

ISRG Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (ISRGJAHSS)



ISRG PUBLISHERS

Abbreviated Key Title: ISRG J Arts Humanit Soc Sci

ISSN: 2583-7672 (Online)

Journal homepage: <https://isrgpublishers.com/isrgjahss>

Volume – II Issue-VI (November-December) 2024

Frequency: Bimonthly



SECURITY AND PEACE AS NEXUS FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND POLITICAL STABILITY IN NIGERIA

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| **Received:** 24.11.2024 | **Accepted:** 28.11.2024 | **Published:** 04.12.2024

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Abstract

The importance of Security and Peace in ensuring economic recovery and political stability is the focus of this paper. The paper observes that Nigeria with the potential to be a major player in the economic and political arena of Africa has been hindered by various security challenges resulting in economic and political crisis that have impacted the national development negatively. The paper critically examines the role of security and peace as the nexus for economic recovery and political stability of Nigeria. Specifically, the paper recommends the needs for governments at all levels in Nigeria to frontally attack the pervading corruption in government business, promote transparency, accountability and eschew arbitrariness, by adhering to the principles of rule of law while aggressively and ruthlessly implementing good policies and programmes put in place to achieve peaceful environments for political stability and economic recovery that will set Nigeria on the paths of National developments.

Keywords: Security, Peace, Rule of Law, Economic recovery, Nexus.

Introduction

The menace engendered by the activities of Boko Haram, banditry and kidnapping for ransom in recent times in Nigeria has brought to the fore the nexus between security and peace, economic and political stability of Nigeria.

Nigeria, in recent years have been bedeviled by the negative consequences of the activities of enemies of developments such as banditry, kidnapping for ransom, Fulani-herders and Farmers' clashes, cultism and armed robbery among other social vices in the land.

For a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural or plural nation like Nigeria with over 200 ethnic groups, the stakes seem to be extremely high to the extent that some of the desirable features that distinguish the different components of Nigeria as a nation – states, which used to serve as bridges are now being used to fan the embers of discord¹

¹ Sanni, R.A. (2001) *Politics and Governance in Nigeria*, Osogbo Kollington Press and Publishers Ltd. p.39 See also Prof. Siyan Oyeweso (2012), *Terrorism, Peace and National*

on which insecurity now thrive, thus making the situation in Nigeria more precarious today than in the days after the civil war.

Whereas the successive Constitutions adopted by the different Nigerian governments at different times emphasize the secularity of the country², undue covert and overt interference in religious matters by political elites has resulted in the politicization of religion with its attendant negative consequences on the economic and political stability of Nigeria³.

Similarly, unresolved socio-political issues which led to the thirty months civil war led by Chukwuemeka O. Ojukwu remained largely unresolved even today in Nigeria. Thus, a combination of political and religious crises, among others, has threatened and continues to threaten the corporate existence of the Nigerian State and consequently continue to hinder National Development by challenging the secular basis of the Nigerian state and her sovereignty.⁴

Unfortunately, due to the lackadaisical attitudes of the Nigerian elites and governments towards the political and religious crisis and their inability to rub them in the bud, at the formative years, they have developed into full blown terrorists activities that has covered the Northern and Southern parts of Nigeria in many forms, spreading terror into the minds of citizens, thus bringing Nigeria into the global terrorist web⁵.

This paper therefore examines the broad issue of Insecurity (Terrorism), Peace, as they affect the political and economic stability of Nigeria.

Security and Peace

Security is sinequanon for economic and political stability and hence, development of every society. Security has been defined as “the state of being secure, especially from danger or attack”⁶. It is the activities involved in protecting a country, building or person against attack, danger etc, protection something bad, that might happen in the future, the state of feeling happy, and safe from danger or worry⁷.

Fundamentally, security has to do with the presence of peace, safety, gladness and protection of human and physical resources. It is also the protection from or resilience against potential harm or other unwanted coercion caused by others by restraining the freedom of others to act protection from hostile forces etc. Security

Development, Society for International Relations and Strategic Studies, Lagos State University, p.1

² Adebite, K. (2012) *Is Nigeria a Secular State? The New Jurist International Law Magazine*

³ Introduction of what has been described as Political Sharia by Zamfara State Governor in 1999, adopting Islam as State religion despite outcries by citizens further creates mistrusts among the citizens of Nigeria.

⁴ The Boko Haram sect is known to have a lot of disdain for the Nigerian State and her constitution and determination to bring down the Nigerian Government as presently constituted

⁵ Kidnapping for ransom, banditry, boko Haram, cultism, etc. may safely be termed terrorists' acts and collectively called acts of terrorism.

⁶ Bryan A. G. (2009) *Black's Law Dictionary*, West Publishing Co. USA, p.1476.

⁷ Hornby, A.S. (2000) *Oxford Advanced Learned Dictionary (International Students Edition)* OUP. London. P.1320 – 21.

is a very broad concept which may include food security, social security, financial security, natural security etc.

Peace, on the other hand, is a situation or period of time in which there is no war or violence in a country or in an area⁸. Peace is a concept of societal and harmony in the absence of hostility and violence. Peace is commonly used to mean a lack of conflict such as war and freedom from fear of violence between individuals, groups or country. It means being free from persecution due to one's nationality, immigration status, race, ethnicity, political affiliation, religious beliefs etc.

Rule of Law is a legal/political principle in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated which are consistent with the international human rights principles. The rule of law is said to have been “one of the most used, missed use, and even abused constitutional concept⁹. It is a ready tool in the hands of the democrats dictators, tyrants etc.

The concept has therefore been clothed in different garbs, depending on the individuals and their motives. However, a single thread runs the concept and that it is, it emphasizes that every individual has the right to enjoy the dignity of his person as a citizen. Rule of Law is encapsulated in the idea that man is governed by regular law and regulations and not by the caprices of the rulers.

Nexus simply means a complicated series of connections between different things, ideas and issues, often a causal one¹⁰. Security and Peace could be safely regarded as two sides of the same coin. The two are critical to the efforts to achieve economic recovery and political stability of any country.

A country existing peacefully attracts many investors from other countries because it is believed that their investments would be secure in a secured and peaceful country. Absence of security in a country will usually lead to disjointed economic activities because of the fear of attack by the recalcitrant elements in the country. Adequate security normally engenders peace, which consequently leads to an increase in socio-economic activities, and ultimately leads to growth and developments of the citizens and the country as a whole. Involvement of foreign investors in the economies will equally help in boosting the economy, and developed economies and adequate security will naturally enhance political stability, thus affording the governments the required avenues to carry out their functions at all levels for the good of the citizens¹¹.

No wonder, Nigeria with her abundant human and natural resources has not experienced much development because of the negative impacts of the diverse nature of insecurities besetting it,

⁸ Hornby, A.S. (2000) *Oxford Advanced Learned Dictionary (International Students Edition)* OUP. London. p.1071.

⁹ Abiola, O. (1987). *Constitutional Law and Military Rule in Nigeria*. Evans Brothers Ltd., Ibadan. P. 239.

¹⁰ Bryan A. G. (2006) *Blacks Law Dictionary (3rd Pocket Edition)*. West Publishing Co. USA. p. 483.

¹¹ The outbreak of Boko-Haram uprising since July, 2009 in the Northern part of Nigeria has put the governors in perpetual fear of attacks, kidnappings and banditry, which impacted negatively on these efforts to govern the states well with billions of Naira wasted on the conflicts and ransom payments on kidnapped citizens. See also Babatunde S. O. & Omowole S. A. (2016), *Nigeria's Security Challenges and Economic Development*.

ranging from kidnap for ransom, banditry, armed robbery, farmers-herders clashes, which have sent many farmers and other businesses out of their economic activities in the last ten years¹².

Therefore, the urgent need for adequate security and peace as a nexus for economic recovery and political stability in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized in view of the negative impacts the different security challenges being faced by the country has contributed to the underdevelopment engendered by the socio-economic and political instability¹³.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the paper frankly observes that achieving security, peace, economic recovery and growth, political stability in Nigeria is not a tea party. It involves frank and ruthless approach to implantation of policies and programmes earmarked to achieve successful outcomes.

For Nigeria to enjoy the benefits of her diverse human and natural resources fully, there is the urgent need to implement the following suggestions or recommendations:

Governments, at all levels must address the root causes of insecurities which is the problems of the endemic corruption in the system. Policies that discourage corrupt practices with stringent punishments for breach of codes of practices/conducts in the civil services must be implemented.

Secondly, governments need to consciously encourage and promote economic recovery and stability through good well thought-out policies that encourage investments, create jobs and promote economic developments/growth.

Furthermore, deliberate efforts must be made by the ruling elites in governments at all levels to promote transparency, accountability and zero tolerance for arbitrariness in government works and total adherence to the principles of rule of law by government officials at all levels of government.

Among other things, government must address the evil of corruption in government business; ruthlessly address the issue of youth unemployment frontally by aggressively investing in infrastructure developments, agriculture equipment and training of the teeming youths, right from the secondary school levels of our educational systems with adequate financial inducements to encourage them to go into fulltime agricultural practices nationwide.

The Security agencies should be well trained, remunerated and well-funded with robust welfare programmes to boost their morale in fighting insecurities.

Robust collaboration between the communities and security agencies should be encouraged to foster confidence and harmonious cooperation between the citizens and the security agents which will consequently enhance intelligence gathering capacities of the security agents and foster good relationships

¹² Aliyu, M. (2018), Nigeria's Security Challenges and the Quest for Sustainable Peace, *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, p. 75-85.

¹³ See the report of the Institute for Education and Peace (2020) which ranked Nigeria as 14th on the Global Terrorism Index with Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen as the main drivers of terrorisms in the country with the cost of the crisis estimated at 1.75b dollars in 2019.

between them and the communities they have been established to protect.

Finally, to achieve peaceful environments for political and economic stability and recovery, governments must ensure that policies and measures that will enhance security of lives and properties of citizens are ruthlessly implemented. This will ultimately promote peace, the precursor of economic growth, political stability and overall national developments

The aforementioned are bound to ensure security, peace, economic recovery and political stability in Nigeria.

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