Counting the Cost: An Assessment of the Effect of Abduction and Killings on the Nigerian Human Capital Development

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Abstract: **The need for the provision of security is the basis of the social contract between the citizens and the state, thus, it is the core responsibility of the state to ensure the protection of the lives and properties of all citizens. However, despite the provision of this fundamental right in the constitution, lives of citizens are being threatened daily by the ostensible increase in cases of kidnappings and killings. The heightened cases of insecurity have continuously hampered the human capital development efforts of the Nigerian government. Against this background, this work examined the impact of the eclipsing cases of kidnappings and killings in Nigeria on the Human Capital Development. The broken window and Robert K. Merton's anomie theories were employed in analysing factors that influence these anti-social behaviours. In other to have a robust work, this paper adopted both documentary and survey methods while utilizing the content analysis method in analysing the gathered data. This intellectual discourse observed that the spate in killings and abduction across the nation, deplete the workforce of the country and hamper national productivity. This is because the majority of persons killed are youths, who are considered engine of the country. The threats and attacks of bandits and killings have created a climate of fear and continues to have a surging effect on public safety, food security and social cohesion in Nigeria. The study suggests that Government and Policy makers should as a matter of urgency give high priority to human capital development through review of the education and health policies, and increase budgetary allocation to these two critical sectors, reconfigure the overtly centralized and unitarized security architecture that is struggling to provide security in a supposedly federal structure and refocus the conceptualisation and pursuit of national security to human security by taking concrete steps to prioritize and right-size the deployment of available national resource to address the vulnerability of marginalised groups, especially the poor in vulnerable and isolated places.**

Key words: **Security, Human Capital Development, Abduction, Killings**

I. INTRODUCTION

Guaranteeing to everyone the right to security is pivotal in enhancing the socio-economic and political development of a nation (Anifalaje, 2017). Without security, members of society live in continuous fear, anxiety, tension and pain. They feel unprotected, insecure and vulnerable from hidden and hurtful disruptions in their homes, workplaces or communities (United Nations Development Programme (1994). They feel that their rights are trampled on, they do not want to be heard and have been failed and deceived by the system who should protect them (Thomas Hobbes, 1996)**.** With the heightened cases of abduction of school children, commuters on the high way, and the incessant stories of bandits killing citizens making the headlines of Nigerian dailies, it has become imperative to examine the impact of these heinous crime on human capital development.

Insecurity in Nigeria

Security is one of the fundamental human rights of the people in any given state and Nigeria is no exception. Section 14 (2) (b) of the Nigerian 1999 constitution states clearly that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of the government". The need for security is the basis of the social contract between the citizens and the state, thus, it is a fundamental right of the citizens and a core responsibility of the state. However, this primary purpose of government has been thrown in the mud as more concerns are been raised towards the growing incidences of crime in all geo-political zones of the country. Disapprovingly, Idayat Hassan, director of the Abuja-based Centre for Democracy and Development, states that "From the north to the south, life has become nasty, brutish, and short. Omoyibo and Akpomera (2012) avowed that security in Nigeria is synonymous to an individual who put iron bars across his or her windows which eventually prevents the individual from escaping a fire outbreak. Insecurity indeed has become a multi-hydra-headed monster which security agents in Nigeria appear incapable of handling (Adegbami, 2013).

Nigeria's long-standing security challenges continued in 2021 and have been described as stemming from militant Islamists predominantly active in the North-East Region moving into North- Western states; violence related to armed bandits and criminal violence in the North-West and North-Central Regions and street gangs in the South-West Region; conflict between farmers and herders mainly in the Middle Belt but increasingly moving to southern states; communal and ethnic clashes in the North-Central Region and increasingly in the southern states; Biafra separatists in the South-East Region and oil militants in southern Nigeria, particularly the Niger Delta (European Asylum Support Office, 2021). Kidnapping has also increased in numbers of incidents and geographical reach though a sharp increase has occurred in Kaduna, Rivers,

Katsina, Zamfara and Taraba states. Whilst kidnap attempts used to mainly target rich and important political figures and their families or relatives, more recent data suggests that less targeted kidnappings are taking place focusing instead on whole villages or pupils from schools, who may not be able to pay the demanded ransom, explaining the rise in fatalities from kidnapping attempts.

II. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION / ANALYSIS

This study employed documentary and survey methods of data collection. Contents of documentary materials related to the subject matter such as newspapers, published articles were examined. The researchers went ahead to conduct an In-depth Interview with key informants knowledgeable of the subject matter under discuss. The In-depth Interview were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Respondents' statements were adequately interpreted to support the secondary data.

In addition, this work utilized content analysis as the method of data analysis. This method helped in making replicable and valid inferences by interpreting textual materials and systematically evaluating them. The meaning was extracted and based on logical chain of evidence, inferences were drawn upon and conclusion made.

Factors Influencing Abductions and killings in Nigeria

No one enjoys an insecure environment. No one in his or her right senses likes to metaphorically hold their hearts in their hands because they feel unprotected, insecure and vulnerable from hidden and hurtful disruptions in their homes, workplaces or communities. There is pressing need to manage the growing incidences of insecurity across the country as it affects human capital development. Even more important is to understand factors that have influenced the unknown gunmen era. In explaining the underlying causes of insecurity in Nigeria, the theoretical explanations of Robert K. Merton, James Wilson and George Kelling are examined.

The broken window theory is a criminological theory proposed by James Q Wilson and George Kelling in 1982. This theory is likened to a building with a few broken windows. If left unfixed for a while, people begin to have an impression that there is no one in the building or the owner cares less about it. There is thus, a high tendency for more windows to be broken by miscreants because it has been presumed that no one will be available to stop them. Ultimately, they may have access into the whole building causing more damages. This therefore translates to mean that, anti-social behaviours such as crime however minor leads to further levels of anti-social behaviours if left uncontrolled or addressed. In Nigeria, broken windows exist. It is littered in all facets of the society. If factors such as high level of unemployment and poverty among Nigerians, especially the youths (Adagba, et al, 2012), porous borders and weak security systems (Hazen and Horner, 2007), rural /urban drift- the migration of jobless youths from rural areas to urban areas (Onuoha, 2011), lope-sided criminal justice systems etc that influenced insecurity overtime were hitherto addressed to a

reasonable extent, Nigeria will not be battling with this menace. From the family institutions to national front, these social problems inevitably push members of the society to crimes that now seem like survival strategies.

The basic idea of Robert K. Merton's anomie theory is that by whatever means, people must strive to achieve those goals that are culturally accepted—business growth, academic success, wealth, marital bliss, good career prospect etc. A state of anomie however, develops when there is an imbalance between these goals and the means of achieving them. Members of the society begin to think of an end to a means when these goals are blocked due to structural/systems failure. The result is a deviant behaviour characterized by Innovation (acceptance of cultural goal while rejecting the legal means to achieve the goals), rebellion (opposing the objectives of the conventional means of changing social structures), retreatism (rejection of cultural goals and legal means), ritualism (abandoning the cultural goals and maintaining legal means to achieve them), and/or conformity (accepting the cultural goals and the legal procedures to achieving them). Crime however, results largely from innovation. Merton asserts that people from lower social strata tend to tilt to such means (innovation) because they have fewer opportunities than those in the higher strata to achieve cultural goals.

Visibly, studies have shown that economic stress causes increase in criminal behaviour. As at Septemer I, 2021, the naira equivalent to one dollar is almost at 550. The purchasing power of the Nigerian currency is weak. Consequently, the cost goods and services are inflating. The economy is crippling outrageously. There is hunger in the land. Yet, people, the poor, must survive. People must eat. That man who is out of a job must do anything, anyhow, to survive and the next thing in mind is crime. For a country with a rapidly increasing population and a struggling economy, there is no doubt that Nigeria is in for some tough times ahead. This explains why kidnapping and children abduction are on the increase with payment of ransom by victims to the adductors being the way out.

Governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Wike, in his review, declared that Nigeria has totally collapsed. He described these challenges as a clear manifestation of a failed nation, which is a sequel to bad leadership. In addition, a respondent stated that, violent crimes, economic and ethno-religious reasons greatly influence killings in Nigeria. For kidnapping, the untamed quest to make money from the system make kidnapping attractive to perpetuators. In addition, people indulge in kidnapping to discredit the government, and in many cases just like the Boko Haram, to buttress what they stand for, their ideology. Education is key to human capital development, but then, the incessant cases of killings and kidnapping have not allowed children to school".

A Nigerian Defence Academy staff identified factors which include corruption, impunity and unethical practices in government and leadership, high rate of illiteracy, ethnic and religious differences, rapid population leading to struggle for

resources and land, open borders and foreign influences, high influx and proliferation of arms and weapons, and terrorism. He further acknowledged that weak judicial systems that encourages criminals to buy their freedom from conviction, injustice and weak security systems are factors associated with this menace.

Human Capital Development and Sustainable Growth in Nigeria

Human Capital is the collective skills, knowledge, and intangible assets of individuals that can be used to create economic value. Along this line, Human Capital Development can be seen as the deliberate and continuous process of acquiring and increasing the number of persons who have the skills, education and experience that are essential for driving sustainable national development. In the absence of substantial investment in the development of human capital in any country, sustained economic growth and development would only be a mere wish, never a reality.

The UNESCO unequivocally states that developing countries ought to invest a minimum of 26% of their yearly budgetary allocation on education, while the World Health Organization (WHO) specifies at least 5% on health (Jaiyeoba, 2015). Studies show that Developing countries are yet to fully tap into their Human Capital, they are yet to reach their maximum capacity in spending on the component of human capital in boosting their economic growth. These countries have failed to realise that it is a major drive to facilitating sustainable development. Low level of human capital development hinders the productivity prowess of individuals and results in a range of socio-economic challenges which include poverty and unemployment in society and which have risen overtime in a number of developing countries especially those of Sub Sahara Africa. They further feature demographic indicators such as low life expectancy, and high mortality rate. The development successes recorded by the advance countries of Europe and America as well as the evolving industrialized nations of Asia can be attributed to long-term investment in human resources. These resources have been employed in achieving significant progress in terms of increased productivity and technological advancement. The advanced countries provide empirical evidences for justifying the imperative of deliberate investment in human beings as a road-map to national development.

In the 1950's, it was discovered that investment on human capital was the primary way to raise an individual's wages making it more effective when compared to other production inputs such as land, financial capital, and labor force (Woodhall, 2001). This implies that human capital formation is undoubtedly the pivot for any meaningful programme of socio-economic development of Nigeria; and indeed, of any country (Ejere, 2011). According to National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC) of Nigeria, 35 per cent of the nation's adult population are illiterate. This high rate of illiteracy partly accounts for the low level of development in Nigeria because the growth and development of any nation depends largely on the quantity and quality of all segments of its population.

Nigeria as a developing country in Sub-Sahara Africa, in an attempt to develop her human capital so as to achieve sustainable growth embarked on some educational programs in the past, but these have only served as conduits to transfer money to the corrupt political leaders and their cronies (Ogunleye , O. & Owolabi et al, 2017). In 1967, Nigeria launched a mass-oriented education program; Universal Basic Education (UBE) and again in 1976 launched the Universal Primary Education (UPE) but as noted, the program failed due to misappropriation of funds, policy inconsistency, poor policy implementation, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor funding, among other issues. Inconsistencies and failures in policy implementations that aims at alleviating poverty and promote sustainable growth in Nigeria continues to deteriorate the nation's economy, security, and human productivity. Security which is essential for peace, national cohesion and sustainable development and human capital development has been breached leading to wanton destruction of lives, properties and the entire eco-system.

Effects of Abduction and Banditry Attacks on Human Capital Development in Nigeria

Nigeria is among the countries of the world endowed with enormous human resources as evident in its large population of about 211, 400, 708 people. However, Nigeria's efforts at developing a formidable human capital are challenged by certain inadequacies in the education and health sectors such as underfunding, dearth of infrastructures, corruption, examination malpractice, brain drain, among other factors (Ifejika, 2017). Lately, attempts by the Nigerian government to grow quality human capital has been blighted by the rising cases of insecurity.

Banditry attacks and killings have created a climate of fear and continues to have a surging effect on public safety, food security and social cohesion in Nigeria (WANEP, 2021). There has been a spate of attacks and killings since the last quarter of 2020 all over the county. Every day, both rural and urban communities are attacked by bandits who operate at night and day, attacking homes, offices, business centres/markets and security institutions such as police stations. Between January and April 19, 2021, over 17 police stations, have been targeted by these gunmen, including correctional facilities (Sahara report, 2021). The consequences of these attacks are piles of dead bodies including officers, wounded victims, mentally/emotionally abused victims, abandoned homes or offices, deserted communities, burned police stations, freed prison inmates, destroyed properties and livelihoods. The SBM Intelligence, a socioeconomic research firm, in its 'Media Reported Killings in Nigeria' report for Q2 2021, April to June 2021, stated that at least 3,133 Nigerians were reportedly killed in Nigeria in three months due to violent incidents, including attacks by Boko Haram Islamist terrorists, militia herdsmen, bandits, armed robbers, and others. The North-West led the

chart by geopolitical zones with 894, followed by the North-Central at 867, the South-West region had the lowest number of reported killings with 177. The increasing cases of killings of the human capital affects human capital development, and this continues to deplete the workforce of the country and hamper national productivity. This is because the majority of persons killed are youths, who are considered engine of the country.

In the other news, an average of 13 persons were abducted daily in Nigeria in the first half of 2021, according to SBM Intelligence bringing to 2,371 the number of persons kidnapped in the country within the first 6 months of the year. Since the popularized abduction of 276 secondary schoolgirls from Chibok in 2014 by Boko Haram Islamist militants in Borno state, Secondary schools and universities have repeatedly been a target for more armed groups who have resorted to mass abduction of students making Niger, Zamfara, Kaduna, Gombe and Katsina states the worst hit. A case in point is the Baptist school in Kaduna state where not less than 140 students were abducted making it the fourth educational institution that has been captured by armed gunmen in same state in five months. This social unrest prompted the state governor to withdraw his son from a local school where he had enrolled him in order to promote confidence in public schools, interestingly, he alleged that his decision was premised on the need to protect other pupils. Another incidence amongst many others is a military officer who was abducted in the early hours of Tuesday, August 24, 2021 during a raid at the Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna.

Investment in human capital through quality education has become widely recognized by states as one of the most potent strategies for concretizing both short-term and long-term development plans in the face of the prevailing global economic crisis, however, with the rising cases of abduction of school children and subsequent closure of schools across affected states, this strategy of developing human capital through education proves futile.

In the same vein, an interviewee explained that, "when the mind is idle, negative thoughts start ruling it—stealing, kidnaping, name it. This is a true-life story. A friend of mine, a guy in my church was recently gunned down by unknown gunmen in front of his son of about 8 years. This is a young guy that has just broken even. I have thought that by the second half of the year, I will work with him in networking business. Now he is dead, why was he killed? I keep asking myself. His business will fail if his wife is not capable of running it. The business will shut down for some time. His employees will no longer earn salary. This incidence has affected his family and every single person who depend on him. They will be drawn back. And if they are drawn back, where will they start from? Nigerian government has made it in such a way that heavy taxes are payed for imported goods. Every time some people try to grow the government have a way of killing it, frustrating the young Nigerian. This explains why a lot of persons are travelling out. Everyone wants the best for themselves. I don't see the future for my son in this country, I want the best for him. In fact, the effect is just too much".

"Sadly, people no longer move freely from one part of the country to another for fear of being maimed. Humans meant to be developed are rapidly becoming unavailable while some are being kept in captivity. Coercion, displacement and deprivation of basic daily needs such as drinking water, food and health care as well as stoppage of educational activities are associated factors of its effect on human capital development" another respondent said. The fact is with scarce economic prospects for many young Nigerians, and with security forces struggling to stop the wave of abductions, unknown gunmen attacks and killings, it is hard to see how insecurity crisis ravaging the society will stop. Indubitably, these threats call for a serious concern as it affects human capital development and the overall well-being.

Government Interventions

The Nigerian government so far have expressed concerns towards the growing incidence of insecurity in the country. Some state governments have continued to declare curfews while some have proposed that a state of emergency be declared in worst-hit states such as Benue. While contributing to the debate, Senator Smart Adeyemi described insecurity as a serious problem in Nigeria that she cannot pretend capable of confronting. He thus called for foreign support (Daka, Ityokura,et al, 2021).

In the same vein, President Buhari has expressed that the security challenges in Nigeria is of great concern to him resolving that the security forces remain resolutely committed to addressing its root cause. He called for the support of important and strategic partners like the United States as the consequences of insecurity will affect all nations hence the need for concerted cooperation and collaboration of all nations to overcome these challenges. Though the government has tried to bring the challenge of abductions and unknown gunmen attacks and killings under control by deploying security operatives to the hot spots, introducing community policing, purchasing arms, acquiring modern combat equipment, arms and ammunitions, training of security personnels, but a lot still needs to be done to restore peace, law and order across the country.

III. CONCLUSION/ RECOMMENDATIONS

Security is essential for peaceful co-existence, human capital development, national cohesion and sustainable development. The clamour for security has always been a matter of the moment. However, in recent times, it has been wantonly devilled by series of senseless killings and abductions for ransom. The government has made efforts in bringing it under control, but a lot still needs to be done. Based on this, the following recommendations were made.

1. Government and Policy makers should as a matter of urgency give high priority to human capital development. Concerted and sincere efforts should be made in building and developing human capacity through review of the education and health policies, and increase budgetary allocation to these two critical sectors to meet UNESCO and WHO specifications since it remains the major way of attaining sustainable economic growth and development.

2. Reconfigure the overtly centralized and unitarized security architecture that is struggling to provide security in a supposedly federal structure.

3. Refocus the conceptualisation and pursuit of national security to human security by taking concrete steps to prioritize and right-size the deployment of available national resource to address the vulnerability of marginalised groups, especially the poor in vulnerable and isolated places.

4. Review national framework and criteria for remuneration to radically redistribute national wealth in order to reduce income and structural inequality and inequities.

5. Restructure the nation's economic base through conscious efforts at developing strategic sectors; revitalizing the manufacturing, agricultural and construction companies.

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