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BOOK OF READINGS ON NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC



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CHAPTER 24
THE CHALLENGES OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA; A CRITICAL APPRAISAL (2015-2021)

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Introduction

The chapter examines the security challenges in Nigeria. The objectives of the paper are anchored on the following: To establish the reason for the unending destruction of lives and property, to examine the nature and activities of these bandits, again, to identify the implications of these hoodlums on the dev of Nigeria in general, and to identify the consequences of this destruction of lives and property in the Nigeria state. This chapter on insecurity was necessitated by the violent display of weapons across the country.

The study adopted the frustrated aggression theory as theoretical framework and the qualitative research analysis method. This compelled the researcher actively involved in critical observations, case studies, among others. The statement of the problem is "can banditry hooliganism among others create room for any possible development? Or can banditry, hooliganism, kidnaping activities, redirect government towards pursuing good governance? Its scope is from 2015-2021.

The research adopted the historical method because of its sensitive and critical roles in the investigation of past and current happenings. Thus the work relied more on secondary sources of data; textbooks, magazines, journal articles among others. The finding of the research revealed that kidnaping in Kaduna State, North East vis-viz Nigeria is one of the most disturbing problems of Nigeria. It was recommended that government should work to improve governance in order to ameliorate the lives of the people of Kaduna and other areas where kidnaping has become a threat and to put an end to kidnaping and banditry. Government should also as a matter of necessity provide adequate security to enhance the quality of lives and of the people. The motivation on the part of the security forces to do the job effectively must also be in the agenda of the government.

In order to give a clear meaning and interpretation of insecurity, there is explicit need to define the concept of security. The idea is to enable the researcher to convey a meaningful and logical pursuit of what the entire topic is targeted. Security implies or connotes the state of order, peace, among others, anchored on the harmonious living of people with the mind set of promoting a socio-economic relationship among all. In other words, it is a system that is governed by law and order to guarantee peaceful coexistence among the citizens of that locality. Therefore, there is security when people are going about their legitimate business work, and do other things that are capable of guaranteeing happiness, peace, amongst all. There should be absence of crisis ranging from violence, fighting, hunger, deprivations, murder, kidnaping and arson, to mention a few, before you can call it security. It is on the strength of this (McNamara, 1968: 149), asserted that "any society that seeks to achieve adequate conventional security against the background of acute food shortages, population, explosion, low level of productivity and per capital income, a high rate of illiteracy or fragile infrastructural base for technological, inadequate and insufficient public utilities and a chronic problem of unemployment, has a false sense of security". According to Efeuhobo, Emuebie and Okonkwo, (2013), security can be conceived as a state of existence that is free from, danger, fear, threat, anxiety and uncertainty. Most writers agreed that security is a "contested concept (Baldwin, 1997); Bayhs, 2008, Naidoo, 2008) but there is a consensus that it implies freedom from threats to core values (for both individuals and groups). Another bone of contention is situated in where the main focus of inquiry should be on the individual, "national or international" security (Bayhs, 2008).

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Causes of Insecurity

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Similarly, Arnold (1962) quoted Olayimola (2013: 30) who states that "security, in an objective sense measures the absence of threats to acquire values in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attached. Insecurity, on the other hand is the sense of vulnerability to danger or risk because it produces fear, tension and anxiety and threat (Efeurhobo, 2017). Having looked at the meaning of security, it is imperative to look at the meaning of insecurity. Insecurity is the absence of security in virtually all ramifications. It is therefore the harassing and overwhelming presence of hunger, poor health facilities, terrorism, insurgency, religious violence, ethnic violence, diseases unemployment, poverty amongst others. There is insecurity when government is unable to address the aforementioned security risk threatening the peaceful co-existence of the society. In the words of Alegre (2008), insecurity is a feeling of society, lack of confidence and anxiety about oneself occasioned by unemployment that result in poverty that have consequences on youths, economy, social and political development.

No society can make any meaningful progress when its subjects are being harassed and killed by agent of insecurity. The current situation in Nigeria has been recklessly exposed to the whims and caprices of different people, ranging from bandits, kidnaping, armed robbery and other social vices that have made lives less interesting in Nigeria. It must however be acknowledged that insecurity in Nigeria even before 1999 has been an issue in Nigeria. As a matter of fact, it was one glowing evidence that masterminded the Nigeria Civil War of 1967 to 1970. And since then it has been the issue from one regime to the other. Many political pundits have lost their lives in the process of aspiring to occupy governmental offices. Bola Ige, former Minister of Justice, Pa Alfred Ruwane, Engineer Funsho Williams among others lost their lives due to poor security network in this country. However, it must be acknowledge, without any modicum of bias that the situation since 1999 till date has become increasingly very alarming and unprecedented in the history of the country. The degree of death by the Boko Haram insurgency is the height of insecurity in Nigeria. Since the emergence of Boko Haram in 2002 many innocent Nigerians have been sent to their grave. Fafowora (2012) noted that a report on global terrorism in 2011 showed that one hundred and thirty six (136) attacks were carried out in Northern Nigeria by Boko Haram resulting in the death of five hundred and ninety people.

It is instructive to note that it was because of the violent activities of these blood thirsty fundamentalists amidst other factors that led to the end of former President Ebele Jonathan's administration when he contested against Buhari and failed. Unfortunately for Nigerians, their hopes were dashed to see that since Mohammedu Buhari's assumption in office till date no meaningful effort has been made towards putting an end to the problem of insecurity in the country. Rather, the situation is getting worse on daily basis with different and more daring groups such as the deadly and fearless Fulani herdsmen, bandits among others emerging. It is against this background that the chapter of this book is set to interrogate the causes, implications of insecurity in Nigeria and possibly point the seeming efforts to ameliorating the situation in order to promote a healthy and sustainable environment devoid of endless acrimony and bickering.

Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

The Nigerian political system over the years has been experiencing insecurity of different kinds. Findings reveal that this unending insecurity can be attributed to the following causes or reasons: corruption, deprivations, poverty, bad governance, unemployment, illiteracy, religious extremism, impunity, ethnic differences, state neglect, terrorism, social injustice, hunger, among others. Efforts will be made to examine some of them one after the other to see how they have caused the Nigerian state backwardness and retrogression, particularly in a highly competitive world.

Corruption: corruption is one of the glaring causes of insecurity in Nigeria. The fact here is that the elite that decide the direction of this country are selfish and wicked to the point of not even caring about the faith and situation of the people they are leading. Added to it are the politicians whose interest and acquisition of wealth matters most to them. Consequently, this type of selfish and wicked action that lacks patriotism and commitment to development can only lead to revolt, crisis and insecurity that is anchored on stealing, arson, kidnaping, assassination, election rigging amongst others. According to Oyovbaire (1992), leadership that is poor, uninspiring, corrupt, oppressive and sectional can only generate resentment, dissension and revolt. This height of poor leadership that is borne out of corruption can be seen in the unrelenting and unending actions of the Boko Haram fundamentalists. The fear of the Islamic sect has now become the beginning of wisdom. Many people have been killed by them. Property worth millions of naira have been destroyed since 2009, by the organization which seeks to establish a "pure Islamic state in Nigeria (Forest, 2012) has carried out several attacks on national security and public institutions, schools, markets, churches and mosque, telecommunication equipment and international institutions such as the United Nations building in Abuja (Ibaba, 2016). Until the leadership structure is patterned in such a way that corruption is checked to suit the expectation of the people, society will keep witnessing and experiencing such degree of insecurity. For Akinoya (2009) "The leaders mismanaged the economy and these results in the continuing manifestation of a dog eat dog ethos which has become a common feature of the Nigerian society."

Religion:

Religion is a moment of quietness that requires relating with God. It is the process that requires man's humble moment with God, either in prayers, praises or request of whatever kind, whether it is through Christianity or Moslem as the case may be. According to Durkheim (1965), religion is a unified system of belief and practices relative to sacred things. Marx (1967) sees it as "the sub of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, the spirit of conditions utterly unspiritual. It is the opium of the poor. The idea of God is the keynote of a perverted civilization. To suppress religion which promotes and illusory happiness, is to establish the claims of real happiness. (p. 140)". Unfortunately, this mode of worship has turned many Nigerians against themselves. As a matter of fact, it has become a major source of disunity as far as the country is concerned. Many people have lost their lives in the process of worshipping God in various ways. Over the years, through the early post colonial period many African countries confronted a number of religions and political problems most of which resulted in severe political upheavals and economic distractions (Asike, 2017). People have had their prosperity destroyed and their rights violated because of religion. Apart from the division it has created on both sides of the divide, there is bitter acrimony even among members of the same religion because of sexual abuse by some of the leaders. Again, the issue of fraud, distrust, among others have increased the degree of hatred and animosity amongst all. It has even resulted in hate speeches and other unpleasant remarks by the supposed worshipers of both religions.

Poverty:

Poverty is a strong cause of insecurity in Nigeria. A man who is naturally poor is an unhappy person. But when the poverty is provoked by man's wickedness to man, poor governance, unemployment, selfishness, deprivations as it is currently the case in Nigeria, it can trigger insecurity. The situation in Nigeria has become so alarming that a man without job, naturally blames it upon the government, since it is the legitimate and functional responsibility of every existing government to make provision for jobs. In the absence of this, the environment is charged with a lot of vitriolic and unrepentant activities of people with idle minds. Poverty therefore (Njoku, 2004) dehumanized individuals and robs them of dignity. It pushes under-aged children to assume the position of adults and this leads to child abuse. In very recent time, it is poverty that has pushed people into a lot of terrible things that were not originally in our culture. There are cases of people who use their fellow human beings for ritual purpose, a mother selling her child for ritual money and people feeding on human excreta for money. The list is endless. A society whose citizens are known for such dehumanizing practices is doom. Efforts therefore must be made to free ourselves from this shackle of underdevelopment and impoverishment.

Terrorism:

This is about those whose aim is to go about their property both in a calculated use to intimidate government. Similarly, Homeland Security says that terrorism has become a government threat. One thing is sure, it is that terrorism has killed and murdered. They are caused by lack of patriotism and aspirations of the Boko Haram, bandits (2015)", the world where none seems to

Bad Governance:

Leadership that is perceived to be overwhelming and a nuisance to the people. There is good governance (poor) as it is the case in Nigeria (2013) depicted years due to the unguarded reign of Kolawole (2021) cool, the security

Ethnic Consciousness:

than ever before. It has disunited the country. Elections, the state and voting over governance. Nigeria ways to enhance resources and most of us are ourselves in terror. Enjoy freedom,

Terrorism:

This is about the peak of the cause of insecurity in Nigeria. Terrorism is a violent attack by a group of individuals whose aim is to make an existing government unpopular by harassing, killing and maiming innocent citizens who go about their legitimate businesses. The actions of this blood thirsty group still extend to the destruction of property both private and public). According to the United State Department of Defense, terrorism is the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat to unlawful violence to inculcate fear intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological. Similarly, Hornby (2001), defines terrorism as use of violent actions in order to achieve political aims or to force a government to act in a manner prescribed by the groups. Whatever explanation or definition of terrorism, one thing is sure, it is provoked by poor governance, deprivations among others. Even if it must be acknowledged that terrorism has been with us particularly during the first and second republics when politicians were kidnaped and murdered, it has never been this alarming. According to Nwaorgu (2014), things do not just happened. They are caused. A people alienated from the state which continuously demands for their increased loyalty and patriotism are bound to be irritated". Government over the years has always neglected the yearnings and aspirations of its subjects. Consequently, the manifestation and proliferations of different violent groups (Boko Haram, banditry, Fulani herdsmen, "yahooism") is the outcome of bad governance. According to Alapiki (2015)", the world has lost its innocence, not that there was much innocence earlier, but whatever there was, none seems to exist now".

Bad Governance:

Leadership that is tilted towards selfish and personal interest at the expense of the generality of the people is perceived to be an epitome of bad governance. The Nigerian ruling elite including the politicians created the overwhelming presence of the nauseating and aggressive looking youths that have constitute themselves as nuisance to the Nigerian society. There is hardly any section of the six geo-political zones of the country where there is good governance. The effect of the bad governance in these zones includes bad roads, unemployment, diseases, absence of electricity, promotion of class differences among others. Bad governance (political economic and social governance) is among the major causes of the problems facing nations as it is threatening to undermine the nation's democratization process (Shabbir, 2004). Again, Zumve et al (2013) depict the contemporary Nigeria as a threat of genocide, bloodshed and insecurity over the past three years due to the carnage activities of terrorists groups of various groups and camps. Again, the flippant and unguarded remarks of some of our leaders have exacerbated the insecurity in the country. According to Kolawole (2021) "When Gumi and some governors say that banditry is not a crime and that carrying AK-47 is cool, the security agencies are being undermined."

Ethnic Consciousness: The promotion of ethnicity by leaders of Nigeria has further divided this country more than ever before. This attitude of the political class towards pursuing personal interest has polarized and disunited the country. Consequently, everything in the country is now being done towards ethnic line. During elections, the situation is even more glaring to see. You see members of a particular ethnic nationality queuing and voting overwhelmingly for their tribesmen or women. This has hindered democracy and progressive governance. Nnoli (1978) believes that ethnicity arises from the desire of individuals to organize themselves in ways to enhance their competitive efficiency in a situation where they perceive each other as competing for resources and positions. Corroborating the position of Nnoli, [Ake 1996: 24] opined that some of us perhaps most of us are prone to giving loyalty to the community, the ethnic or national group. Life tends to define ourselves in terms of these identities and it is in oneness with them that we become intelligible to ourselves, enjoy freedom, pursue interest and actualize our potentialities.

State Neglect:

Politics of our country has been skewed and tailored to suit the interest of small group and section of the country and state respectively. The consequence of this is that development is slowed down as infrastructural facilities are narrowed to areas where massive votes were gotten during elections. Thus, leading to the mismanagement of the economy as some sections are completely prevented from tapping from the national cake.

Akinoya (2009) noted that the leaders mismanaged the economy and this results in the continuing manifestation of a dog eat dog ethos which has become a common feature of the society. Everybody is desperate to overcome the inadequacies of life even when those who have been supposedly elected to make provision for just and egalitarian society. I think good governance that is anchored on effective and humane distribution of goods and services will make a better and happy society.

Good governance climate ensures that enhancement of the responsiveness, transparency and accountability of the state and the empowerment of the people (Ejumudo, 2009: 8).

Population Explosion:

In contemporary time, towns/cities have been invaded by the overwhelming presence of people from different work of life. This unprecedented number of persons was given rise to undue competition over scarce resources. This consequently has resulted to conflict which has gradually brought about increase in crime, insecurity of various kinds (Fulani herdsmen, banditry etc). For instance the grazing issue in Nigeria has resulted to wanton destruction of lives and property. This unpleasant development arose because of the unhealthy competition for scarce resources (land).

Added to the above is the lackadaisical attitude of government. Never in the history of Nigeria has existing institutions of government charged with the responsibility of maintaining peace and order been so relax and unpatriotic. Agree that there are instances where government representative address the security lapses in the country. But, this is very rare. The number of times they have been so unpatriotic and bizarre in their attitude to security challenges have been more than the degree of commitment. Consequently, this give room for the bandits, kidnappers and Fulani herdsmen to always strike and make the situation seem as if there are no law enforcement agents in place. According to Nwabufo (2021), "Genocides or mass killings do not just happen. They are usually harbingered by conspiracy theories of ethnic and religious complexions, sentiments, skewed and perceptions and assumptions." So, the law enforcement agencies must wake up to their duties irrespective of ethnic and religious affiliation. We have seen instances where some of the law enforcement agents are sympathetic to the course of the "Boko haramists," thereby colluding with them to do havoc to the country. This is not right. "Our security forces must collaborate to take the bandits and terrorists cover and restore the forest the enable our law abiding citizens to erigage in legitimate farming and livestock production (Eze, 2021).

The Porous nature of our border is another cause of insecurity in the country. Those who are paid to do the job often time compromise with the rules of the game. This condemnable action arise from friendliness of the custom officers, police etc with the arsonists, killers, amongst others. It is this high degree of familiarity, bribery that more often than not enable the criminals outside the shores of our country to infiltrate and invade the states/towns with sophisticated weapons in recent time, killing and maiming innocent citizens who are legitimately going after their jobs.

Implications

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Implications of Insecurity in Nigeria

The overwhelming presence of insecurity in Nigeria has some negative implications in the socio-economic development of Nigeria. Below are some of the bad and ugly implications:

1. **Under Development of the Economy:** The Nigerian economy over the years has been made impoverished by the negative and ugly manifestations of the activities of these agents of insecurity. For instance, the activities of the Fulani herdsmen, banditry and Boko Haram have adversely affected the development of Nigeria. This is because of the fear and anxiety which the activities of these hoodlums have created.
2. **Lack of Foreign Investment:** Foreign investors have ceased coming to the country to invest. This is because of the unending and overzealous display of powers towards the violent and the attendant effect of death by the Boko Haram insurgents.
3. **Distrust:** The Nigerian society is having the terrible effect of distrust arising from peoples negative and terrible behaviours. It must however be acknowledged that in the time past, there were traits of such vices but not as alarming as it is presently. Almost all sectors of the Nigerian society are enmeshed with some level of distrust and dishonesty.
4. **Disarticulation of the Economy:** Again, the society has poorly been structured because of the potency for wealth and recognition. Not many are committed to the betterment and results of their offices, vis-a-vis the sustainability of the economy. Those who are privileged to make decisions make decision that are more often than not, not to the betterment of the economy. Decision taken sometimes is borne out of purely personal interest and not to genuinely co-ordinate and developed the economy.
5. **Abuse of the Rule of Law:** The degree of violence in Nigeria has made it almost obvious for everyone to see that some persons are above the law. Many a times, the Fulani herdsmen persistent violation of peoples right has made most Nigerians feel that they are above the law since no man has been prosecuted. The same applies to Boko Haram insurgents. More often than not, they are even granted amnesty. A justification to do more wrong and get rewarded for doing bad. No society develop with such alarming rate of human violation.

Impact of Insecurity on the Socio-economic activities in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

Having considered some of the implications of insecurity in Nigeria, there is need to critically examine some of the possible impact it has on the Socio-economic activities in Nigeria's fourth republic. Below are;

1. **Breakdown of Social Values:** There is a general disconnect between the elders and youths of the society. The African tradition believes in respect for tradition and culture which to a very large extent permeate the social fabrics of our society. Very unfortunately, these traditional and cultural ties that are anchored on social relationship have completely disappeared from the relationship between the elders and those they are supposed to lead. This is obviously because of the high degree of the belligerent attitude exhibited by the youths, arising from their ill gotten wealth.
2. **Lack of Hope in the System:** The general attitudes of the youths, the elders, the elite and the political class have made the system almost unworkable. There appears apparently to be no bond holding us together. Because of the high level of distrust that kept us relatively far from each other. Honesty in our society was the watchword in the time past. The symbolic relationship that existed amongst all was purely based on trust, which consequently gave the system some semblance of hope. In recent times, the penchant for money and fame has eroded this trust. Consequently, the Nigerian society is drifting left and right. There is a high degree of hopelessness and emptiness in the entire system.
3. **Influx of Western Culture Imitation:** This is another terrible effect of insecurity. The high degree of dependence of the ex-colonies on the culture of the developed industrialized countries of the western world is our greatest mistake. Permit me to say that violence is totally alien to the African culture.

Our desire for western visitation/relationship has erroneously given us the bad side of their culture which by implication has impeded our discipline life style. For instance, it is unAfrican to see a fellow African shoot his fellow with a gun at the slightest provocation. This obviously is the life-style of the white. Certainly not ours. Unfortunately, some of us have considered this as a means of settling conflict.

4. **Tension and Fear:** There is hardly any section of society that is not living in fear. Either that problem is emanating from the Fulani herdsmen or it is from the kidnapers and Boko Haram insurgents. You could see shopkeepers practically locking their shops with protector while carrying out the daily services for fear of being attacked. Unfortunately too, some of the law enforcement agents do not help matters as they are seen in some instances conniving with hoodlums. The situation is so appalling that people generally live in constant fear.
5. **Poor produce of Agricultural Products:** The unending insecurity has retarded the productive output of farmers as a good number of them no longer go to farm as usual for fear of being lynched or maimed by the blood thirsty hoodlums. Consequently, there is the scarcity of farm produce which resulted to increase in food stuff as very few and scarce commodities are available in the market.

Conclusion

The forgoing analysis reveal without prejudice that insecurity in Nigeria has rendered the Nigerian economy comatose. This is obviously arising from the fact that governance in Nigeria leaves much to be desired. No right thinking man wakes up and takes up to crime as a means to survive. Even if some people are involved in it, this is comparatively very rare. For every existing system to survive the leadership must be focus, strong and purposeful. The Nigeria society unfortunately lacks some of the virtues of leadership. This poor attitude towards leadership is clearly manifested during elections. There are situations where even those given leadership responsibilities are seen giving bribes to the electorate that may not have the economic power to vote according to his conscience. The situation especially in Nigeria speaks to us of disappointed hopes and squandered opportunities and of a state that has been tottering on the edge of a cliff (Ekekwe, 2015). Supporting the above, Ndu (2016) has this to say "In the light of the above it would appear that corruption is not only just a matter of stealing money from the coffers of the state or collecting bribes which lead a great many to think of corruption in only in relation to politicians and the police it seems to me that every act of indiscipline which has money for its end is an act of corruption". So to reduce the challenge of insecurity in order to promote a society of healthy living and growth, effort must be made to eschew poor governance, insecurity, amongst others.

Recommendations

The following factors have been advanced in order to curb the problem of insecurity in Nigeria;

1. **Job Creation:** Genuine and concerted efforts should be made by government towards the jobless youths. This is because a busy man is a grateful man. When a man has something occupying him, little or no effort will be devoted to things that are trivial.
2. **Self Reliance:** Again, government should come up with a policy that will enable every citizen to look inward in the development of his country. Perhaps, the type of policy that was introduced by Julius Nyerere of Tanzania when he came up with policy of Arusha Declaration in 1967. The policy was anchored on a villagisation policy called "Ujamaa". Here, every citizen of Tanzania was expected to be involved in agriculture. The idea was to discourage foreign importation.
3. **Discipline:** One of the problems working against the progress of our society, which consequently has resulted to insecurity, is indiscipline. Government again must come up with very stringent measures against violators of rules and regulations of society. Whether we like it or not discipline is part of development. The desire to live harmoniously while punishing offenders of law makes society develop faster.

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4. **Implementation of the Concept of Rule of Law:** No one should be made to be above the law. An offender of the law irrespective of his/her status in the society must be made to face trial and if found guilty should be punished accordingly.
5. **Leadership as a Course in the Secondary Schools:** While appreciating the fact that leadership is a course in the higher institution, it must be made a subject at the secondary school level. The idea is for students at that primordial stage of learning to get acquainted with the rudiments of settling conflicts and preventing issues that may lead to insecurity of lives and property.

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