

ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION AND ITS EFFECTS ON HUMAN SECURITY: THE NIGERIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Though various forms of crime which has given rise to insecurity are on the increase in the world today, the prevalence of crime among the poor and poor nations of the world is a pointer to the fact that a strong relationship exist between economic wellbeing and human security. This study investigates the dangers economic deprivation poses on human security. It is an attempt to investigate the claim that those who are in wants are not only exposed to threat but also constitute threats. Insecurity is a global issue as no nation can claim to be totally free from security challenges. Nigeria, though richly blessed economically, is unfortunately plagued with all sorts of security challenges ranging from terrorism, banditry, insurgency, militancy, cultism, kidnapping to armed robbery among other violent crimes. Many of these crimes are caused by economic hardship occasioned by socio-economic deprivation. This work, having thoroughly investigated the causes of economic deprivation in Nigeria, its consequences on human security has suggested ways of tackling economic deprivation. It is the conclusion of this work that, a better means of livelihood and a secured means of economic sustenance can enhance human security leading to a peaceful society. This position is premised on the assumption that human security is the gateway to all other forms of securities.

Introduction

The world in which man lives is very complex and multifaceted .Therefore, man's ability to adjust depends to a large extent on his ability in meeting his daily needs. This is because man functions optimally when he lives in a proper environment with his basic needs met. On the other hand, economic deficiency militates against one's ability at living a fulfilled life. Unfortunately, despite government efforts, the world is yet to attain equality of economic opportunities for every citizen. As a result, a large part of the world population, particularly those of developing countries are deprived of adequate means of economic sustenance. This deprivation has led to many being very dissatisfied and easily triggered to violence at any provocation.

Again, the constant decline in peace experienced in the world today points to the fact that as far as security of life and property is concerned, a lot remains undone. This situation calls for urgent attention. This is because where there is no peace, development remains an illusion. Though the relationship between peace and development is a known fact, sadly, several countries of the world are more interested in national security, trying to defend their territorial

integrity and institutions and neglecting human security. This is evidence in the policies enacted by governments to ensure the survival and safety of their nations, diplomatic relations with other nations, economic and military powers. But, over prioritizing national security at the expense of human security is a pointer to a total lack of understanding of the fact that human security is the gateway to any other form of security. Human security is at the forefront of any other form of security. This explains why some nations that are territorially well defended from external aggressors are not immune to other forms of internal security challenges.

Nigeria at present has **witnessed an unprecedented increase in the level of insecurity.** These include Boko Haram insurgency, armed robbery, Militancy, cultism, piracy, kidnapping, herdsmen, armed banditry and others. Though poverty, peer influence, religious fundamentalism, family condition, unemployment and deprivation may have accounted for some degree of crime in the world today, the fact remains that where there is crime, insecurity strives since there exist a strong link between both. Again, though it may be very unacceptable to blame the failure of government for all forms of insecurity in Nigeria, government has a lot to do if life and property must be adequately secured.

Furthermore, in an attempt to live up to her responsibility, Nigeria has spent a lot and continues to budget so much yearly on security. The breakdown of Nigeria 2019 budget shows that N435.62 billion was budgeted for the Ministry of Defense. Though Nigeria yearly budgets have shown the good will of the government towards solving many issues in Nigeria, what is on ground leaves much to be desired. If government as could be seen from her yearly budget is sincerely spending this much on education, agriculture, science and technology, in the development of the Niger Delta region that has for years been ravaged by environmental pollution due to oil exploration thereby depriving many of their genuine means of sustenance, how can the high level of insecurity in the country be explained. If the citizens of Nigeria are effectively educated, well employed for self-sustenance and not economically deprived of means of livelihood, why is there increase in crime and human insecurity in the country? These and others are some questions that beg for answers.

For some, peace and security in Nigeria can only be guaranteed if government at all levels is willing to genuinely do enough to confront the situation as supposed. This is true to some extent. To others who are of the opinion that some security situations are politically motivated aimed at serving the interest of some politicians who may have been dissatisfied, a solution goes beyond guns and ammunition procured for fighting crimes by the government. This too, may not be false. Whatever the reasons for insecurity and how justified the reasons may appear to be, the need for peace remains non-negotiable for a nation that knows that peace and security are the bedrocks for development.

Again, though the government may not be out rightly accused of paying deaf ear to the problem of insecurity in Nigeria considering her many attempts at solutions, government inability to realize that the starting point to a lasting solution to any problem is the ability to discover its cause(s) seems to constitute a problem as well. Spending so much money in buying ammunition to fight crime may not really be the solution to some insecurity challenges. This is because some crimes are only effects with some underlying causes. To tackle such crime properly, the cause must be known and tackled too. Therefore, while ammunition may be useful in combating terrorism and other high profile crimes, human insecurity caused by economic deprivation cannot be solved through procurement of ammunition but through improved standard of living. As such, until the Nigerian government understands the reasons

behind human insecurity in Nigeria, a proper solution may still be very far from her reach as spending much on the purchase of ammunition without providing sources of employment which will enhance economic wellbeing of the citizens may tantamount to chasing the wind.

Moreover, most of Nigeria human security challenges are not so much about external threats but internal though emboldened by some external assistance and influence. No doubt, external influence can only have its way when the internal situations provide a fertile ground for it. Evidently, the Nigerian government with all the resources at her disposal to provide adequately for the needs of her citizens has performed below average. Corruption, lack of social amenities, ineffective education, poor economic planning, ethnic and civil unrest have deprived many Nigerians of their means of sustenance. If the government were sincere in its fight against corruption, funds could have been saved for social and economic development. Through effective education, jobs opportunities could have been created. Through proper economic planning, economic policies reforms, more economic opportunities could have been created to fight unemployment. If resources were equitably distributed, civil unrest could have been drastically curbed. Proper health services could have resulted in a healthy populace that could have translated into a better workforce. All these could have reduced economic deprivation, enhanced human standard of living and nipped some crime at the bud. Thus, with a better and improved standard of living, human security can be improved and crime reduced.

Definition of Terms

Economic Deprivation

The term economic deprivation is a compound term coined from two words “economic” and “deprivation”. The compound word separated, we have deprivation and economic. For a better understanding, the two words shall be defined separately before joined together. Deprivation is a word that has many dimensions. As a term, deprivation is used in both scientific as well as day to day discourses. As such, deprivation has as many definitions as its usages. Misra and Tripathi, define the term deprivation from its etymological point of view as “derived from the verb 'to deprive' which means to dispose or strip a person or an object of something” (*Deprivation: Its Social Roots and Psychological Consequences* 32). In this context, deprivation implies a loss felt. It is a damaging lack of material benefits considered to be basic necessities in life. On the other hand the word “economic” is defined as “the study of how people allocate scarce resources for production, distribution, and consumption, both individually and collectively” (*Investopedia*). From the two definitions stated above, the term economic deprivation therefore refers to the lack/denial of means or material resources and economic benefits considered to be of essence towards an improved standard of living.

Human Security

Human security can be defined either in connection with human development or by focus on armed conflict and the abuse of human rights. Defined in connection with human development, human security refers to “*freedom from want*” (Gómez, Oscar A. and Gasper, Des. *Human Security: A Thematic Guidance Note for Regional and National Human Development Report Teams*). Defined in relation to armed conflicts, human security means “*freedom from fear*” (Gómez, Oscar A. and Gasper, Des). The United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) in its human development report of 1994 defines human security as “safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression [and] protection from

sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life” (UNDP 1994 Report 23). This definition also embraces both the notion of human security as freedom from wants and freedom from fear. The focus of human security according to this definition is the protection of individuals. According to Ball, threat to human security covers though not restricted to “ill-health and disease, lack of education, absence of basic sanitation and access to clean drinking water, malnutrition, environmental degradation and preventable disasters, to political repression, violence and armed conflict” (*Human security and human development: Linkages and opportunities*, 2001). The 2003 Commission on Human Security in its report captioned “*Human Security Now: Protecting and Empowering People*.” defines human security as a process of “protecting people's fundamental freedoms from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations (4)”. From the various definitions offered above, though human security is a complex issue requiring a holistic approach, human security has to do with protection of the human person from wants and fear.

Forms of Economic Deprivation

Any form of human deprivation culminates in a lack of human capabilities, opportunities, choices, values, and basic needs. Economic deprivation defined as the lack/denial of resources or material benefits considered to be basic necessities for a well lived life takes varieties of forms in various societies. In Nigeria, economic deprivation expresses itself in the various forms in which some Nigerians are deprived of resources or material benefits, income or revenue which in turn affects health, education, food, shelter and other basic needs of man. Thus economic deprivation occurs in forms such as lack of or inadequate employment, low and inadequate income, lack of unemployment benefit, lack of child support, lack of adequate pension and lack of life and property insurance.

Causes and Effects of Economic Deprivation on Human Security

A strong link undeniably exists between economic conditions and human security. This position has been corroborated by various economists, psychologists and security experts. Again, as noted in “*Poverty Reduction and Human Security*” published in March 2006 by Japan Institute for International Cooperation, “human security comprises of two main issues: “freedom from violent conflict (fear)” and “freedom from deprivation (want).” Since want and fear are not separable phenomena, “want may imply fear, while fear may generate further want”. (xiii). This confirms that deprivation (absence of wants), leads to fear. Lack, creates fear. What then causes economic deprivation in Nigeria and how does this lack generate fear?

In Nigeria, several reasons are responsible for deprivation which adversely affects human security. These include lack of good employment, civil unrest and ethnic conflicts, endemic corruption and wrong economic planning, policy development, lack of effective education and job oriented education.

Lack of Employment

Majority of Nigerians depends on monthly salary from the government or private sector for their survival. Nigeria on the other hand depends more on oil for her income and economic growth. According to “*Nigerian Gross Domestic Product Report Q2 2015*”, oil exports contribute 9% to the GDP of Nigeria. The oil sector sadly employs only very few Nigerians. Sadly too, much of the oil revenue that is sourced from the rural areas is spent developing the cities though greater percentages of Nigerians live in the rural areas of the country. Again, the Nigerian oil sector employs more foreigners as experts than her citizens. With this, many

Nigerians especially rural dwellers are left unemployed. Also, the Agricultural sector which before now had been the mainstay of the Nigeria economy currently contributes not much to the Nigeria GDP and employs not many Nigerians. With the oil sector taken over by foreigners, and the agricultural sector partially abandoned, the rate of unemployment in the country and especially among rural dwellers has gone down drastically.

The process of oil extraction in the Niger Delta region has resulted in environmental pollution and degradation. Many farmlands have been rendered unfit for utilization for agricultural purposes. This has caused further harm to the agricultural sector. Farmers-herdsmen clashes, kidnapping, armed banditry have either prevented farmers or discouraged others from agricultural activities. All these have led to many persons remaining either unemployed or without a steady means of livelihood.

Ethnic Conflict and Civil Unrest

Most parts of Nigeria are embroiled in one ethnic conflict or the other. While some of these unrests are as a result of poverty, political misunderstanding and ethnic differences, some are caused by religious intolerance. All these conflicts result in both economic and human losses which further deprive people of their means of livelihood. A case at hand is what is presently happening in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Civil unrest caused by the displeasure of the local communities with oil companies has threatened oil production resulting in the closure of oil companies. The folding up of any company implies the laying off of staff. When persons are laid off, means of sustenance are deprived and human security is threatened.

Corruption

The World Bank and Transparency International (TI) define corruption as “the misuse of public office for private gain.” (19-20). Corruption therefore involves the improper and unlawful use of public good and services by public or civil servants for their selfish benefits. Corruption distorts resource allocation and government performance. Corruption has been one of the greatest problems in Nigeria. Due to her large population, vast land mass coupled with ethnic segmentation, Nigeria runs a federal system of government. This system of government requires that control of revenues be allowed and shared between federal, states and local governments. The revenues are meant for the provision of public services. Unfortunately, lack of proper regulatory and monitoring body has given way to uncontrolled level of corruption. This has hindered poverty alleviation efforts to a large extent, as resources which could have been used to provide public goods and services which could have created economic opportunities for Nigerians are being misappropriated. In Nigeria, a lot of economic deprivation is caused by corruption.

Wrong Economic Planning and Policies

Having been blessed with so much abundant natural and human resources, the energy sector plays a vital role in the growth of the Nigerian economy. In 1958 crude oil was discovered in Nigeria. Several years after its discovery, oil had dominated the Nigerian economy. Over the years, Nigeria has gained a lot from sales of oil as revenue. Paradoxically, Nigeria so blessed has one of the highest numbers of poor people in the world. One begins to wonder why a country such as Nigeria so highly endowed has fared so badly in economic growth. Why has so little been done in terms of human development in Nigeria? Besides, the Niger Delta region, the main producer of oil in Nigeria though being the engine of Nigeria's economy has been the least developed.

The problem in Nigeria has always been wrong economic planning and bad policy. Though oil revenues had impacted the economy positively for years, due to lack of foresight and proper planning, the profit from oil seems to have been spent not judiciously. The abandonment of the Nigerian agricultural sector where majority of Nigerians relied for sustenance during the oil boom led to a catastrophic drop in agricultural exports. Non-agricultural wages dropped massively as the labour workers became only interested in the oil sector jobs. With the decline in oil prices coupled with the abandonment of the non-oil sector, there came a continued decline in wages and unemployment.

Lack of Effective Education

Today, our world is increasingly knowledge-driven. This means that survival in today's world requires effective education and skills to thrive in a competitive marketplace. Also, employers of labour today need workers who can solve problems. Yet, only few Nigerians can pass this test of employability. The important qualities, skills and competencies that people need to be successful and productive workers seem in short supply among Nigerians seeking for employment. This is because the Nigerian educational system has failed in several areas. Facilities in schools are obsolete, vocational education and career counseling are not seen as priorities, retraining of educational staff to be updated is not prioritized and funding to the educational sector is grossly inadequate. The resultant effect of this is an educational system that produces graduates that cannot be employed by others or create employment themselves.

The Way out for Nigeria

As noted in the introductory part of this work, to effectively tackle human insecurity, economic deprivation as its cause has to be tackled. Having analyzed the causes of economic deprivation and its effects on human security as it affects Nigeria, few ways in which the growing threat to human security could be reduced shall be suggested.

Effective Education

Education has a substantial impact on employment prospects. Employment oriented education provides essential skills and knowledge required to succeed in certain occupation or profession. It helps to produce skilled required for the development of different sectors of any country's economy. It develops creative ability in an individual that is essential not only for employment but also for employment generation. That crime rate among the uneducated is higher than those who are educated goes to buttress the position that education influences employment. Since those deprived of effective education are prone to crime, to reduce insecurity in Nigeria, the educational system has to be improved. Improving the education system in Nigeria will enhance skills and readiness for work. Also reforms in the curriculum of studies for schools to ensure that students are engaged in relevant, challenging, vocational and career counseling will not only expose students to career opportunities but will prepare them to be employers of labour.

Proper Economic Planning, Reforms, Expansion of Economic Opportunities and Equitable Distribution of Resources

As quoted by Nipun, S in "What is Economic Planning?" B.C. Tandon defines economic planning as "arrangement of resources which are scarce in relation to the needs for their alternative uses in such a way that the satisfaction yielded by them is maintained at an

optimum level”. In the sense stated above, economic planning involves choice between limited means aimed at arriving at a fixed purpose. For Dickinson, as quoted in *“Managing Natural Resources for Development in Africa: A Resource Book”* “Economic planning is the making of major economic decisions by the conscious decision of a determinate authority, on the basis of a comprehensive survey of a country's existing and potential resources and a careful study of the needs of the people” (7). Since the aim of economic life is the satisfaction of human needs and wants which are many in demands, every economic activities of any serious minded society should be directed towards satisfying human needs with scarce human and natural resources. The limited nature of resources in relation to the demands therefore calls for proper choices and decisions on its allocation.

Since the primary economic problem faced especially by countries richly endowed but with many poor citizens is improper allocation of scarce resources to satisfy human wants in a manner that brings maximum satisfaction, proper economic planning will go a long way to ameliorating poverty. If policy planners in Nigeria could consciously and carefully think-out processes that will help in efficient distribution of the country's available resources in order to realize some basic objectives such as expansion of economic opportunities, equitable distribution of resources and employment, many security challenges occasioned by poor economic wellbeing could be solved even without ammunitions. Since reducing human insecurity in Nigeria will mean creating more opportunities for income earning, Nigeria needs proper economic planning which involves having some definite aims and objectives.

Proper Health Services

A healthy nation is a wealthy nation. Also, a healthy workforce is a productive workforce. Therefore, an improved healthcare system translates into a robust economic growth which can reduce poverty rate. Unfortunately, Nigeria is presently battling with health challenges such as malaria, tuberculosis and infant and maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS, polio and others. All these, poor health services coupled with the inability of many Nigerians to have access to good health services due to low economic status impacts negatively on productivity. In order to end poverty, investment in health and health education must be improved. Remarking on October 2017 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, Babatunde Osotimehin of the United Nations Population Fund argued that “when countries age structures change favourably, meaning that they have more people of working age than dependents, they can see a boost to development provided that they empower, educate and employ their young people.”

Sustained Fight against Corruption

Nigeria is a country with one of the highest numbers of anti-corruption agencies in the world but sadly Nigeria is one of the most corrupt nations. With the Codes of Conduct bureau, the Tribunal, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, the Police, The Judiciary, Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), Public Complaints Commission and other Security Agencies, corruption would have been unheard of in Nigeria. But the reverse is the case. In order to fight economic deprivation and reduce human insecurity, the Nigerian government must be sincere in her fight against corruption. Fighting corruption will entail encouraging the rule of law. This can only be achievable when the institutions of law are strengthened. Institution that needs to be strengthened include the Nigerian Judiciary, which is itself the custodian of laws and order. But when the judiciary is itself corrupt as it is the case in Nigeria, the problem is compounded. Again, the capacity and integrity of enforcement need to be enhanced. Law without enforcement remains powerless. The power, value and strength

of any law is in its enforcement. The police and other law enforcement agencies are embroiled in corruption. Eradication or reduction of corruption will save Nigeria enough funds to take care of the needs of the populace thereby reducing poverty and human insecurity. *Actionaid* affirms this when it states that “taking care of corruption is taking care of poverty”. Government should strengthen anti-corruption institutions by putting up strong and independent bodies that can help ensure that the acceptable standards of behavior are respected in both the private and public sector. In addition, the need also to have the public enlightened on the ills of corruption is important. This is because “the public itself bears a large share of responsibility for insisting on honesty and integrity in government and business” (Arlacchi 3). Parents and care givers need to inculcate into the young good values and the spirit of integrity.

Conclusion

If as opined by Marxist theory, crime is a response aimed at recapitalization, a reorganization of the distribution of resources in a more equitable manner, human insecurity is a response aimed at building a society where everyone can enjoy freedom from fear and freedom from deprivation. Marx's theory helps to clarify why deprivation is linked to crime and insecurity.

For decades, it has wrongly been thought by many that world security could be preserved by maintaining national security. However, the current rise in insecurity index among world powers with strong National Guard indicates that security is a complex reality that requires a new philosophy and approach to be properly handled. No gains saying that national security depends on human security which protects people and society from multiple threats affecting human life, means of livelihood and dignity. Therefore, a threat to ones means of livelihood is a threat to human security and vice versa. If human security aims at strengthening people's ability at realizing their potentials, economic deprivation constitutes a big threat towards the realization of human security.

Moreover, the declaration by the Millennium Summit of 2000 of poverty reduction as one of the most significant Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Japan's “Official Development Assistance Charter (new ODA charter)” revised in 2003 declaration of human security as one of its five fundamental principles go to show the link between deprivation and human security. Since want and fear are inseparable, human security “requires an integrated approach that incorporates both aspects” (Poverty Reduction and Human Security, xiii). Unfortunately Nigeria, a country richly blessed has experienced an increase in security threats of all sorts. Due to lack of effective and job oriented education, many who have graduated from schools have remained jobless. Wrong economic planning and policy implementation which has led to years of wasteful spending have deprived millions of employment opportunity. Corruption that has eaten deep into the fabrics of the Nigerian government has also resulted in many citizens deprived of basic infrastructures. Ethnic conflicts and farmer herdsman crisis have left many whose source of sustenance was agriculture without means of livelihood. Long years of negligence of the Niger Delta have led to civil unrest that has not only affected the nation economy but has sent millions off jobs. All these and others have resulted in economic deprivation that has posed a serious challenge on human security. Though much harm has already been done, all hope is not lost. By equitably and fairly distributing available human resources, some human security challenges can be reduced. This is because some security issues stem from the perception of marginalization in the provision of basic social amenities which has become a primary source of disaffection, resentment and civil unrest. Ethno-religious violence which stems from wrong indoctrination and wrong religious/cultural beliefs among various ethnic and religious groups should be discouraged.

Lastly human security remains elusive if there is no good governance. Only good leadership can assure the implementation of good policies that will reduce or eliminate insecurity. With a new concept of human security, which equates security with people rather than territories, with development rather than arms, investing in human development, rather than in arms will translate to a more secured society.

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