of an individual's inaction, laziness, lack of intelligence (Giddens 1981; Malumfashi 2008); poverty could also be seen as a situation of insufficient income for procuring basic goods and services. Poverty is a failure of functioning of education, health and life expectancy World Bank (2020; 1996). Poverty constitutes a danger to prosperity all over the world with its causes ranging from lack of resources, an extremely unequal income distribution, to conflict among others. Defining poverty remains a problematic term and the debate relating to what it constitutes, how it is measured and how it is to be tackled, rages on. In the first place, the difficulty in defining poverty arises from the fact that different poverty definitions span different spheres of concerns which may not all be easily measured. Secondly, there is the issue of the universality of the definition of poverty. Definitions and measurement indicators applied in one type of society may be difficult to transfer to other societies, without serious modifications (Ruggeri Saith and Stewart 2003).

There are various poverty frameworks which may be useful for understanding and measuring Poverty such as material poverty, money-metric measurement approaches and multidimensional concepts of poverty (Hulme, Moore and Shepherd 2001). Scholars who adopt the material and physiological approaches view poverty as lack of income, expenditure or consumption. In recent years, however, poverty has been viewed in a more holistic sense, based at least in part on the increased credence given to the views of the poor themselves. This is based on the belief that the poor are likely to be poor in several ways, not only in terms of income. Gordon and Townsend (2000) believes 'someone is poor when they have both a low standard of living and a low income.' Sharing this view is Joseph and Sumption et al (1979) who believe that 'A family is poor if it cannot afford to eat.' This definition is also supported by that of European Commissions in its Joint Report on Social Inclusion (2004) which states that: "People are said to be living in poverty if their income and resources are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living considered acceptable in the society in which they live. Because of their poverty they may experience multiple disadvantages through unemployment, low income, poor housing, inadequate health care and barriers to lifelong learning, culture, sport and recreation. They are often excluded and marginalized from participating in activities (economic, social and cultural) that are the norm for other people and their access to fundamental rights may be restricted."

In the same vein, Peter Townsend, defined poverty as when someone's "resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities" (Reporting poverty in the UK). To Friedman (1999), it is a form of disempowerment that can be viewed from socio-economic, political and psychological dimension. Socio-economic disempowerment refers to relative lack of access to the resources for the self-production of livelihood;

political disempowerment to lack of clear political agenda and voice while psychological disempowerment refers to internalised sense of worthlessness and passive submission to authority.'

According to the World Bank (2023) estimate, there are 87 million poor people in Nigeria who live below \$1.25 a day. Extreme poverty remains an alarming problem in the world's developing regions. The elimination of poverty is a key concern of all those interested in the development of poor countries ranging from policy makers, scholars, state and non-state actors, social groups and the poor themselves and now provides the main justification for promoting economic growth and development. The central objective of the Millennium Goals (MDGs) was to reduce poverty by fifty percent in the year 2015 (Ruggeri et.al 2003).

Anyanwu (1997) viewed poverty as a situation where people are unable to meet "basic needs physically such as food, health care, education and shelter, while none physical factors such as non-participation in most of the human developmental programmes which are said to be directed towards the poor masses to improve their living standard". But often times these are lip services carried in the media channels rising hope for the masses but at the end of the day they are excluded. They are not allowed any say in such programmes, their contributions are not needed. They may not beware when such development meant for them may start or end. That is to say they are not involved in decision concerning society-economic condition.

Factors Causing Poverty

What are the factors that cause poverty and what are the resources that propel development. Poverty is what prevents people from leaving a long, healthy and creative life as well as from enjoying dignity, self-respect and the respect of others. To manage poverty, we must first understand the factors that generate poverty; then we must generate political and cultural consensus to remove these factors. Generating this consensus is much more difficult than making statements of good intentions about the "removal" of poverty. It is ignorance and conflict that lead to the vicious circle of poverty and the lack of development, while, knowledge and cooperation lead to the virtuous circle of prosperity and progress. Some theorists have accused the poor of having little concern for the future and preferring to "live for the moment". As in the case of Nigeria, others have accused them of engaging in self-defeating behavior. Still other theorists have characterized the poor as fatalists, resigning themselves to a culture of poverty in which nothing can be done to change their economic outcomes. In this culture of poverty which passes from generation to another the poor feel negative, inferior, passive, hopeless, and powerless. The "blame the poor" perspective is stereotypic and not applicable to all of the underclass. Not only are most poor people able and willing to work hard, but have they done so when given the chance? The real trouble has to do with such problems as minimum wages and lack of access to the education necessary for obtaining a better-paying job. More recently, sociologists have focused on other theories of poverty. One theory of poverty has to do with the flight of the middle class, including employers, from the cities and into the suburbs. This has limited the opportunities for the inner-city poor to find adequate jobs. According to another theory, the poor would rather receive welfare payments than work in demeaning positions as maids or in fast-food restaurants. As a result of this view, the welfare system has come under increasing attack in recent years.

Strategies for Reduction of poverty in Nigeria

The poverty Alleviation Programme like other poverty reduction programmes introduced earlier has failed to achieve the target for which it was set. The poverty situation in Nigeria continues to worsen and this motivated the government to embark on an elaborate anti-poverty initiative known as National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in 2001. NAPEP was created to Eradicate absolute poverty in Nigeria through streamlining and rationalization of existing poverty Alleviation Institutions and coordinating the implementation of relevant schemes and programmes. In order to make the institution more powerful and functional, twelve ministries were co-opted into NAPEP. NAPEP was set up with the following objectives:

- i. To reduce the social unrest occasioned by unemployed youth
- ii. To reposition the private sector so as to make it more productive
- iii. To create opportunities for empowerment and wealth creation
- iv. To invest in education, Provision of social programmes for the vulnerable.

The above objectives of NAPEP were strengthened by the introduction of a new development initiative in March 2004 known as the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS). NEEDS is conceived as a national driven policy initiative that seeks to address Nigeria's long term goals to poverty reduction, wealth creation, employment generation, and value orientation. NEEDS is heavily linked to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS). The millenniums Development Goals are a series of eight times bound development goals that seeks to address issues of poverty, Education, Gender Equality, Health and Environment (Ibrahim, 2008). The Musa Yar'Adu'a led government demonstrated her support and commitment to the Millennium Development Goals mission by introducing the Seven Point Agenda.

The objective of this programme was to facilitate the achievement of the targets of the MDGs. One of the specific goals of the MDGs is:

- i. Reduce by 50% between 2000 and 2015 the proportion of people whose income is less than one US Dollar in a day.
- ii. Reduce by 50% between 2000 and 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

Attempts to eradicate poverty in Nigeria have never shown any positive results. Instead the gap between the rich and the poor is so wide and alarming. This situation is unfair considering the resources committed to poverty alleviation in Nigeria. The weak nature of the leadership is its failure to effectively distribute the nation's resources among the existing classes is responsible for the impoverishment of Nigeria population. The World Bank has classified Nigeria as a paradox, rich country poor people.

Strategic Security Management Models.

In this section, we look at strategic security management approaches as espoused in the literature. These comprise of two models; viz: the two-way approach model and the composite approach model.

The Two-Way Approach Model: In this model, the creators and perpetrators of insecurity are combated. This is done by removing the factors that cause people to turn to acts of insecurity; and the second part is to combat the perpetrators of insecurity using the long arms of the law and armed forces.

The Composite Approach Model: In contrast with two- way approach model, the composite approach model contends that the traditional assumption conferring national security as solely the responsibility of government is faulty. According to Achumba et al. (2013) the Composite approach model ascribe the security of the state on all stakeholders both in public and private capacity---government, communities, business organizations, civil society, religious groups and individuals. Insecurity environment in Nigeria is complex to be handled by government agencies alone. There is need for other stakeholders to get fully involved in the struggle to ameliorate the ill situation and achieve enduring security in Nigeria.

II. METHODOLOGY

Ex-post factor research design was used in the study. Secondary data covering 1999 to 2023 were utilized in the study. The data were sourced variously from: CBN Statistical Bulletin and National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) databases using desk survey approach. The dependent and independent variables used in the study were chosen after adequate consideration on extant empirical literature and objectives of the study. Economic Growth (EG) was measured using gross domestic product (GDP), poverty was measured using expenditure on education (EXED) and expenditure on health (EXHT); while insecurity was measured using defense budget (DB) and foreign direct investment (FDI). In meeting with the objectives of the study, we logically used time series data from 1999 to 2023, taking into account the period of uninterrupted democratic rule in Nigeria.

Hypothesis Testing

For the purpose of this study, one hypothesis was developed and tested and the result is presented as indicated below.

Ho:

Insecurity and poverty does not affect economic growth in Nigeria. This hypothesis was tested using SPSS version 23, multiple regression analysis was used for determining the independent and joint effect of insecurity and poverty on economic growth at a significance level of 0.05.

Table 1:
Multiple regression analysis summary table showing the independent and joint effect of insecurity and poverty on economic growth

DV	Predictor(s)	β	T	P	R	R ²	F	Df	P
Economic Growth	Constant				.979	.958	253.172	2,	<.05
	Insecurity	-.961	-19.996	<.05				22	
	Poverty	-.401	-8.835	<.05					

Result in table 1 shows that there was a significant independent effect of insecurity [$\beta = -.961, t = -19.996; p < .05$] and poverty [$\beta = -.401, t = -8.835; p < .05$] on economic growth in Nigeria from 1999 to 2023. This means that an increase in insecurity and poverty in Nigeria contributes to the reduction in economic growth in Nigeria within the specified years. Moreover, insecurity ($\beta = -.961$) exerts the highest effect on economic growth which was followed by poverty ($\beta = -.401$).

In the same vein, the result showed that insecurity and poverty significantly and jointly affects economic growth in Nigeria from 1999 to 2023 [$R = .979$ and $R^2 = .952, F(2, 22) = 253.172; p < .05$]. Observation of coefficient of

determination [$R^2 = .958$] shows that both insecurity and poverty significantly and jointly accounted for 95.8% of the total variance observed in economic growth. Based on this result, the alternate hypothesis which states that 'insecurity and poverty does not affect economic growth in Nigeria s' was therefore rejected.

Incidental Finding

Incidental finding was conducted to investigate the effect as the year progresses, this result showed an increase in economic growth. This was conducted using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and the result is presented below;

Table 2:
Pearson's product moment correlation showing the relationship between years and economic growth

Variable	Mean	SD	r	df	P
Years	2011.00	7.36			
Economic Growth	74225.95	57688.79	.979**	23	<.05

** sig @ .001

Result in table 2 shows that there was a significant relationship between years (1999 – 2023) and economic growth [$r(23) = .979$; $p < .05$]. This means that as the years progresses from 1999 upwards, the level of economic growth also increases. However, additional information obtained showed that even as economic growth increases in Naira, the value of Dollar keeps gaining and as such, instead of the growth in economic to be felt, there is a decline in growth.

III. Conclusions

There is no denying the fact that conflict has a direct impact on poverty. During severe conflicts, there is always wanton destruction of lives and property (private and public) which makes life insecure as being witnessed in Nigeria at the moment. Such environments become investment-unfriendly and thus poverty becomes the order of the day. World Bank Group Data and Statistics show that in 2023, of 22 low income countries, 19 were located in Sub-Saharan Africa and were associated with conflicts. At the end of 2005, the global number of refugees was at its lowest level, in almost a quarter of a century but by the end of 2008, the total number of refugees under United Nations High Commission on Refugees' (UNHCR) mandate exceeded 10 million. The number of conflict-induced internally displaced persons (IDPs) reached some 75.9 million worldwide at the end of the year 2023. Using the statistics above, 1.1 billion people suffer from chronic hunger while 75.9 million people are displaced [global-multidimensional poverty index 2023]. In 2022 a total of 2.4 million people were displaced by insecurity related conflicts in Nigeria (internal-displacement.org). Nigerians need to shun violence in all its ramifications while the government should ensure that the issue of conflict and insecurity are addressed – of course, poverty and insecurity are like Siamese Twin, the prevalence of one attracts the other and vice versa, but either of the two is capable of social dislocation. Nigerian insecurity has risen to epidemic level and actually slipping into a failed state. In March 2024, a Lt. Colonel and sixteen other combatant soldiers on a peace mission to Okuama community, in Delta State were killed. Good governance that will enthrone transparency is the only way out. Good governance implies non corrupt judiciary, the military and the police force free of saboteurs, transparent implementation of non-padded budgets. In Nigeria poverty is insecurity driven. Except if insecurity is checked we cannot expect sustainable development, otherwise the dream of sustainable development and stability will continue to be a mirage.

IV. Recommendations

To combat insecurity effectively, federal government must stop hide and seek game by:

1. Immediate stopping of absorbing self-professed repentant Boko Haram members into the military, police and paramilitary forces
2. Dismissing the absorbed Boko Haram members from all military, police and paramilitary forces.
3. Sanitizing the judicial system by dismissing all corrupt judges and establishing a more transparent and credible approach in engaging judges by selecting the best on merit after standard tests/screening.
4. Good selection method of electoral umpires by appointing credible persons like Professors Humphrey Nwosu - 1993 elections Nnenna Oti – 2023 elections
5. Sincere annihilation of Islamization Agenda in Niger

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