

Peace and Security: Necessities for Sustaining National Transformation in Nigeria

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Abstract- Security is an enabler of national development. There can be no sustainable development without peace and security in any nation. Building peace and adequate security involves a wide range of efforts by diversified actors in government and civil society at the community, national international levels to address the root causes of violence and ensure that people have freedom from fear of humiliation, war and conflicts. This paper, therefore, x-rays peace and security as necessities for sustainable national transformation. It also discussed some concepts, challenges and came up with the way forward.

Index Terms- Peace, Security, Transformation

I. INTRODUCTION

Peace and Security have been acknowledged all over the world as basic conditions necessary for sustainable national transformation. The growing interaction of societies on a world wide scale demonstrates the overall need for peace and security. Adebayo and Rashid (2004) submitted that there is a consensus among scholars that there is a linkage between failure in governance, national transformation, sustainable development, insecurity and conflict. Nigeria is a country endowed with abundant human and mineral resources which when properly harnessed and equitably distributed would ensure sustainable national transformation.

Over the years, there has been unrest in the country starting with the persistent militancy in the Niger Delta, the cracks in our political democratic system and the failure of Nigerian leaders to meet with the people's needs, desires and hopes. Francis (2006 as cited in Ebrim, Mbaji and Iwuozor 2012 :2) opined that "high level of corruption among government or political office holders, violation of human rights, regional and sectorial injustice prevalent in the country have created room for aggressive tendencies, violence, conflicts, crime and general insecurity in the nation". The resultant effects of these have led to a downward trend of the economy and failure in sustainable national transformation agenda.

Madu and Udezo (2010: 3) stated it all in this comment that:

The feeling of estrangement of Nigerians in their home land is a source of worry to all patriotic Nigerians. If it is not the problem of Niger Delta, it is that of North- South dichotomy, or that of the minority group with the majority group or that of Uta Azu (back stabbing) of fellow Nigerians by their kits and kins or that of bastardization or scourge of democracy in the nation.

Currently, as this paper was being written, there was a report from the television media over a gang of bandits that assassinated one Mr. Uche Obunike along Enugu Agidi Road in

Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State. Mr. Obunike was said to have come back from a business trip. The man died leaving five children behind at the mercy of his wife. All these acts of terrorism can never allow the nation to experience sustainable national transformation.

It is interesting to mention that Nigeria has been a member of African Unity Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) responsible for addressing conflicts in various parts of the world but unable to boost peace and stability in her jurisdiction. For instance, there has been rampant killing by a group called "Boko Haram" in the northern region of the country where lives and properties have been lost, political rivalries worked against and kidnapping, corruption, unemployment among others are at increase. How can there be sustainable national transformation in an atmosphere of such vices? This question creates a gap that has to be bridged. It is possible that if adequate peace and security strategies are employed, the issue of insecurity to sustainable national transformation in Nigeria would be reversed, hence, the need for this study.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Peace: Different scholars gave different interpretations and meanings to this concept, "peace". The interpretation and meanings vary depending on the situation and context within which it is used. Ahamfule (2013) defined peace as a situation in which there is no war between countries or groups; a situation in which you are not annoyed by noise or other people; a state when you are calm and have no worries. Francis (as cited in Ebrim, Mbaji and Iwuozor 2012: 3) conceptualized peace "as the absence of war, fear, conflict, anxiety, suffering and violence". In the words of Ibeanu (2006), peace can be defined as a situation where there is absence of violence or other disturbances within a state to ensure social, political and economic development. In the light of the above definitions, peace therefore, is the absence of fight or terror. It is the maintenance of orderliness and absence of threat to society.

Security: Security can be viewed as a defence against external and internal threat as well as the overall socio-economic well being of the society. Ahamfule equally defined security as safety from attack, harm or danger; a situation in which one feels confident and safe. In the same vein, United Nations (2013) understand security to mean far more than simply the absence of conflict and armed violence. Development, human rights and protection from environmental hazards are pre-conditions for security and lasting peace. Nigeria cannot boost of security where injustice, kidnapping, man's inhumanity to man, neglect

of the people's aspiration and high levels of unemployment are the order of the day.

Transformation: Cambridge Dictionary (2015) defined transformation as a complete change in the appearance of something or someone especially, so that that thing or person is improved. Also, Business Dictionary (2015) noted that in any organizational context, a process of profound and radical change that orients an organization takes it to an entirely different level of effectiveness. Unlike "turnaround" (which implies incremental progress on the same plane), transformation implies a basic change of character and little or no resemblance with the past configuration or structure. National transformation, therefore, implies fundamental change in the building block of a nation, change in the social, economic, infrastructural and political landscape of a nation (Dakuku, 2014).

III. RELEVANCE OF PEACE AND SECURITY

Peace and security is the key to sustainable national transformation. No nation boosts of development in the absence of peace and security. The relevance of peace and security entails development of stable economy, encouragement of unity as well as attraction of foreign investors. Development of stable economy has to do with assurance of economic growth. Attraction of foreign investors will bring about establishment of industries and consequently lead to job creations.

With peace and security, there is improvement in the quantity and quality of the nation's factors of production. Peace and security encourages the improvement of infrastructural base of the nation such as roads, electricity, water, school, hospital among others to ensure a change in the standard of living of the citizenry. Any nation with absence of unity as a result of violence and crime will not witness any appreciable national transformation. Malaysia would not have been where she is today without the willingness of a group of citizens who endangered their lives. Peace and security are the most important elements for a nation's success. It is the gate way to sustainable national transformation.

IV. CHALLENGES TO PEACE AND SECURITY IN NIGERIA

Despite the relevance of peace and security as basic instruments for sustainable national transformation in Nigeria, there are still many challenges confronting them. These challenges can be viewed in different dimensions ranging from social, educational, political and economic factors.

Social challenge: The social challenge relates to those activities that deal with fighting for power. It involves struggle for recognition and position. This struggle usually results to social conflicts. The social conflict according to Wikipedia (2012) is a social relationship where actions are oriented intentionally for carrying out the actor's will against the resistance of other parties. Social conflict occurs, when people, tribes, different societies agitate and cause opposition in social interaction, preventing rivals from accomplishing their goals (Ebirim, Mbaji & Iwuzor, 2012). This situation usually culminates in disruption of peace and security. This can also

manifest in form of social vices resulting to assassinations, violence, riot and demonstrations. Social crises such as boundary disputes, cultism, criminality and violation of human rights pose social challenge to peace and security.

Educational Challenge: The educational challenge has to do with the problems bedeviling our education sector for which urgent attention is needed if we really desire sustainable national transformation. These problems according to Gbenedio (2012:2) are: curriculum that has no relationship with workplace and societal needs, embezzlement of funds meant for educational development purpose, employing unqualified personnel, misplacement of priorities, lack of research and development, lack of teacher motivation, inadequate facilities, incessant strike action, cultism among others. All these, and many more pose a challenge to education in Nigeria. Any nation that is intellectually bankrupt will definitely be socially, economically and politically bankrupt. Education as an agent of change is capable of transforming the nation. Any country yearning for meaningful progress must accord education a special place.

Despite the huge investment on education, our country has not fared well educationally. Entrepreneurship and information communication technology (ICT) are the trends that are imperative for transformation. The education so far given to Nigerians is largely theoretically based rather than practical and has created more problems than it has solved. Every year, our higher institutions of learning turn out graduates into the labour market without any entrepreneurial skills for self employment. These problems have faltered our educational system, invariably affecting national transformation.

Political Challenge: The political challenge relates to distribution of power and decision making. Successive governments in Nigeria have formulated a number of policies in the country over the years which pose threats to the peace and security of some citizens. For instance, the policy of Federal Character where Quota System and Catchment Areas are adopted in admissions into schools, appointments into offices and allocation of resources, does not promote merit, just and egalitarian society. Nigeria is vulnerable to insecurity and conflicts emanating from the nature and character of politics in many states of the federation. Instability of government, corruption and bad governance has eaten deep into the fabrics of our nation.

Nigeria is a country where elections are rigged to occupy political positions, political appointments are based on God-fatherism, and employments are based on sentiments. Madu and Udezo (2010) maintained that Nigeria has democratic system of government but seems to be struggling with issues of accountability and good governance. Revelation from Nigeria's anti-graft agencies is rife with so many economic and moral crimes of our political leaders at both the national and state levels. Many a time, series of reports have been given in some states of the country experiencing various crimes and violence involving groups that are illegally armed during elections to cause confusion. Youths are manipulated by political elites for self-fish purposes. The above scenario cannot promote peace in any nation.

Economic challenge: The economic challenge results from economic conflict which involves competing motives to attain scarce resources (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2013). Economic

conflicts arise where people, organizations or societies strive to control the means of production and direct their activities towards maximizing their gains (Ebirim, Mbaji & Iwuozor, 2012). The Niger Delta militancy arose due to the quest for resource control. Nnaman and Ayogu (2011) postulated that the Niger Delta region bears the bulk of the nation's oil wealth, yet it is faced with serious environmental hazards resulting from oil spillage, forcing the people to live in abject poverty. This has caused the youths of that region to take up arms hence, resulting to total confusion, anarchy and disorderliness in the nation. Unemployment among Nigeria youths has become a cankerworm in the country and a threat to Nigeria nation. In fact, it has many consequences on the youths and the society in general. Ocholi (2005) warned that if unemployment in Nigeria is not addressed on time, it will contribute to more social ills in the country. Unemployment brings about social unrest and national insecurity in the nation.

V. THE WAY FORWARD

Considering some of the challenges to peace and security in Nigeria as stated in this paper: social, educational, political and economic factors, the following can be a way forward towards promoting peace and security in the nation.

Anti-social conflict should be encouraged. Anti-social conflict in this paper refers to the struggle for understanding and tolerance rather than violence. This happens when people, tribes, different societies decide not to cause opposition in social interaction nor prevent their opponents from achieving their goals. Peaceful co-existence and harmony with one another might enhance sustainable national transformation. War and anarchy does no good to a nation.

Another is educational reform. Educational reform entails bringing sanity to our education sector so as to produce the right kind of human capital who will solve the problems facing the sector and catapult the nation in the right and desired direction. Just as Gbenedio (2012: 4) commented: "For Nigeria to attain national development and transformation, there must be a thorough revamping of the schools curricula, adequate and continuous training and retraining of teachers in relevant areas like entrepreneurship and ICT education. This assertion implies that Nigerian educational system should be tailored towards reorientation of the people's values and methodology to produce the right expertise for national transformation. When the citizens are self-employed, the rate of armed robbery and kidnapping might reduce and the nation will be a better place for the citizenry.

There should be a change in the political structure of the country. For democracy to be sustained in Nigeria, elections must be free and fair. There should be no imposition of interests and thus political parties must act as major instruments of constitutional democracy. Some government policies that do not promote just and egalitarian society should be abolished. In a situation where the application of government policies such as "Federal Character" that denies admissions, employments and appointments to merited candidates does not guarantee the safety and comforts of the citizens and hence a breach to peace and stability, a better policy should replace it.

There is need for economic reform. This has to do with equitable distribution of resources. When the resources are evenly distributed, there will be no anarchy. The government should avoid unjust revenue allocation formula. Every region must be treated equally without fear or favour. Moreso; industries should be established by the government especially in the rural communities to promote job creation, thereby reducing unemployment in the country. There is an adage that says: "A hungry man is an angry man". This will go a long way in maintaining peace and security in the nation. Hence, the end result will be sustainable national transformation.

VI. CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, it is evident that high level of crime and anti-social behaviour has been on the increase among developed, as well as developing nations like Nigeria. The resultant effect has led to a downward trend of the economy and failure in achieving sustainable national transformation. Peace and security are the basic instruments for a nation's success. Nigerians, must therefore, unite together and change their value system towards achieving national transformation. No meaningful progress can be attained in an atmosphere of disharmony and chaos. Hence, it is said that united we stand, divided we fall.

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