

Article

## Insecurity And National Development in Nigeria: A Qualitative Assessment Of The Northeast

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**Abstract:** Nigeria has witness continuous rise in insecurity with the Northeast as the center of security discourse. Insecurity poses diverse challenges to national development especially economic development. This study examines the divers' causes of insecurity arising from the Northeast with its implication's national development. The study is guided by the following research questions; what are the possible causes of insecurity in Northeast Nigeria which hinders national development? and what are the implications of insecurity recorded in Northeast Nigeria on national development? with an objective of identifying the causes of insecurity in Northeast which hinders national development among others. The study is anchored on the Frustration-Aggression theory while secondary sources of data were used to gather the required data for the study. The generated data was analyzed with the use of content and thematic analysis. The study findings amongst others revealed that insecurity in Northeast Nigeria has hampered national development and that the country cannot record development strides without peace. The study therefore recommends among others that; the government at all levels should create job opportunities with improved governance, and that the government must intensify its fight against corruption.

**Keywords:** Insecurity, National Development, Corruption, Northeast

### 1. Introduction

Development is the act or process of progressing and improving from one point to another with a record of positive changes and attributes. The goal of every society is to witness continuous development across all sectors and within her physical setting. The United Nations (1986) describes development as a comprehensive process that encompasses economic, social, cultural, and political dimensions. What this means is that development can be economic expansion, political stability, social equality, and technological advancement all of which are geared towards improving the well-being citizens or a particular society. National development therefore is the enhancement of the deferent sectors within a country, enabling them to effectively compete with other countries economically, politically, and technologically.

To Ajaebili (2013) the primary objective of national development in any country is to achieve lasting and favourable improvements in the quality of life and the endeavours of its citizenry this is because national development reflects the state of any society. Nevertheless, Nigeria has long been plagued by continuous incidents of insecurity which hinders its progress towards achieving complete national development. Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria has been striving to establish a stable and functional political system, free from socio-political instability, insecurity and other national issues. The country has witnessed an unprecedented security challenge, which has led to a substantial rise in insecurity because of the activities carried out by different militia groups. These activities include insurgency in the South-south region, kidnapping in the Southeast,

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targeted killings for political reasons and ritualistic murders in the Southwest, religious extremism, acts of terrorism, and organized criminal operations in different parts of the Northern region, notably the Northeast.

These societal threats exacerbate feelings of insecurity and hinder Nigeria's progress towards national development, while negatively impacting the country's international reputation. According to Idoniboye-obu *et al.* (2022) Northern Nigeria has experienced several security issues including banditry, abduction of adults and school children, and the criminal encroachment on villages and farmlands by herdsmen. These and others hinder government efforts of infrastructural and economic development all of which leads to national development.

Arising from the above, insecurity presents a substantial threat to industrialization, societal development, educational development as well as citizen well-being. An atmosphere of insecurity drive away both local and international industries from contributing to the growth of a society. Inline with the above, Adeleke (2023) state that the prevailing insecurity in Nigeria has led to economic casualties, structural destruction, and the closure of multinational businesses with the country losing her foreign investors. More so, the local population are forced to leave their immediate communities for a safer location. No doubt the Nigerian authorities have been grappling with security challenges, notably in the Northeast area, as they strive to address the dangers presented by Boko Haram terrorists and other militia groups, however, more needs to be done if the country must achieve sustainable development.

Insecurity is a significant problem that impedes industrialization and sustainable development globally. Nigeria has experienced an unprecedented surge in insecurity, including incidents involving Fulani herdsmen, Boko Haram insurgencies, armed robberies, kidnappings, political and religious crises, murders, destruction of oil facilities by Niger Delta militants, child abductions, and human trafficking. Akonbede (2013) asserts that the crimes perpetrated by the Islamic group Boko Haram in the Northeast region include the vandalization of cars, destruction of churches, police stations, schools, hospitals, clinics, stores, army barracks, and residential residences. These problems have made security a top priority since it directly impacts the country's pursuit of national development. Furthermore, it has shifted the focus of the Federal government solely from developmental programs to the exclusive management of security.

The Northeast region of Nigeria, consisting of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe states, has been consistently drawing attention and concern due to the recurring and well-coordinated security challenges in the area. In a report by Punch newspaper in 2023, it was disclosed that a group of kidnappers abducted Zainab Abbas, who was identified as the spouse of a judge from the Adamawa State High Court, in the Jimeta area of Yola, the capital city of the state. This incident occurred after the armed individuals had previously invaded the same community and kidnapped Pastor Mike Ochigbo. Similarly, Agbana (2023) reported how the Adamawa State Police Command apprehended a 29-year-old individual named Abubakar Kawu for the claimed crimes of kidnapping and strangling a six-year-old child to death. Educational institutions have not been spared from the relentless attacks of insurgents and kidnappers. According to a report by Tyohemba and Ejike (2023) a staggering number of 1,591 school children have been abducted in Nigeria since 2014. This wave of kidnappings began when terrorists initially took 276 students from Chibok, Borno state.

More so, between 2014 and October 2023, more than 61 members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) were also kidnapped by bandits. If educational institutions and instructors are consistently subjected to kidnapping and terrorism, it would result in inadequate development of human capital. This is because education serves as the fundamental foundation of any country. In addition to the above, Yusuf (2017) stated that the occurrence of a terrorist attack on a mosque in Mubi, as well as a conflict between

herders and agricultural communities in the Numan local government area of Adamawa State resulted in the loss of several lives and caused injuries to many more.

Ola and Tukur (2015) stated that a large number of Boko Haram militants launched an invasion on Gombe, the capital city of Gombe state in Nigeria, while shooting indiscriminately at citizens and burning down buildings and commercial assets with the use of explosives. This resulted in the destruction of goods valued at billions of naira. The persistent attack on the commercial, educational, and infrastructural establishments of the nation impedes national development and simultaneously diminish the country's reputation internationally.

The aforementioned issues undoubtedly have significant effects on Nigeria's national development, as evidence reveals the economic drawbacks resulting from the persistent insecurity in the country. PremiumTimes (2023) revealed how the Vice President, Kashim Shettima, expressed concern about the detrimental effects of insecurity on the progress of the country. He said that the North-east region has suffered damages amounting to \$9 billion as a result of insurgency and other security difficulties. With Borno State alone incurring losses of \$6.8 billion (PremiumTimes, 2023). This study therefore aims to provide a comprehensive qualitative analysis on the consequences of insecurity in the Northeast region of Nigeria and its effects on the country's overall development.

The study is guided by the following research questions:

- i. What are the possible causes of insecurity in Northeast Nigeria which hinders national development?
- ii. What are the implications of insecurity recorded in Northeast Nigeria on national development?

#### **Research objectives**

- i. To identify the causes of insecurity in Northeast Nigeria which hinders national development.
- ii. To examine the implications of insecurity on national development especially in Northeast Nigeria.

#### **The concept of insecurity**

Insecurity refers to a state of danger, uncertainty, lack of protection, and absence of safety. To Akonbede (2013) insecurity is the state of experiencing anxiety as a result of an actual or perceived lack of protection. It is seen as a state of fear which affects the sanity or psychology of an individual thereby influencing their general state of mind. More so, Achumba *et al.* (2013) defines insecurity as the state of being susceptible to damage or disquiet, whereas anxiety is a broad and unpleasant emotion that emerges from anticipating impending misfortune.

The above definitions of insecurity underscore a major point that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen, but they are also vulnerable to the threats and dangers when they occur. In this study, insecurity is defined as the ongoing attacks by insurgents in Northeast Nigeria, which include actions such as abductions, bombings, and religious extremism among others all of which lead to unstable society, weak economic growth and hinders national development in Nigeria.

#### **National development**

As to Adagbabiri and Okolie (2016), national development encompasses the sustainable enhancement of both the material and spiritual aspects of a nation. This improvement should be achievable in a manner that upholds the preservation of human dignity. In order to promote the overall welfare of the population in terms of their economic, social, political, and technological progress, national development must encompass the consolidation of the country's national resources. Following a similar line of reasoning, Idike (2014) asserts that national development refers to the comprehensive

development of a given nation-state. In material terms, it refers to the welfare of a hidden majority of the population and a reduction in levels of inequality within a state.

Above all, national development implies the guarantee of security of life and property in the nation state. National development in the context of this study therefore refers to the progressive changes and transformation in the economic, social, political, demographic, scientific, ecological as well as technological life of a nation today, without jeopardizing the development of tomorrow.

### **Frustration Aggression theory**

This study is anchored on the Frustration-Aggression Theory (FAT) propounded by John Dollard (1939). According to Wendt (1999) this theory posits that violence in any society occurs when the aspirations of an individual or group is obstructed, thereby leaving the individual or group in a state of anger which then led to aggressive behaviour. Furthermore, if the underlying cause or rationale for the recognized dissatisfaction is not addressed or managed properly, the hostility is redirected onto an unsuspecting target, resulting in various forms of violence such as abduction, insurgency, assaults by gunmen, banditry, and killings, among others.

Therefore, when applied to this study, we can state emphatically that violence which arises because of government inability to meet the basic needs of the people in the Northeastern part of the country can further evolve into a high-level security challenge for the nation which if not controlled will hinder national development. This is because security challenges when not checked can escalate into national problem all of which hinders national development. Thus, for national development to be achieved, the government must provide good governance for the ordinary citizens such as the construction of good roads, drinking water, hospitals, schools, economic institutions amongst others all of which can bring about national development while also reducing insecurity in Nigeria through employment.

Moreso, the frustration-aggression theory can thus be used to explain riots, insurgent activities, and revolutions witnessed the world over with specific reference to Nigeria. In economic sense, the theory attempts to explain the correlation between poverty and insecurity, implying that emergence of conflicts especially in developing countries is caused by the prevalence of poverty and lack of good governance. Hence, for Nigeria to attain or achieve development, the government must as a matter of priority engage the teeming youths through the creation of jobs while also building educational facilities for all especially in the Northeast Nigeria.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

This study employed the descriptive research design. Descriptive research helps researchers collect data for the purpose of describing and interpreting existing conditions, attitude, opinions, beliefs, social phenomenon like insecurity (Ogunniyi, 1992). Secondary data were used for this study; thus, data were gotten from secondary sources such as textbooks, journals, seminar papers, newspapers, and other online materials related to insecurity and development. Content analysis was used in analyzing and interpreting the collected data. As a method of analyzing qualitative information, content analysis was used to determine the causes of insecurity in Nigeria.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### **Insecurity in the Northeast: The possible challenges hindering national development in Nigeria**

The importance of national security cannot be overstated in relation to the socio-economic progress of any nation. The industrial performance of an economy is a measure of its capacity to effectively utilize its resources and leverage its technical and managerial advancements to improve the quality of life of its citizens. Nevertheless, there are different

factors which contribute to the ongoing problem of insecurity in Nigeria. Nwagboso (2012) identified several causes of insecurity in Nigeria that are inimical to socio-economic growth and development. These challenges hamper the smooth flow of business activities in Nigeria. They include, but not limited to, the following:

- a. **Imposition of undesirable policies:** frequently, policies are imposed upon citizenry notwithstanding their objection and displeasure. An example of such measures was the elimination of fuel subsidies and the deregulation of the downstream sector of the economy on January 1, 2012, implemented by the government led by President Jonathan, despite widespread public opposition. According to Obasi (2012), this unpopular policy resulted in a large-scale protest, crisis, and violent demonstration when the young people faced the police. This confrontation led to the use of live ammunition by the security personnel and resulted in the death of Mustafa Muyideen in Ilorin, Kwara state. Another individual was killed in Lokoja, Kogi state, while numerous others suffered injuries during the violent protest that ensued after the elimination of fuel subsidy.
- b. In his study, Akonbede (2013) notes that the permeable borders of Nigeria, particularly in the Northeast where individual movements are mostly unmonitored, have played a role in the significant level of insecurity the country experiences. Consequently, there is an unregulated influx of small arms and light firearms into the country, which has contributed to the rise of militancy and criminal activities in Nigeria (Ikenga & Efebeh, 2013). The permeable nature of the Nigerian borders has facilitated the unmitigated surge of migrants, predominantly young males, from neighbouring nations such as the Republic of Niger, Chad, and Republic of Benin, who are accountable for certain criminal behaviours in Northern Nigeria (Achumba et al. 2013).
- c. **Ethno-religious conflicts:** These conflicts have emerged due to a lack of trust among different ethnic groups and among the predominant religions in the nation. In their study, Ndubisi-Okolo and Anekwe (2018) specifically highlighted ethno-religious conflict as a significant cause of insecurity in Northeast Nigeria. Ethno-religious conflicts refer to a scenario in which the interaction between individuals belonging to different ethnic or religious groups within a society that is diverse in terms of ethnicity and religion is marked by a lack of understanding, mutual distrust, apprehension, and a proclivity towards violent confrontation. Recurrent and enduring ethnic conflicts and religious confrontations between the two prevailing religions (Islam and Christianity) in the nation provide a significant security dilemma.
- d. The weak security architecture is a consequence of insufficient equipment for the government's security agencies, including both weaponry and training (Achumba et al. 2013). Furthermore, this is compounded by the inadequate attitude and behavioural disposition of security officers. Frequently, security personnel designated to address certain security problems lack the necessary knowledge and tools to effectively manage the crises and avoid their escalation. Furthermore, even in the presence of these factors, certain security operatives are susceptible to the influence of ethnic, religious, or communal sentiments, leading them to prioritise their personal interests above serving the nation.
- e. Indeed, the current unemployment rate in Nigeria is significantly high due to the government's failure to establish essential infrastructure such as roads, reliable power and water supply, which are necessary for job creation, despite their previous commitments to address these issues. According to Mohammed (2011), the significant youth unemployment rate in Northeast Nigeria suggests that various criminal activities, including those of Boko Haram, kidnapping, and other vices, were likely to occur. The prevalence of severe economic violence against the population facilitates the easy employment of those with violent intentions. Nigeria's unemployment rate, as reported by the National Bureau for Statistics (NBS), stands at 33.3 percent, which equates to over 23.2 million individuals. This figure represents the highest rate in the

past 13 years and the second-highest percentage globally (Izuaka, 2023). As of 2007, the unemployment rate in Nigeria stood at eight million. The amount increased to 10 million in 2008 and reached a total of 18 million in 2011. Unemployment among citizens invariably leads to their involvement in criminal activities and other societal vices.

- f. **Poverty:** This is a societal issue resulting from unemployment and poor empowerment. Put simply, when the unemployment rate increases, the poverty level necessarily increases as well. The relentless proliferation of poverty in Nigeria can be attributed to the absence of adequate formal education and work opportunities. Consequently, the burgeoning youth population in the Northeast region has been propelled into extremism. In a Punch newspaper article, Ubanagu (2023) disclosed that almost 71 million individuals in Nigeria dwell in extreme poverty, with a total of 133 million people categorised as multidimensionally poor based on statistics published by the National Bureau of Statistics.
- g. **Corruption** is a predominant social vice that hinders the progress of Nigeria, despite its abundant human and material resources. The rationale behind the lack of leniency in addressing corruption by most governments worldwide is as follows. Corruption in Nigeria has proven resistant to resolution despite the implementation of policies and campaigns aimed at combating it. In spite of the establishment of institutions such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC), together with an enabling Act, the government lacks the necessary political determination to combat corruption. Indeed, corruption is the complete opposite of progress and development since it generates political instability, social discontent, and a crime-ridden environment. It also fosters inefficiency, ineptitude, mediocrity, unethical ideals, and other detrimental tendencies that have the potential to trigger a revolution. Udo (2015) reported that a minimum of N183 billion, originally intended for the development of Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta, was misappropriated by the individuals responsible for overseeing the government development commission specifically for the region. The aforementioned and other unscrupulous actions shown by certain government officials have the potential to result in violent rebellion.

#### **An assessment of insecurity in Northeast Nigeria and its implications for national development**

According to Akpobibibo (2003), the essence of national development is to enhance the quality of life for inhabitants while simultaneously establishing infrastructures that would enhance the global reputation of a country. For any country to achieve national development, it is imperative that the government gives utmost importance to its security apparatus and institutions, since security plays a critical role in the attainment of sustainable national development. Inadequate security has a deleterious effect on economic growth and development of every society, since it weakens economic, human, and social capital. In a peaceful and secure environment, both citizens and government officials will focus their energy and resources on improving the overall quality of human life. As Akonbede (2013) argues, insecurity presents a substantial threat to both national and sustainable development globally. It obstructs economic, social and educational development and progress and has both disappointed and undermined the ambitions and hopes of countries owing to its evident adverse effects.

The fundamental issues of national development include economic expansion, social advancement, and environmental sustainability. Hence, the progress of a country ensures the establishment of a highly developed world that provides a secure and prosperous society for all, including people, animals, and plants. In Nigeria, the achievement of sustainable development is dependent on the stability, security, viability, and equality of its social, economic, political, and environmental sustainability components (Ndubuisi-Okolo & Anekwe, 2018). Nigeria, being a member of several regional and international

organizations, is widely seen as the leading power in Africa and a major contributor to regional and global political matters. However, the increasing degree of insecurity in the country, resulting from the activities of kidnappers, militants, ruthless armed robbers, and particularly the Boko Haram sect in the Northeast, seems to affect national development. The activities of the insurgents have substantial effect for Nigeria, both inside the country and on an international scale. These continuous attacks have negative effects on human capital development and the general educational standard of the nation, this is because both teachers and students can not learn in an unstable environment. According to Asiegbu *et al.*, (2021) the UNICEF in her 2017 report revealed how Boko Haram attacks have resulted in the deaths of over 2,295 teachers, with over 19,000 people forced to flee their homes across the Northeast region since 2009. This report as published by UNICEF further reveal the demeaning effects which insecurity pose for the county's national development and growth; hence the government needs to put mechanisms in place to help curb the menace of insecurity.

Again, the Nigeria's Northeast region is experiencing increasing instability mostly due to the activities of the Boko Haram organisation. As a consequence, the international community has imposed a ban on Nigeria and designated it as a terrorist country. In 2022, the United States of America uncovered and enforced penalties on six Nigerians due to their participation in financing and aiding the Boko Haram insurgency (Olisah, 2022). The effect for our country is that Nigeria's high level of insecurity is met with disapproval by the international community, therefore affecting our diplomatic relations with other countries of the world.

More so, in 2009, Umar Farouk Abdumuttallab, a Nigerian tried to explode an explosive device on an American aircraft that was flying from Amsterdam to Detroit (Olawale, 2012). It is worth noting that Nigeria has been included on the list of countries classified as terrorist states, with Yemen, Afghanistan, Tunisia, Somalia, Iraq, Pakistan, and Sudan. As a consequence, Nigerians travelling abroad are now facing strict fines, typically leading to more security scrutiny compared to those from other countries. Furthermore, Nigerians who live or temporarily stay abroad are likewise seen as possible security risks to their hosting nations.

Moreover, the ongoing insecurity in the Northeast region has a negative impact on the political stability of the country. During periods of political instability resulting from security crisis, the government is distracted from its responsibility of bringing about national development, infrastructural development, human capital development, as well as promoting and improving the country. This is because, rather than giving priority to development projects, the government would be compelled to dedicate all its attention and resources to security management, therefore disregarding other social benefits that should be bestowed upon the citizens.

According to Odewale (2022), the Federal government has earmarked a minimum of N12 trillion for security expenditures over a span of seven years, from 2016 to 2022. Amidst a growing sense of insecurity, Nigerians are urging the military, police, and other security forces to intensify their efforts in addressing insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, disputes between farmers and herders, and other criminal activities. In line with the above, Odewale (2022) states that the government budget for 2016 allocated a total of N1.4 trillion, with N443.1 billion explicitly to the Ministry of Defence. In 2017, a sum of N1.053 trillion was designated for security-related issues, while the Ministry of Defence was granted N330.54 billion. Odewale notes that in 2018, the security sector received a total allocation of N1.305 trillion, along with an additional \$1 billion sourced from the surplus crude oil account. A total of \$496 million was allocated for the acquisition of 12 Tucano fighter jets from the United States of America. The allowance for security costs was increased to N1.78 trillion in 2020. In 2021, the amount was raised to N1.97 trillion, in addition to the N802 billion from the N983 billion supplementary budget that was allowed for President Muhammadu Buhari (Odewale, 2022). This implies that funds that might have been

assigned to state development initiatives, such as economic, human capital, and institutional advancement, were instead used for security intervention, thereby hindering national development.

Consequently, the continuous records of insecurity have led to a decrease in the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) of the country. The presence of insecurity inside a country acts as a challenge to foreign investment, hence hindering the economic development of the nation. A survey done by Ayantoye (2022) revealed that Mr. Terseer Adamu, an economic tourist lamented his concern over the worsening security conditions in the nation. He stated that this has resulted in a decline in the number of international tourists visiting their sites, thereby affecting foreign direct investments in the country. In 2023, Aina reported that the World Bank revealed Nigeria's foreign direct investment was declining owing to limited access to foreign currency, concerns about security, and several underlying problems. Therefore, it is crucial for the country to implement security measures to address the ongoing security challenges occurring in the Northeast and other parts of Nigeria. This would create an advantageous environment for prospective investors.

Finally, the economy of the nation generally undergoes stagnation due to ongoing security issues. The lack of security has a domino effect on the nation's economy. These issues include a reduction in foreign direct investment (FDI) as previously stated, unemployment, poverty, and the closure of multinational firms. Ogundepo (2022) argues that the escalating insecurity in Nigeria has adversely affected the economic climate in the nation. According to the 2019 World Bank annual assessments, Nigeria was ranked 131st out of 190 countries in terms of the ease of doing business. The security challenge in Nigeria presents a substantial peril to the well-being of persons and their possessions, while also impeding business activities, consequently affecting the socio-economic development of the nation.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study reveal that continuous insecurity in the Northeast Nigeria hampers national development this is as the nation suffers economically, socially and other wise. To overcome insecurity, it is important to have dedicated leadership as well as a viable and conducive environment for good governance. The consequences of insecurity on the nation's growth are severe. Therefore, it is imperative for the government to establish measures to effectively address the problem of insecurity in the Northeast area.

Sequel to the above, the following recommendations are made:

- The government should create job opportunities for the teeming Nigerian youths especially those in the Northeast. This can be done through laws, policies and provision of infrastructural facilities which will facilitate investment and creation of jobs by private sector organizations in the country.
- Corruption and injustice in Nigeria must be eliminated. Government appointments must not be based on nepotism and favouritism. The country must eschew the culture of impunity in our national life as this can help national and sustainable development.
- Moreso, there is need for training and retraining of our security agencies to help get them equipped with modern way of combating terrorism globally. Though, this is ongoing now, it should be supported and followed by the provision of modern equipment and facilities by the government to enhance intelligence gathering and effective coordination.
- Government needs to inculcate security management courses into our educational curriculum at all levels ranging from primary, school and tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This will enable children as well as youths to appreciate the relevance of security and peace in Nigeria.



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