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The Spate of Insecurity in Nigeria within the Context of Governance Failure, Justice and Unrest

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Abstract:

The discourse expresses great concern on the spate of insecurity in Nigeria within the context of systemic government ineptitude with respect to unrest and justice delivery. It is not disapprovingly debatable that Nigeria polity is dotted with high insecurity, unrest and partiality informed by religious and political brinkmanship which in all truth has inhibited Nigeria's socio-economic development. The experiences in the Northeast – devastated by Islamic terrorists (Boko Haram), Niger Delta Agengers in the South-south region (destroying oil pipelines), the herdsman conundrum in the middle belt of Nigeria, signals Nigeria's precariousness. However, the paper concludes that, notwithstanding the maladies, if justice is served and vexed questions of unemployment, food insecurity and general welfare provision are answered, Nigeria would be a better place.

Keywords: Insecurity, justice, crime, unrest, unemployment, social

1. Background

World over, insecurity, social unrest and spatial justice has constituted a fillip for anarchy and crime; and generally stalls the growth and socio-economic development of the society. Nigeria and Nigerians have suffered from the conundrum and debilitating effects of these phenomena which characterization is expressed in political thuggery and instability, corruption, insurgency, communal and ethno-religious conflict. Security here therefore, becomes a critical element in responding to these hiatus which sustenance is predicated on first and foremost sound justice, transparency, accountability, respect for ones rights and implementable government policies vis-à-vis proper orientation. Barry and Victor (2007), maintained that given the number and variety of weapons that are in circulation and can be used, insecurity, social unrest and injustice can become a big challenge to a peaceful polity. A society, as a matter of fact, must recognize that human beings are integral part of the society and all the resources an individual need to solve his problems could be provided for by the social system.

In analyzing the social provision theory of Titmus and Khan, Etuk (2002), avers that a system should emphasize on the rights of society members especially as it pertains to equality of access to resources and opportunity (ies) society has to offer. For this, social unrest and insecurity will be majorly curbed and the pressure on court vis-à-vis justice would be reduced.

To a large degree, because of insecurity, the economic and political imperatives that drive growth and development in the society is fractured and dislodged. Nigeria's wealth which ordinarily would have placed Nigeria and Nigerians at a pedestal of economic, political and social diadem is rather sloping to a deterioration. Julius (2011) adds that, insecurity and social unrest experienced in Nigeria has brought severe and devastating socio-economic, political and developmental crises plundering and destroying basic amenities, giving impetus to corruption, religious charlatanism, war, restiveness, unstable political systems and dictatorial governance.

According to Sambo (2008), the security climate in Nigeria within the past three or four decades has not promoted the kind of social and economic welfare that would have insulated citizens from vagaries of poverty, hunger and diseases. He further posited that, over 70% of the nation's population live below poverty line, restricted access to education and public health as experienced in the Northeast and North-Central of Nigeria.

Corroborating this assertion Julius (2011), maintained that these maladies and their unfathomable consequences is the inability of Nigeria (ians) to effectively and efficiently utilize resources for the nation's economic gain to develop various communities in the country has created rift among its population and encouraged schism with the various ethnic nationalities. According to Emmanuel (2005), the efficacy of the philosophy and policies of any system of government in maintaining peace and order is predicated on empowered and incorruptible judicial system. It is therefore expedient for

improvement in the management of resources, provide for adequate social welfare scheme and justice that REFLECT PRO-ACTIVENESS in its execution.

2. Nature of Insecurity in Nigeria

Nigeria today like in countries of Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan, Lybia, etc. fits in the narrative of security threat. This is because, evidently, conditions that do guarantee safety of lives and property do not exist. Insecurity here connotes a presumption of lack of peace, restiveness and apprehensiveness, fear and threat that makes it possible for attack, armed robbery, arson, vandalism, terrorist/insurgency and the likes, to occur. Lack of security simply can be said to be insecurity – uncertainty and vulnerability to undeserved brutality occasioned by the absence of security agent or instruments meant to check, control and arrest such real or perceived threat (Ayuk, 2015).

Insecurity, ab initio is a functional prerequisite in the society and made possible by people's greed, covetousness, misunderstanding during interactions and relationships. The existence of insecurity can only be dysfunctional when and if the corresponding apparatus for its check and control is/are lacking or nonexistent. The damaging consequence arising from non-presence of these anti-insecurity outfits is always devastating (example, Somalia, Nigeria, Egypt, etc.). Ortwin, Alexander and Regina (2011) argued that the uncertainty insecurity brings is unimaginable and to say the least, it, on a large scale, legitimizes anarchy, which consequences are always dire. Furthermore, Anthony (2011), observed that insecurity and security issues have become such topical issues in today's Nigeria - this is so because life has become so precarious and seems unattainable. Security dynamics in Nigeria as presently constituted, many will argue, is a shamble and at best captured as a travesty. For a nation to be seen as pro-security, certain indicators amongst others must be seen and expressly be practiced i.e. intelligence gathering, adequate security personnel, modern weaponry, proper funding – unfortunately, this is lacking.

What characterizes an insecure society which inversely are indicators of security are; weak government, deficiency in mobilizing resources to deliver needed services to her citizens, poverty, inequitable development, unemployment especially among the youths, hunger, lack of infrastructure, lack of accountability and bad leadership (Egharevba & Iruonagbe. 2015).

World Bank (1989), declared that insecurity in most African countries underlies the litany of development problems. Corroborating this assertion, Hyden and Bratton (1992) cited in Egharevba and Iruonaghe (2015) maintained that, Africa security crisis has a direct relationship with bad governance and is perhaps the single most important factor that if addressed, development problems vis-à-vis insecurity will be assuaged. Insecurity is connected to irresponsiveness to people's needs as exemplified in poor policies and programmes that exclude the masses whose life conditions is depicted by lack and want.

A security prone society must entail translating societal demands into choices, resulting in policy formulation and implementation through applying the principle of accountability, transparency and participation (Op cit. 2015). The lack of the aforementioned attributes breed insecurity. Furthermore, respect for human rights, public participation in decision making, equal treatment, impartiality, absence of any discriminating practices as well as preserving the needs of future generation makes a society peaceful (UNDP, 2002). Worried by security challenges in Nigeria, Egharevba and Iruonagbe (2015), note:

The process, institution and mechanism through which citizens and social groups articulate their interest, exercise their legal rights, mediate their differences, assess the role of political authorities in establishing the enabling environment in which economic operators function and in determining the distribution of benefits as well as the nature of relationship between the ruler and the ruled is threatened. Peace can only be imagined than experienced

Every person craves for security, as the fear of insecurity has eroded the social fabric that binds families, individual and communities. Kasang (2014), alluded that insecurity has facilitated a marked deterioration in control of social interactions and co-existence schemes, as communal reliance and trust have become necessary for both the individual and the group: as Nigeria like many sub-Saharan African countries is notable for insecurity. This situation is attributable to civic conflict, violence as a result of unemployment and poor socialization culture. Corroborating this claim, Sanjua (2002) opined that:

Insecurity and violence have created an atmosphere in which everyday encounters with insecurity are perceived as a natural aspect of perverse state of order and fundamental elements of democracy. As such, negotiation, dialogue and execution of political and civil citizenship, are no longer expected or necessary; corresponding to individualization and a lack of optimism have become inherent and constitutive facts of contemporary societies that influenced sheer expectation and the vision of the future is oblique.

This lack of faith in a system produces a feeling of hopelessness and often results in even more insecurity, as violence is no longer merely an aspect of survival in the society but rather a characteristic that is necessary to survive. Though insecurity is not intrinsically violent but it predisposes conditions that precipitate it. For example, in an environment of insecurity people's knack for weapon acquisition surges, trust is misplaced and suspicion holds sway and at the slightest threat, people tend to react disproportionately. This, according to Kasang (2014), hampers individual capacity to improve his/her living conditions. Insecurity propagates uncertainty and fear and thus inhibit proper information flow about needed service(s), delays the establishment of good business and restricts productivity by limiting the number of hours of work performed and depresses sales because potential purchasers do not go out for transactions where there are security constraints.

Furthermore, insecurity set the stage for spatial locations and identities of the major nationalities as the case with Nigeria (the living pattern among the Igbo, Hausa/Fulani and Yorubas). This further manifest in the nature that Nigerian political system operates. Even citing of industry (ies) and other important institutions in Nigeria is informed by security

leverage relative to other groups, irrespective of relative advantage (e.g. oil companies' headquarters are in Lagos or Abuja).

Insecurity in modern Nigeria has emerged even more daring than what it was in the 60s after independence. The reason according to Kasang (2014), is that, the amalgamation of Nigeria was not properly knitted, it was an act of colonial convenience and made little impact since the policies adopted to turn the Nigeria project into reality were self-defeating as the colonial state relied heavily on hostile force to subjugate the indigenous people which drove them to traditional solidarity groups such as ethnic or national groups. This event set the platform for regionalist elites on whose behest decisions on information and policies are represented in the national domain.

As it stands now in Nigeria, the barracks and its personnel fear for security. Onyemiazu (2010:10) adds: A resort-to-violence, including armed militancy, assassination, kidnap, etc., have suddenly become attractive to certain individuals seeking to resolve issues that could have ordinarily been settled through due process. The end product of such misadventure includes the decimation of innocent lives, disruption of economic activities and destructions of lives and property among others.

Therefore nation building is the most common form of collective identity formation with a view to legitimizing trust and allay insecurity within a nation state; which according to Egharevba & Iruonagbe (2015), is a meaningful future that draws on existing traditions, institutions and customs, redefining national characteristics of tolerance and respect for one another, support the nation's claim to sovereignty, uniqueness and security. A secured society, emphasis on cherished values and beliefs which can function as the legitimizing foundation of a structured security importance.

Nigeria insecurity comatose stems from severe institutional crisis that has given a platform for anomie especially in the northern parts (Borno, Bauchi, Zamfara, Adamawa, Plateau) of Nigeria. The politicians have been observed to be lackadaisical on related issues of security in Nigeria. The revanchist tendencies and political brinkmanship exhibited in Nigeria's political space is untoward and negate the basics of democratic precepts and only instill fear and uncertainty in the minds of average Nigerians. Buttressing this, Kasang (2014), quoting Aliu et al. (2010:22), maintained;

They bought the weapons and armed the boys to help them secure electoral fiction. And when they have used them to get where they are going, they dump them. When these boys no longer have access to them and they longer measure up to how they lived while they were getting money from politicians, they start to threaten innocent people. It is not that one should be grateful to God this time around that a senior citizen of Rimi's caliber is a victim. But ironically, in the sense that Rimi was in position to empower the masses (talaka was) in Kano by giving them education and means of livelihood; if he had done that in his tenure (as a Governor), the supreme prices that he paid would have been perhaps averted. This has been the trend for quite some time now. Furthermore rapid urbanization process has a strong correlation with insecurity.

Aliu et al, (2010:23), quoting Choke Chikwendu in Kasang (2014), avers: Our society has witnessed urbanization but without commensurate security strength. We need to improve the security situation through a holistic approach. First, we need to provide jobs because when people are unemployed, they still survive somehow, devising dubious means and involving themselves in nefarious activities like armed robbery, pick pocketing, car snatching among others; secondly, we need to make our schools function. Anyone that has spent four years in school should be able to do something to help himself. Also, you will observe that the policemen are currently not doing much. They set up static checkpoints that even common thieves can elude. They need to be mobile so that they can rapidly respond to distress call.

The security situation of Nigeria is further challenged by poor funding, corruption and total neglect by successive governments. These problems are more epitomized in the police force. They are poorly remunerated, their barracks are squalid and appalling - even their offices bear such challenges; they use antiquated rusted weapons, which do not show and guarantee good security appeals.

Insecurity consequences to a nation are dire with often unpalatable outcomes. The following would be possible watershed in an insecure polity; weakness in the capacity to mobilize both human and materials for growth and development, credibility and integrity in governance is or will be effused, anger and frustration that can resort to disorderliness and violence that retards the penchant for productivity, criminals would explore the vacuum and commit havoc, and as captured by Eme (2011), there will be social dislocation, social tensions, general atmosphere of mistrust, fear, anxiety and frenzy. Insecurity problem can be addressed by ensuring that poverty is reduced if not eradicated and a realistic social security programme pursued and systematically implemented to meet the basic needs of Nigerians closely related accordingly, ameliorate what sometimes induces insecurity and crimes. So economic empowerment must be emphasized and micro credit schemes should be put in place in pursuit of this objective and re-organization of the security agencies via re-training and re-socialization.

3. Social unrest in Nigeria

Nigeria's development framework right from independence till date has been enmeshed in one social unrest to another. According to Orekan (2014), Nigeria has experienced four major threats of social unrest, apart from hundreds of minor undocumented ones, to her survival as a nation since her gaining political independence in 1960. These threats were the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), the June 12, 1993 crisis following the annulment of the presidential election results by the military, the militancy, the violent uprising by military groups in the oil producing region of the Niger-Delta and the revanchist and unfounded vengeance by Boko Haram which have led to the death of persons and destruction of property.

Social unrest from the systematic point of view can be conceptualized as risk (posing threat to society) but also an opportunity for positive change or development. For example, those who pursue social or political goals, are meant to

reshape society and instrument for facilitating changes (Ortwin, et al. 2011). Even though social unrest may trigger positive changes in the society, it is associated with the risk of experiencing damage to human lives and property; it describes a complex web of triggers, immediate risks and probable remote benefits and threats which make social unrest a typical representative of systemic risks.

It is a complex event that can be influenced and triggered by social causes or accidental or natural disaster and characterized by high complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity that can easily trigger effects onto other sectors of society capable of inducing a breakdown or collapse of the social or political system (Ortwin, 2011). Social unrest is usually associated with protest in the form of peaceful as well as violent demonstrations, strikes and with acts of civil and political violence. Barnes et al (1979) posit that social unrest is an action(s) that is/are operated by citizens aiming at influencing collective decisions on several concerns and levels of political system - active mobilization that constitute unconventional participation to achieve its aims and objectives. Naturally, activities that are associated with social unrest are often linked to unconventional political participation. Conventional political participation like elections or the attendance of a political event are not part of social unrest. Put simply, activities that are designed to serve a specific function within a functional system (Ortwin, 2011).

It should be noted here that unconventional means (social unrest) is not always dysfunctional though it is an unexpected form of expressing desires for genuine reforms. Its manifestations seem in most cases unplanned, often spontaneous and uncontrollable within the functional system they occur (Ortwin et al. 2011 and Ayuk, 2015). In his submission, Tilly (2004) adumbrated that social unrest emerged as a synthesis of three elements viz: collective action aimed at influencing public decision, a social movement repertoire and political representation of the socials, unity and values as prerequisites for sustaining the coherence of social movement.

Contemporary and especially in Nigeria, unconventional activities (a form of social unrest) have become ordinary conventional forms of expressing dissent. Strikes organized by labour unions, for examples, are now seen as legitimate form of protest even by those who do not benefit from these activities irrespective of the position of the law (Ortwin, 2011& Ayuk, 2015).

Given these complexities and ambiguity, social unrest is an expression of collective dissatisfaction with the political system and manifests itself in unconventional forms of protest behavior; because when people are not satisfied with a particular situation in the system they do necessarily try to organize protest in expressing their dissatisfaction. For social unrest to occur, the following must come into play;

- The number of people that share the same feeling of dissatisfaction must be large enough to form a formidably large group (example the hike in petrol in 2012 by President Goodluck's Administration, and Buhari's administration, 2016).
- Potentially affected individuals must know each other and find a way to communicate to each other.
- There must be motivation to invest time, effort and finances to start or organize for the action.
- Common interests here must be connected with individual interests as common good serve common interest within the group (Leuffen. 2006).

In addition, socio-economic status of a person can also add to incentive and greater chances for him/her to participate in social unrest. The main idea here is that, the awareness and re-socialization naturally shapes orientation and expectation from the operators of the system. For example, survey conducted by Ortwin (2011) on educational background and social unrest, reveals that well educated individuals from the middle class are more likely to start organizing or expressing their dissatisfaction on systemic dysfunctionality(ies). On the other hand, people with lower educational or no educational background seem quite reticent especially on organized labour protest. The thinking is that whatever accrues thereto would be usurped by the elitist class leaving them to grope in continued despondency (Ayuk, 2015).

Social unrest can impact both positively and negatively. When better policies are churned out, welfare for citizens improved and other sundry expediencies met as a result of social unrest, that is when social unrest can be termed positive. Conversely, where violence is evoked, people displaced, properties looted and destroyed, vandalization, arson acts, businesses disrupted and general state of disorderliness, this is when social unrest is considered negative. Often times, when negative input is expressed during social unrest, is because clandestinely leaders may not disclose their strategies publicly and insist in the public on a peaceful protest to pursue their cause; secretly, however, they encourage their members to use violence and justify these actions later as "spontaneous" outbursts of public frustration (Ortwin, 2011). However, many social unrest(s) are systematic expressions of unresolved questions (insecurity) in the system. Granted, people have the right to voice and express their grievances in the form of protest, strike and other non-violent means. It should not degenerate to anarchy. It becomes an aberration and frowned upon if this act exceed societal consensus which emphasis is peaceful co-existence (Ayuk. 2015). In all protests, there should be integration and avoidance of criminalization, openness and collaboration/transparency; and restrain linear actions that will precipitate chaos, violence and disorder.

4. Spatial Justice in Nigeria

Spatial means space or relating to space in life. Space denote vacuum and nature abhors it because it naturally invites extraneous or unwanted conditions to strive which often might be counterproductive (Ayuk, 2015). In this context, spatial justice could he referred to as justice in vacuum. Put differently injustice, partiality and questionable justice. Definitionally therefore, spatial justice is unfairness, wrongness, incongruent and lack merit opinion of cases to be adjudicated upon by a stakeholder.

All over the world, spatial justice has not been taken with "kid gloves". Evidences abound to buttress negative

reaction to unfairness in terms of justice. A survey by Ayuk (2015) on the judgement on/of Bakasi peninsular by the International Court of Justice in the Hague reveals that, 88% of the inhabitants frowned about the judgment and describe it as a charade and a travesty of judgment and should be resisted in perpetuity. This was supported by an interviewed respondent (40 years old Mr. Effiom Augustine). In his words; Court, irrespective of location has a responsibility and duty to address by way of sound judgments disputing issues that continuously lead to a crime. Unfortunately, the Hague Court has sold herself to a show of shame and money verdict as against natural justice. If your country is not loved by the "West" your case will not be given the attention it deserves. This is entrenched corruption that has compromised judicial sanctity to the extent that judgment in court is/are served to the highest bidder. In the Nigeria context describing the Nigeria judicial system in respect to court decisions, Barr. Helen Omini adds:

I regret to be called a Nigerian and a lawyer; it hurts to see how justice is murdered in courts while we are helpless. My God! It's frustrating; it's only God that can help us concerning our legal system.

General Oladipo Diya Esq. confirms this and maintained, "Judges go to court with two judgments and serve the interest of the pay masters; as matters of safety and security are predicated on justice, equity and modicum of fairness. When justice is denied, not served or is partial, it breeds threat, social unrest, insecurity, crime, killing etc.

Onyemiasu (2006) reacted this way; when spatial justice thrives in a policy, people resort to violence including armed militancy, assassination, kidnap, etcetera, which have somewhat suddenly become attractive to certain individuals in seeking to resolve issues that could have ordinarily been settled through due process. The end-products of such misadventure have been catastrophic. They include the decimation of innocent lives, disruption of economic activities and destruction of properties among others.

As a matter of fact, if salient prerequisites like negotiation, dialogue and consensus is/are played down: law(s) distorted to settle genuine issues that concern justice to be served, then, is very damaging. When this happens, an atmosphere of political, social and economic insecurity fast engulfs the polity (Ayuk, 2015 and Eme, 2011). In popular parlance in Nigeria: "law and justice favours the rich and the poor are at the receiving end".

Eme (2011), opine that with a long unbroken history of underperformance, the law enforcement and criminal justice system in the polity are gradually receding from public reckonings as viable mechanism for social control; in short, in helplessness, citizens have watched human lives brutally terminated and laws of the land violated without relevant institutions even able to initiate the appropriate and persecutorial processes as to secure conviction.

Nigeria and Nigerians need a polity that is stable, peaceful and safe enough from criminality, murder, assaults, chaos, tyranny and breakdown by authority so that the populace can face development concerns with vigor and courage. To attain such polity, Eme (2011) suggested that the practice of the rule of law and constitutionalism should be tenaciously adhered to.

5. Conclusion

This presentation basically x-rayed spatial justice, social unrest and insecurity in Nigeria. The three phenomena undoubtedly are crucial to a nation's development process and success. Any polity that lacks or cannot guarantee its citizens with adequate security which is a function of impartial justice is bound to face serious economic, political, social, religious and ethnic challenges. Just as security is important so is justice which existence would strike off lawlessness, chaos and anarchy.

From the findings, it was revealed that Nigerians have overtly or covertly contributed to insecurity in the country because they have refused to engage government on accountability, transparency and probity. Also, the security agencies are ill-equipped to the extent that armed robbers and rag-tag-cultists can conveniently defeat Nigeria Police Force which is grossly understaffed (for example, Nigeria with a population of over two hundred million people can only boast of 317,000 police men) is a shame; and finally, poverty, unemployment, corrupt judicial system and deficient resource mobilization to deliver the needed service to her citizens is/are responsible for insecurity, governance failure and social unrest.

Therefore it was recommended that:

- Settling of grievances should be sustained through credible and relatively impartial judgment, negotiation, reconciliation, mediations and respects for human person.
- There is no gainsaying the fact that the negative impact of insecurity, social unrest and spatial administration of justice on both people and government via-a-vis business is ominous - it constitutes a major threat to a nation's internal cohesion. According to Omede (2011), it has the potential of warding off foreign investors and creating negative image for the polity.
- Therefore law should and must be applied across board irrespective of class, culture, tribe and race. Security agencies saddled with the onus of protecting Nigerians should be equipped and property remunerated and the issue of poverty and unemployment tackled to give reprieve to Nigerians;
- The government should train and retrain her security agents (agencies) in modern security technique in respect to pro-activeness;
- Employment opportunity (ies) should be created for Nigerian youths who have high propensity for insecurity and criminal related activities;
- The law must take its course in all situations irrespective of who is involved, security personnel should be properly and adequately be remunerated amongst other sundry welfare services.

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