

Poverty as a Threat to Human Security in Nigeria

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Abstract: - The paper examines the concept of poverty, threat, security and human security in Nigeria, making use of library research and content analysis methodology in a qualitative analytical perspective. Apart from the afford mention conception, the paper establishes the causal relationship between poverty and human security adopting modernization and dependency theories. It outline some causes of poverty (unemployment, corruption, poor education, laziness and environmental degradation) and the seven dimension (economic, food, health, environment, personal, community and political) of human security which are all threaten. In order for Nigeria to attain freedom from wants, recommended among others: Nigerians should develop the habit and mind set of self-reliance in order to reduce the rate of unemployment and under employment in the country; afforestation policy and punishments of illegal cutting of tree should be put in place; patriotism is a remedy to high rate of corruption in Nigeria. Policies, programs and their execution should be done in the interest of the state only.

Key words: poverty, threat, Nigeria, security and human security

I. INTRODUCTION

In 21st century, conflict, peace, development and security seem to be the most recurrent terms gaining wide currency. Security, especially in the second decade of 21st century in Nigeria has become the national vernacular. The problem of Nigeria in this era is not how to keep individuals, tribes, religion etc. peaceful apart but how to bring them peaceful together.

The democratic space seemed to have contributed immensely to the rise of violence conflict in the country. It seems that the freedoms of expression and right of self-determination which the democratic rules promotes is being negatively exploited by the citizens, hence their acts of impunity which leads to these violence conflicts, Alabi (1). Akeem, opinion that “poverty is major root cause of Nigeria’s violence conflicts’ given the emerging flow from the economy of violence. In different area of Nigeria, the unemployed and underemployed youth have embarked on a range of violent activities in search of livelihood’ and this situation has produced heroes in context of political thug, assassinations, militancy and ethnic massacre” (2).

Hence, the present state of security in Nigeria is very worrisome. By its very composition and nature, Nigeria is seems to be prone to some forms of insecurity: assassination, ritual killing, armed robbing, pen robbery, kidnapping, ethno-religious violence, suicide and suicide bombing, arsons, floods, food shortage, election result manipulation,

plagiarism, unemployment and underemployment, corruption, police brutality, banditry, impunity, lawlessness and a host of others sources of insecurity abound in Nigeria.

The fundamental assumption of this paper is that poverty is the core threat to human security and where there is human security there will not be abject pauper. And that individuals, groups of individuals (e.g. community based organization, international organization and international non-governmental organization) and Nigeria’s state must put hands together in poverty reduction and enhancing human security in Nigeria.

This paper shall clarify the concept of poverty, threat, human security and establish a solid link between poverty and human security from modernization and dependency theories. To this end, poverty reduction and human security enhancement remains the essential focus of the paper. Thus, sources of data are secondary and observation with content analysis.

II. POVERTY

Poverty like many other concepts in social sciences is an essential contested concept. Almost all attempt to conceptualize the concept, failed in viewing it from invisible/internal. Hence, emphasizing the visible which is the manifestation of the unseen. This implies that poverty is multidimensional concepts that first commence in the brain or rather the mind, when it grows it become what is commonly refers as poverty.

In the words of Alabi, (ibid.) poverty is “seen as a condition where individuals cannot meet the basic and essential needs of life that differentiate him from animal”. Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not having access to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclear water. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom.

The other aspect of poverty that scholars and researchers have pay little or no attention to, is that of intellectual not limited to access to school, reading and writing etc. but of the ability to think, produce new ideas, improve the existing ideas in order to earn and improve individuals and collectives living conditions. This is worse form of poverty. And societies that can be considered to be poor have first and foremost lacked this.

It was first revealed in June 2018 that Nigeria have overtaken India as the nation with the highest number of people living in extreme poverty across the world, with an estimated 86.9 million people measured to be living less than \$1.25 (381.25 naira) a day (3). The report showed that nearly 50% of 80 million populations of Nigeria are living in extreme poverty with Sokoto and Jigawa state 89.9 and 86.1 per cent at the top respectively while Osun state was the lowest with 17.5 per cent (4).

III. CAUSES OF POVERTY

Unemployment is a key contributing factor to poverty in Nigeria and relationship between the former and latter akin to blood and life in human being. Nigeria unemployment increase from 18.8 per cent in the third quarters of 2017 to 23.1 per cent in the third quarters of 2018, the National Bureau of statistic (NBS) has said (5). In the period of this increase, there is also increase in crime in Nigeria ranging from kidnapping, farmers- nomadic, vote selling during 2019 General Elections etc. living standard goes down. It has been alleged that Boko Haram financially empower some youth in Mubi of Adamawa state with loan. The youth failed to repay the loan which resulted to donation of themselves for the 2017 attack in Mubi (6).

Close to unemployment is rate of corruption in Nigeria. Transparency international (TI) defined corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain”. Corruption is more common in Nigeria than in other national symbols (e.g. national Anthem, National Pledge etc.). Government funds are being misappropriated on a daily basis by the leaders, who only put the interest of their family and friends at heart while ignoring the masses. Issues of corruption in Nigeria is often viewed at leadership level, may be perhaps it is easy to be identified. To this end, corruption in Nigeria cuts across both leadership and followership level.

Poor education system, according to World Bank, education is central to development. It promotes economic growth, national productivity and innovation, and value of democracy and social cohesion. Quality and quantity of education compared with Nigeria population is nothing for Nigeria to achieve its dream in Africa. A huge number of teachers are not professional in Nigeria. In fact many that studied educational courses studied them because they can't afford others courses. Universal basic education (UBE) policy of adding three years (i.e. JSS to primary school) brought under-development in education in the rural areas. Qualified teachers are usually not posted to the villages or they refused to go. Conducive learning environment and female school enrolment is another no go area.

Laziness is a serious non-hospital cure disease in Nigeria. Many Nigerians desire for comfortable life without putting efforts while still dreaming to arrive like a breaking of a new cool morning. Many Nigerians preferred to work under someone than establish their own job, no matter how little it may be. Even in job seeking, highest pay is the target of all.

Thus they have not learned how to manage wealth. These, resulted in illegal accumulation of wealth, serving as bread winner and dependency by some relatives. When such an individual died, mismanagement is the last bus stop of the wealth.

Environment degradation which is the deterioration of the natural environment including the atmosphere, bodies of water, soil and forests, is among principal cause of poverty in 21st century. Environmental problems have midwife shortage of food, clean water, material for shelter, and other essential resources in Nigeria.

IV. HUMAN SECURITY (HS)

It is worth at this junction, to insert that threat is a communicated intent to inflict harm or loss on another (7), whereas security is “pursuit of freedom from threats”. Oluwawunsi brought the concept of security and human security very close, since individual person is in focus as referent object of security, defining security as “absence of anxiety upon which the happy life depends” or ‘freedom from the prospect of a sudden or violent attack on one’s person or property’ or ‘the protection which society accords to each citizen, for the conservation of person, his property and his rights’ (8).

The concept of human security is one of the by-products of the post-cold war era. HS is paradigm shift from state centre security studies to individuals and state safety from military threats to concentrate on the safety of people and communities (9). According to Oscar, in 2012 the General Assembly (GA) adopted a common definition of the concept. The HS approach broadens the scopes of security analysis and policy from territorial security to the security of people. The 2012 GA Resolution stresses the roles of member states in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to survival, livelihood and dignity of their people’. In other words, threat(s) to - and values under threat in people’s lives are key starting point of Human Security report (10).

The 1994 Human Development report (HDR) highlighted two major components of human security: freedom from ‘fear’ and freedom from ‘want’. Oscar (ibid.) emphasis “central to this approach is the idea that people have ‘the right to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential. Human development and Human Security are interlinked but are by no means identical. Human development is a broad concept, aiming at enlarging people’s choices and freedoms. Human security is about assuring priority freedoms so that ‘people can exercise choices safely and freely and can be confident that the opportunities they have are protected. More importantly, ‘Human Security recognizes the inter-linkages between peace, development, and human rights and equally considers civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights’. Thus, human security forms part of the family of human concepts

(including human rights, human needs, human development etc.). The 1994 HDR was more specific, listing seven essential dimensions of Human Security: economic, food, health, environment, personal, community and political (11).

V. THEORETICAL LINK BETWEEN POVERTY AND HUMAN SECURITY

There are many theories that can explain the causal relationship between poverty and HS. For the fact that all theories have their respective strength and weakness, modernization and dependency theories are the only once, adopted in this paper. Modernization theory originated from the developed states that lack freedom from fear and dependency theory from developing or underdeveloped who lack freedom from want.

Modernization theory is the product of the assessment of how today developed states in the world mostly in Europe how developed. It notices far back in history, those states suffer from all form of HS due to poverty. The theorists went ahead in the light of W. W. Rostow work "Politics and Stages of Growth" to proposed path of development for underdeveloped states, in order to develop and In the 1960s, the then US president John F. Kennedy emphasis the application of those stages and theory in the US foreign aid (12).

In the other hand, like a rejoinder, the dependency theorists noted the assumption of modernization theory. They agreed that some states (in Europe) are developed. They debunk the single process of development that third world states must follow as did the developed and argued that the developed, developed at the expense of underdeveloped due to the nature of relationship among (13). Like Rodney, in "How Europe underdeveloped Africa" pin-pointed have Africa was developed before it contact with Europe and how is underdeveloped since contact with Europe. The way forward for Africa is to delink with the developed. That will aid it development (14).

It can be deduce that both theories above agreed on attainments of desire development which is more especially to modernization theorists from poverty. Although the departing path from undesired development level to a desire (poverty to HS) differs, mankind in this age is face with poverty which is a threat to HS. All hands to alleviate poverty in order to enhance HS are appreciated. The next section will focus on poverty reduction and HS enhancement. Intellectual poverty, individuals, non-governmental organization and government (three tiers in Nigeria) will be the guide lines in converting the five causes of poverty to HS in Nigeria with seven essential dimensions of HS in mind.

VI. POVERTY REDUCTION AS A MEANS OF ENHANCING HS IN NIGERIA

Poor education system: one of the augment advanced by Rodney is that the present education system in Africa is not Africa's centre. There is a huge gap between education

and source of livelihood. Own to the fact that the system was introduced to aid colonization of Africa. Although this position, have under-rate some significant contribution of western education system in Africa in particular. Still the gap between source of livelihood and education should be bridge.

Review of education curriculum should be done in the light of Nigeria crisis – not imported one. One country is doing well in that, is not a grantee for Nigeria due to many differences. In the light of Rodney postulation, still Nigeria education is still gear toward production of administrators. Vocational education at all level as a matter of urgency must be emphases and ensure in Nigeria in order to grantee HS.

Some countries like China that have achieved freedom from want are practicing technology/vocational education. More importantly in a language that is best understood and is not certificate oriented but skills. The forgoing suggests that China method of poverty reduction and HS enhancement, first and foremost commence by dealing with intellectual poverty.

These call for government to make education sector conducive for investment by investors and implementation of policies and programmes. Individuals and non-governmental organization should pay more attentions in education because is there that all solution to HS will be manufacture. For Nigeria to be saved from insecurity all must be saved: not part or some.

Unemployment: as noted early from the NBS, unemployment rate in on increase in Nigeria. Nigeria at independent has paid a deaf ear or it was not visionary. The set of university graduate at eve and post independent have jobs waiting for them. They could not see the corresponding increase in population and graduate in order to increase jobs opportunities. The end result is that graduate becomes jobless in the country. In order to earn a living, they illegally employ themselves and become prey to predators which are threat to National Human security (NHS).

Employment should be based on merit by government, non-governmental organization and individuals. At government level, jobs should be created in sectors that can generate revenue to government rather than administrative ministries and agencies that are more like sources of expenditure. In countries that are faced with lack of freedom from fear than want, their private sectors create more jobs than government. Thus government regulates.

The present administration turning to agriculture especially irrigation farming and animal husbandry should be buy by populace, toward food security. Some of the government programme like N-power skills acquisition, You-WIN Connect program, bank of industry loan, traders' money, many but few to mention deserver monitoring to ensure the achievement of the programme objectives. Individual should be innovative to create jobs to employ than to be employ. Circulation of money is as result of petty trading which

determine the growth of a place. Averting and converting the threats to HS in relation to unemployment is not how much one get but how many have you serve while realizing we profit.

Individual involvement in lawful economic activities has a long way in ensuring healthy-eating which can increase the life span of the increasing population of Nigeria. Some of the inter-personal, communities and religious crises can be attributed to lack of something worth doing. Everyone is worth adding positive value to others.

Corruption which is derived from Latin word “*corruptus*” meaning “to break” is a manifestation of poverty in Nigeria that is threatens Nigeria corporate existence. It has eaten deep into Nigeria’s state such that in recent time some are calling ‘bring back our corruption’ against ‘fight against corruption’. Many agencies, policies etc. where made to address corruption in Nigeria.

Transparency International defined corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain”. This has led to inter-personal and inter-communities conflict, political thug and election malpractices above all poor health and education system. At the level of individuals and both domestic and international non-governmental organization, the institutional approach to curtailed corruption will only work with their compliance and national interest contribution like report of such abuse and alike.

While at the institutional level, the blue print of agencies likes Economic and financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences (ICPC) among others is never enough. Right from establishment guide lines, it should be done in a way that their aims and objectives will be achieved. Over the years, these bodies have been apolitical by allying themselves by the administration of the day. Such that their operation had been allege to serve as tools against opposition. This and alike should always be carry out for national interest i.e. to say should be dead to themselves and administration of the day and alive for all.

Environmental degradation: mankind health on Planet Earth is largely determined by the healthy environment. Man in search for living (food, shelter etc.) is harming the environment. All should be faithful and custodian of the environment and restore the harm aspect without harming the others. Others living and no-living on space of the Earth are of equal important as human being. Hence, environment should be treated like queen. Government at all level should make working policies and laws to deter and punish enemies of natural environment. And those who are improving or restoring the nature should be encouraged by reward.

Laziness, according to BBC English Dictionary is not doing any work or not putting much effort on a work. Some of the archive culture of some part of Nigeria

subscribed to communal living. While 21st century global culture disowned such. Wealth creation and HS is the onus of all. Majority of lazy people at work are either not intellectual or have corrupt understanding. The problem of laziness is not limited to some at urban or rural areas but even among intellectual-academicians. There is need for motivation to improve efforts and challenge idleness. Ideas and it realization for life improvement should be core culture. Such culture can address the seven essential dimensions of Human Security.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This paper has clarified the concept of poverty and it causes, threat, security and HS and seven dimensions of HS outlined by HDR in 1994. The sum points is that poverty is a threat to HS.

- a. Nigerians should develop the habit and mind set of self-reliance in order to reduce the rate of unemployment and under employment in the country.
- b. In the same vain government should create conducive business environment.
- c. Individual, government and no-government organization should be involve in orientation of need and significant of business in curtailing insecurity.
- d. The rate of desertification is alarming, more especially in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria. Afforestation policy and punishments of illegal cutting of tree should be put in place.
- e. Patriotism is a remedy to high rate of corruption in Nigeria. Policies, programs and their execution should be done in the interest of the state only.
- f. Judicial punishment for all found guilty of corrupt act should be ensure.

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