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Poverty and Insecurity in Nigerian Democratic Dispensation

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Abstract:

Despite the introduction of democratic governance in Nigeria fifteen years ago, the country has been facing unprecedented increased in poverty and insecurity. The argument that democracy is a machinery for economic development, peace and stability have been disproved in Nigerian. Fifteen years into democratic governance, the main features in Nigerian democracy have been a significant increase in poverty, inequality, unemployment and insecurity. It is argued that poverty breeds insecurity. This paper analyses the link between poverty and insecurity in Nigeria. The study is based on secondary data. The data have been taken from journals, textbooks, magazines and newspaper publications. From the evidence of existing empirical literature, the paper identified a higher incidence of poverty as a factor that is responsible for the security challenges facing Nigeria currently. In addition, it recommended three policy interventions as the panacea to the surge in poverty and insecurity in the country.

Keywords: Poverty, Insecurity, Democracy, Boko Haram, Kidnapping

1. Introduction

The expectations of Nigerians in reaping the dividends of democracy were terribly high when General Abudulsalami Abubakar announced on June 9, 1999 after he succeeded General Abacha that he will hand over power to a democratic elected government on May 29, 1999. Keeping on to his promise, Olusegun Obasanjo was sworn in as a civilian president and that marked a watershed within the political history of Nigeria. This is how Maier puts it, the installation of democratic governance in 1999 brought high expectations for the people (Maier 2000). Whereas, Akinosho illustration on the Nigerians expectation from military to civilian rule posits that “the advent of civil rule in Nigeria in 1999 was full of lofty expectation considering the extend of privation which Nigerian experienced during military rule” (Akinosho 2013).

Long years of military rule brought economic sanctions from Western powers, which affected the economic development of Nigeria. For instance, slow economic growth and corruption that encircled Nigeria paved way for high level of poverty and inequality. The return of civilian rule was greeted with exuberant among the people. The insinuation that democracy brings economic development, peace and prosperity prompted Nigerians to place their hope for development and stability on democracy. Through installed mechanism, democracy helps development (Bardhan, n.d.). The hope and expectations of Nigerians in reaping the dividends of democracy have been dashed by the recent happenings within the country.

Looking in retrospect, fifteen years after a democratic rule, the situation remains pathetic. For example, there is a high level of poverty, unemployment and insecurity. According to Kastina, after so many years of civil rule, the economy continues to dwindle; poverty is spreading, and political stability is difficult to seek out (Kastina 2010). In a nutshell, poverty, inequality and unemployment have been double since the installation of democracy (Ucha 2010).

Democracy has proven to be the machinery for sustainable economic growth in some countries. This is contrary to the case in Nigeria. Democracy has not been able to drive economic development necessary for the well-being of the people. In a nutshell, there has not been any concrete evidence of the improvement in the living standard of the masses since the installation of democratic rule. Aside the increasing level of poverty and the upsurge in inequality, the most distinguish feature of democracy has been the pockets of violence in all nooks and crannies of the country (El-Rufa'l 2011).

Since democratic rule berth in Nigeria in 1999, the country has witnessed an unprecedented level of social vices, such as political violence, ethno-religious strife, kidnapping, armed robbery, militancy and the recent activities of the dread Islamic group called Boko Haram. It is argued that the failure of the democratic government to bring the dividends of democracy through the development process into the country has made several people vent their anger on the government through violent means. There is high tendency that frustration can lead to groups taking arms against the state (Ajaegbu 2012). There have been hot debates on the correlation that poverty breeds insecurity. Despite Nigeria being the sixth largest producer of crude oil and natural gas, the bulk of her citizens lived in abject poverty. As a result of this, the rising level of poverty has been blamed for security challenges confronting Nigeria.

The aim of this paper is to substantiate the claim that the high level of poverty in Nigeria has been responsible for the insecurity in the country since the installation of a civilian government in 1999. However, there are contrary claims that poverty has no relationship with insecurity. The notion that poverty is responsible for the conflicts in developing countries has been disproved by empirical evidence (ECLAC 2008). To counter this claim, this paper will use evidence from existing empirical literature to buttress the assumption that poverty is a real issue responsible for insecurity in Nigeria.

2. Conceptual Clarifications

To understand this paper better, it is mandatory to conceptualize the following concepts: Poverty and Insecurity

2.1. Poverty

Poverty is defined as the lack of material resources to cater for human needs. The definition of poverty remains disputable. This is because "poverty is multi-dimensional, multifaceted and, therefore, complex, and because it is both a relative and subjective phenomenon" (ECLAC 2008). As a result of this, there is no universally accepted definition of poverty.

The United Nations defined poverty as:

"a denial of choice and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go; not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individual, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environment, without access to clean water or sanitation" (United Nations 2011:2).

The definition of poverty by the United Nations corroborated that of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) which encapsulates, poverty as a multinational phenomenon. Poverty is when people lack basic resources such as power, capabilities, choice and security that are fundamental for a good standard of living (UNHCR 2004). Thus, poverty can be seen as the scarcity of basic human needs for daily living. Previously, poverty was conceptualized to mean a lack of financial power to shop for basic needs. This indicates one could be considered financially incapacitated for not having income to supply for his or her daily consumption. However, studies have shown that poverty is more than a lack of income. The Copenhagen Declaration (1995) states that poverty is "a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food; safe drinking water; sanitation facilities; health; shelter; education and information." The World Bank report on poverty in 2001 categorized people with less than \$1 per day as living in 'extreme poverty' and for those living not more than \$2 per day live in 'poverty.'

2.2. Insecurity

Security is one of the fundamental needs of human society. In a society where there is no security, the population is likely to be vulnerable to attacks from perceived enemies. Insecurity is the state of being insecure or unsafe. The state is liable for providing security for members of the public. Wherever a state fails in this regard, the state is considered to be a weak state. Most of the weak states in the world are considered weak because they failed in their primary function in providing security for their citizens (Rice 2007). At the Aspen Institute Conference held in 2006, with a conference title tagged "The Tangled Web: The Poverty-Insecurity Nexus." Nigeria and 61 other nations were considered to be weak states. Reason for this, according to Rice and Patrick's analysis, these states have serious deficiencies in economic performance, political legitimacy, social welfare and security (Rice 2007). Since the installation of democracy in Nigeria in 1999, the country has been facing serious security challenges. Grappling with the security situation in Nigeria, it is the duty of the Nigerian government to formulate and implement policy, which will promote national cohesion and integration (Oshodi 2011). To understand insecurity, it is better to conceptualize 'security.' In Ibidapo-Obe's opinion, security is "the situation that exists as a result of the establishment of measures for the protection of persons, information and property against hostile persons, influences and actions" (Ibidapo-Obe 2008). It is a situation where people go about their normal business without any threat to their lives and properties (Ogunleye et al. 2011).

On the other hand, insecurity means the state of being exposed to attacks. It is a state of anxiety and palpable fear. The insecurity situation in the present Nigerian democratic dispensation has intensified since the 2009 attack by Boko Haram in Bauchi state. Till date, Boko Haram has killed more than 12 thousand Nigerians, despite the government measure in curtailing sect heinous crime against humanity. Apart from the activities of the dreaded Islamic sect, Nigeria has also witnessed a surge in kidnapping, youth restiveness, oil bunkering, militancy and armed robbery. The failure of the Nigerian government to provide adequate security for the citizens in the Northern East of the country where the activities of Boko Harna are predominant, prompted the citizens of the region to form a civilian Joint Military Taskforce called 'Civilian JTF.' The aim of the 'Civilian JTF' is to act as a counter terrorism youth movement to checkmate the menace of Boko Haram.

3. Nigeria Poverty Profile

Nigeria is the sixth largest producer of natural gas and crude oil in the world. However, 112 million Nigerians live in relative poverty. The World Bank has classified Nigeria as a paradox, rich country poor people. The poverty rate has been redoubled in Nigeria since the installation of democratic governance. Data from the Federal office of Statistics in 2006 revealed that 15 percent of the population was poor in 1960; the figure jumped to 28 percent in 1980. The incidence of poverty in Nigeria significantly increased to 66 percent in 1996 (Garba 2006). The argument by some scholars that democracy does not translate into significant development has been proven in Nigeria. For instance, the report from the National Bureau of Statistics in 2012 revealed that 112 million Nigerians lived in abject

poverty; 99 million live in absolute poverty and 61 percent of the population lives on one dollar per day (NBS 2012). The report of the NBS was corroborated by the World Bank representative in Nigeria, who in 2012 said 100 million Nigerians live in destitution. The rebasing of the Nigerian economy that eventually created Nigeria to be the largest economy in Africa has been condemned by economic experts. This is because Nigeria being the largest economy in Africa does not translate to the well-being of her citizens. Just as the Nigerian federal government was celebrating the country for being the largest economy in Africa, the World Bank came up with a damning finding of fact that Nigeria is the third countries in the world that has the highest number of extremely poor people. Empirical evidence from the finding of the United States National Security Advisor, Susan Rice revealed countries with a higher level of poverty are prone to conflict. For example, in Africa, Southern Sudan, DR Congo, Central Africa Republic and Nigeria with a high level of poverty are facing unprecedented security challenges. The ethno-religious crisis in Jos; the aftermath violence of the 2011 general election in Nigeria; the 2012 fuel subsidy removal protest was occasioned by the poverty situation in Nigeria (Akwara et al. 2013).

4. Poverty and Insecurity Nexus

The notion that poverty breeds insecurity has been a contentious issue within the academic arena. Some scholars believed there is a direct link between poverty and insecurity. Whereas, others argued that 'insecurity' is caused by other factors. Empirical evidence suggests that chronic 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 consequence on insecurity in the world (Pipes 1995). The protagonists which argued that poverty has no correlation with conflict, however, felt such factors such as ethnicity, political instability and resource control are important causes of insecurity (for instance, see Collier 2000 and Kanbur 2007) for additional details on these variables.

So what is the cause of insecurity in developing countries? Is it ethnicity, resource control agitation, religious intolerance or bad governance? The argument has been laid to rest by recent academic findings by economic and conflict experts. According to Kanbur there is causality from poverty to insecurity (Kanbur 2007). The deprivation theory of Ted Gurr emphasized on this hypothesis. The theory explains the reason why people dabble into violence. The psychological aspect of the theory is that "aggression is always a consequence of frustration" and at the same time "frustration always leads to some form of aggression" (Leeds 1978). The poor are led to violence owing to their relative deprivation and needs (Odumosu 1999). This scenario agrees significantly with the current security situation in Nigeria. The act of frustration, denial and lack of want have actuated several of the youths in Nigeria to take up arms against the state.

According to Awaka (2012) as cited by Akwara (2013) more than 80 percent of conflict-related deaths occurred in less economic advantage states. Conflict, violence and insurgency are caused by poverty and other factors that have been inimical to the development of any society (see Gurr 1970 and Burton 1997). Studies have shown that most of the security challenges facing Nigeria in the current democratic dispensation have their root causes in the high level of poverty and inequality in the country. Nigeria ranks third among countries in the world, having extremely poor people.

5. How Poverty Breeds Insecurity: Empirical Evidence

There is increasing substantial evidence of poverty and insecurity nexus. However, academic findings regarding poverty and insecurity linkage have been controversial. In respect to this, it is necessary to examine empirical literature, whether poverty has a role in the emergence of insecurity.

There are two main important sets of theories regarding the causes of insecurity in countries in the global south. The first set of theories came up with the notion that political repression can instigate violence (for details, see Collier 2000 and Kanbur 2007). The second set of theories lay emphasis on economic factors as the root causes of conflicts in the Sub Sahara Africa rather than political variables. Sarmiento and Bacerra (1998) and Sarmiento (1999) are proponents of this school of thought. However, their works have received sharp criticism from the likes of Gaitan (1995); Rubio (2000); Sanchez and Nunez (2001) and Sanchez, Solimano and Formisano (2005) who stressed that there is no correlation between poverty and conflict.

Looking at the available evidence, there is a strong correlation for the poverty-insecurity nexus. According to Miguel, recent academic findings support the claim, that poverty and the lack of income can be the potential causes of insecurity in Sub Sahara Africa. Furthermore, the interrelationship between poverty and insecurity is arguable in the most exclusive findings in existing literature investigating the causes of civil conflict (Miguel 2007).

Collier and Hoeffler (2002) investigate the incidence of civil wars in Africa, from their research; they notice the sturdy linkage between an income level in one aspect and the occurrence of violence in the other. Their assumption was that joining armed groups becomes more lucrative to the unemployed youths when there are no legal means of income earning. The youths find succor as members of armed gangs in looting, smuggling and illegal mining, as the case is in many African countries.

Sierra Leone was within the last position on the United Nations Human Development Index in 1990. There was a dramatic increase in youth unemployment. The collapse of the economy and the hindrance of the youths to gain full-employment opportunity prompted the youths in joining the rebels as a way of "gaining power and income looted from civilians and the country's rich alluvial diamond fields" (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2006). Poor countries with natural resources are likely to have skirmishes than poor nations with fewer natural resources. There was more fighting in cities in Sierra Leone with abundant diamond wealth and fewer fightings in areas with no diamond (Bellows and Miguel 2006). DR Congo that has experienced two civil conflicts that were attributed to an external reason. However, poverty helped to elongate the conflicts (Rice et al. 2006). Ivory Coast once considered to

be the jewel of Africa because of her relative peace and economic prosperity witnessed a gradual decline in per capita income from \$ 1,120 in 1990 to \$650 2000, and this was the period the country experienced her first political instability since independence (ibid.) Collier and Hoeffler (2002), Fearon (2004) and Walter (2004) agree that once a civil war breaks out, poverty can help to elongate clashes between warring parties, and when the war has come to an end, there is a possibility that poverty can re-ignite the war. For example, the resumption of hostility in East Timor gave credence to this assumption. Many scholars have acknowledged the road to peace in East Timor, but they did not take into account the security implication over rising levels of poverty. The departure of the United Nations contingents drastically increased the poverty level in East Timor. This was due to the UN presence which artificially boosted the economy. Regardless of the international support from wealthy nations, little was done to improve employment generation and more than half of the labour force and many ex-combatants have no jobs, causing a dangerous and tense situation among the discontented youths (Kohen and Korb 2006). However, there is no concrete evidence to show why civil war increases the risk of future war as in the cases of Liberal. DR. Congo and Central African Republic. Some scholars assert that conflicts that are based on ethnicity or religion motive have the possibility to recur (Gurr 2000) and (Kaufmann 1996). Others believe that when a group is defeated in a conflict, “retribution is likely to lead to conflict recurrence” (Kalyvas 2000). And for some other scholars, they claimed that civil war is allowed to continue by those who benefit from it because they are not punished by peace-building strategies (Dolye and Sambanis 2006). Fearon, Collier, Hoeffler as well as Mans Soderbom of Oxford University from their research finding stress that income per capita has influence on the duration of civil conflicts (Collier et al. 2001) and (Fearon 2004). Their empirical finding is important given the fact that some conflicts in Africa take up to eight to twenty years such as the Angola and Liberia civil wars. Ford (2007) x-ray the oil crisis in the volatile Niger Delta region in Nigeria. He stresses that poverty has been responsible for the high level of criminality in the region. The youths took up arms against the state because over 80 percent of Nigeria's wealth comes from the Niger Delta, and most of the inhabitants live in extreme poverty. The oil war declared by the Niger Delta youths led to the attacks on oil installations. Violent crimes in the region such as kidnapping, hostage taking, pipeline vandalism, sea piracy, hijacking and illegal oil bunkering were rooted in ill feelings due to lack of income, education and unemployment. It was contended that the youths were not fighting for the physical development of the region, but were fighting for economic injustice (Ibeanu 2000, Koroye 2007, Akanfa 2007, Iginini 2008 and Amange (2009) as cited by (Oromareghake and Igho 2013). Finally, the commandant of the military task force in Iraq, Lt. General Peter Chiarelli in 2006 noted that securing jobs for discontented youth was pivotal in ensuring lasting peace in Iraq (Rice et al. 2006). The Iraqi civil war continues unabated, and the conflict has been attributed to lack of employment for the teeming youths and the collapse of the economy.

5.1. The Low Level of Per Capita Income Puts Nations in Greater Risk of Conflicts

Conflicts and insecurity are predominately in less developing countries (Rice et al. 2006). According to OCDE 2002, “more than two-thirds of the poorest countries of the world (were) in conflict.” By contrast, countries with middle-income and rich nations are less prone to conflict and experiencing domestic conflict respectively (Rice et al. 2006) President Obama’s security adviser; Susan Rice stresses that despite the strength of the empirical linkage between poverty and insecurity, there remain sturdy debates in the academic circle why the linkage holds. The fact remains that low income or drop in income leads to poverty. We have seen cases in East Timor, West Bank, Sierra Leone and Haiti were dropped in income led to civil strife. The evidence that there is the possibility of an increase in conflict when national income drops emanated from the studies by renowned university scholars, Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler from Oxford University, James Fearson and David Laitin both from the Stanford University, and Professor Nicholas Sambanis from the Yale University (Collier and Hoeffler 2004).

Source	Finding
Collier/Hoeffler (2004)	Countries at different income levels have the following risk experiencing civil conflict at \$ 250 GDP per capita, a 15% risk of war within 5 years; at \$600 GDP per capita, a 7.5% risk of war within 5 years; and at \$5,000 GDP per capita, less than 1% risk of war within 5 years (Humphreys 2003)
Fearon/ Laitin (2003)	Countries at different income levels have the following risk of experiencing civil conflict: at \$579 GDP per capita, a 17.7% risk of war within 1 year; at \$2,043 GDP per capita, a 10.7% risk of war within 1 year; and at \$9,466 GDP per capita, less than 1% risk of war within 1 year.
Sambanis (2003)	Average GDP per capita for countries that experienced war within 5 years is \$2,176. Average GDP per capita for countries that did not experience war within 5 years \$5,173
Collier/Hoeffler/ Rohner (2006)	Average GDP per capita for countries that experienced war within 5 years is \$1,100. Average GDP per capita for countries that did not experience war within 5 years \$5,764.

Table 1: Key findings on Per Capita Income and Civil War

Source: Rice et al. 2006

The findings from the four studies seek to pinpoint the remote causes of conflicts. The second finding of Collier and Hoeffler agrees with the finding of their previous study. It stresses that states which have not witnessed conflicts are “characterized by a capital

income that is more than five times higher than in countries in which wars broke out (Collier et al. 2006) In the same vein, Fearon and Laitin revealed from their finding that in some developing countries, “\$1,000 less in income corresponds to 36 percent greater odds of {conflict} outbreak” (Fearon and Laitin 2003). The finding from Sambanis shows that “the mean per capita GDP in countries affected by civil war at any point from 1960-1999 is less than half that of countries with no civil war experience” (Sambanis 2003). The table above illustrates these findings.

6. Poverty and Insecurity in Nigeria: Trend Analysis

This section unveils the link between poverty and insecurity in the Nigerian context. Since 1999 up to date, Nigeria has witnessed the following security challenges which are: Ethno-religious strife, political violence, kidnapping, militancy and terrorism by the dreaded Islamic sect called Boko Haram.

6.1. Ethno-Religious Strife

Ethno-religious conflicts, according to Ibrahim and Igbuzor (2002) have surfaced due to the new political environment that paved way for political consciousness and identities that are tied to ethno-religious identities. States that have witnessed a surge in ethno-religious conflicts since the enthronement of democracy in 1999 are Abia, Bauchi, Ebonyi, Enugu, Kaduna, Kano, Nassarawa, Ogun and Plateau. Many Nigerians have been killed or maimed since 1999 in sectarian and communal attacks and reprisals between Muslims and Christians (United Nations Human Right Commission 2008) as cited by (Saheed and Alofun 2010). Poverty, unemployment, inequality and bad governance have been blamed for the continued skirmishes between the Moslems and Christians in Nigeria. This is how Salawu analyzes it:

“It is important to note here too that the failure of the Nigerian leaders to establish good governments, forge national integration and promote what can be called real economic progress, through deliberate and articulated policies, has led to mass poverty and unemployment. This has resulted into communal, ethnic, religious and class conflicts that have now characterized the Nigerian nation. Poverty and unemployment therefore served as a nursery bed for many ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria because the country now has a reservoir of poor people who warmongers as mercenary fighters. What this means theoretically is that poverty and unemployment increase the number of people who are prepared to kill or be killed for a given course at token benefit. This explains why all ethno-religious crises that ever occurred in Nigeria have a large turnout of people (including the under-aged) as fighters” (Salawu 2010).

In addition, Awara et al. (2013) stress that the Jos religious crisis in 2008, the post election violence of 2011 in the northern states and the civil disturbance in the aftermath of the January 2012 fuel subsidy removal were occasioned by the poverty situation in the country. Furthermore, a survey carried out on Children and Youth in Organized Armed Violence in Nigeria pointed out that the frustration among the youths due to mass poverty, inequality and unemployment were responsible for the violence in recent times (Ibrahim 2006).

6.2. Political Violence

The 2011 general election witnessed one of the worst electoral violence within the political history of Nigeria. The election took ethnic dimension. Many people were killed and houses were burnt when the incumbent president, Goodluck Jonathan, who is from a southern minority tribe was proclaimed as the winner of the election. A lot of southerners living within the north were killed by irate mobs because a southern won the presidential election. Previous elections have been marred by political violence. However, the 2011 elections' violence was unprecedented because of the magnitude of the damage and the colossal loss of lives. Although, some experts believed that poverty, ignorance, injustice, politics, overzealous religious leaders are some of the reasons for the spate of political violence in Nigeria. However, the fact remains that the recurrent political conflicts are caused by certain individuals who benefit at the expense of the state (Saheed and Egwaikhide 2012). The army of unemployed youths is usually used by politicians for thuggery. Muller and Seligson (1987) argue that "a high level of income inequality in a country increases the possibility of violence against the state for at least two reasons. The number of alienated persons within a society that can easily mobilize is great. And two. It is possible for the groups that emerge out of this frustration to establish alliances with other groups that feel the same."

6.3. Kidnapping

Nigeria accounted for 26 percent of kidnapping in the world in 2013 according to a specialist crisis prevention and response consultancy, NYA International. Kidnapping started in the Niger Delta region as a style of protest against the high incidence of poverty and poor living conditions within the region. Most of the kidnappings in Nigeria are carried out by discontented youths. From available statistics, 512 cases of kidnapping incidents were reported from January 2008 to June 2009, over this period a whopping sum of N600 million was lost to kidnappers (Ngwama 2014). Most kidnapped victims' family preferred to pay ransoms to kidnappers than reporting the case to the police authority, reason for this, they fear for the killing of the victims. For instance, without reporting to the police, the family of a kidnapped Kano base businessman paid N80 million to his abductors; a manufacturer in Anambra state paid N70 million to his captors without recourse to the police authority (Umejei 2010). In some case "victims are maimed, raped and manhandled in such a manner the stigma remains almost perpetually. The family and associates are knocked down by intractable trauma" (Kapoluyi 2009).

What could be the reason behind spates of the kidnapping in Nigeria? From the economic point of view, Tzanelli (2006, citing Gerth and Mills 1948: 56-7) has raised the idea that "kidnapping is regulated by the laws of demand and supply and is a type of social action

that involves the calculation of the most efficient means to the desired end." In Nigeria, kidnapping is motivated by economic factors. The common reason behind kidnapping in the Niger Delta is the rising incidence of chronic poverty and unemployment, mostly in the midst of abundant natural resources. Oil wealth has sustained the Nigerian economy for over 50 years, accounting for more than 90 percent of the country's foreign exchange earnings and more than 80 percent of government income (CBN 1981). Despite these, the citizens of the region remain very poor while their source of livelihood depends on the natural environment often times polluted and degraded by oil exploration. "Kidnapping happens to be the only industry of last resort aimed at forcefully getting a share of the region's wealth" (Akpan 2010).

6.4. Militancy

The Niger Delta region has been the economic backbone of Nigeria since the first discovery of crude oil in Olobiri in Bayelsa state in 1956. More than 90 percent of government revenue comes from the Niger Delta. Despite this, more than 70 percent of the inhabitants live below one dollar per day. This is how Kimiebi expresses the situation in the Niger Delta "the oil produced in the Niger Delta is the blood of the Nigerian economy, oil has failed to translate to regional prosperity and development in the Niger Delta" (Kimiebi 2010). The chaotic situation and armed attacks that pervaded the region were occasioned by the pollution of farmlands, increasing poverty and the neglect of the region by the multinational oil companies and successful governments.

The frosty relations between the host communities and the multinational oil corporations have made the oil companies a potential target by armed militant groups. The youths do not benefit from the oil companies in terms of employment. In retaliation to this, the youths began to bomb oil installations and kidnapping of foreign oil workers. According to Oromareghake et al. (2013) the "youths engaged in self-seeking and criminal activities such as kidnapping or hostage taking in exchange for levied ransom; youth seeking revenge for the oppressive attitude toward members of the elite class or a manner of responding to a repressive state. In all, there is a unifying factor in the rationalization of their action as expressed in their definitions, which is not being satisfied with their present's state."

6.5. Boko Haram

The activities of Boko Haram within the Nigerian state have placed the country in the international limelight. Since the first attack in 2009, the sect has launched unprecedented and coordinated attacks within the northeast of Nigeria. The nation's capital Abuja has not been excluded from the attacks of the Islamic terrorist group. The United Nations building and the Nigerian police authority headquarters have been bombed by the sect. The bombing of the Nyanya motor pack that claimed the lives of seventy three Nigerians on 14 April, 2014 and the follow-up abduction of over 300 female students from Chibok have brought international support from the United States, France, Israel, Britain and China in ending the menace of Boko Haram. The former United States President, Bill Clinton, has attributed that the current insurgency being experienced in the northern part of Nigeria was caused by the high level of poverty within the region. The Nigerian poverty profile released by the National Bureau of Statistics in 2012 showed that the northern region has a higher incidence of poverty compared to the southern region. Some security experts are of the view that the Boko Haram atrocities are not the manifestation of the increasing poverty in the region, but an Islamic terror group having the agenda of Islamizing Nigeria. On the contrary, few scholars have argued that Boko Haram is an urban uprising of discontented youth fighting against economic injustices. Whatever the argument for or against Boko Haram, according to Kastina, there are some:

"salient facts which cannot be demised always easily. The most important of this is that we have to admit that even if the group has its antecedents in theology, its swelling rank is as a result of a huge reservoir of unemployed urban youths from many parts of the country. These youths who have completely become disenfranchised are readily to provide the group with its foot soldiers who commit all manners of atrocities, including assassinations and suicide bombings in the name of religion" (Kastina, n.d.).

7. Recommendations

Global institutions and economic experts have advocated for there to be peace, tranquillity and stability in the world, there is a need for poverty reduction. To tackle poverty and insecurity in Nigeria, three major policy interventions are pertinent:

To begin with, good governance has been seen as an antidote to poverty and insecurity in Nigeria. According to Oluwarotimi (2012), good governance is the panacea of the security challenges bedevilling Nigeria. It is only good governance that can guarantee peace and security in the present day Nigeria. For instance, Oluwa (2010) noted that "good governance is the primary function of an efficient, visionary, transparent, trustworthy and credible leadership whose driving force is an improvement in the collective well-being of the citizens through well conceived, effectively implemented economic policies and human development programmes." Furthermore, in the opinion of Kufour (2012), the task of ending the instability in Nigeria is to accelerate the pace of economic development. Economic development in the sense of creating a vibrant economy with regard to social, economic and physical infrastructure that will drive industrial growth to provide gainful employment, quality education and social security for the people.

In addition, the government should change its strategies in tackling Boko Haram. The present counter terrorism strategy is not working which has given Boko Haram an edge of the Nigerian military. Reports from the front-lines indicate soldiers battling the insurgency are not motivated with regard to delay in allowances, poor fighting equipments and lack of operational modalities from their commandants. The Nigerian government should take a cue from the Egyptian government for its moral support for her military in tackling terrorism. Finally, the Nigerian armed forces, the police and paramilitary organizations should be trained in counter terrorism to contain effectively the menace posed by Boko Haram and other insurgents.

8. Conclusion

The aim of this paper is to achieve what is stated in the introduction by investigating the claim that the high level of poverty in Nigeria has been responsible for the insecurity in the country since the coming of civilian government in 1999. From existing literature, poverty, inequality and unemployment constitute a threat to the security of Nigeria. Unemployment leads to poverty, and poverty creates insecurity.

In sum, the greatest challenge to the security of Nigeria is the army of poor and the unemployed youth. Statistics shows that the present state of unemployment in the country is fifty percent, while the national poverty rate is over seventy percent of the population. These have led to a surge in criminal activities in Nigeria. In the final analysis, the paper recommends good governance, socioeconomic development and good counter terrorism measure as the panacea for the Nigerian security challenges.

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