

## GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES IN TACKLING INSECURITY IN NIGERIA AND THE WAY FORWARD

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### ABSTRACT

This research work dealt on government strategies in tackling insecurity in Nigeria and the way forward. A survey research design was adopted for the study. The population consists of one thousand public servants in Anambra state. Purpose sampling technique was used to sample three hundred (300) public servants in Anambra state. The questionnaire was the major instrument for data collection and it was validated by two experts in public administration and measurement and evaluation at Imo state University Owerri. The mean statistics was used to analyse the data collected. The findings of the study showed that poverty, youth unemployment, injustice, weak security system, porous borders among others are the causes of insecurity in Nigeria. The paper also discovered that government can tackle insecurity through use of community policing, good governance, ban on open grazing, adoption of intelligence gathering and surveillance to predict potential crime. The study concluded that the formulation and effective implementation of policies and programmes capable of addressing the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria are crucial especially poverty, injustice, youths unemployment etc. also, legislative and judicial interventions with government reforms will address some of the acute human security challenges. Conclusion and relevant recommendations were made.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent times, Nigeria has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity. This has made national security threat to be a major issue for the government and has prompted huge allocation of the national budget to security. The concept of insecurity has received diverse definition from scholars from different fields of study. According to Igbuzor (2011), insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety. It is unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. Berland (2005) defines insecurity as the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection. It refers to lack or inadequate freedom from danger. This definition reflects physical insecurity which is the most visible form of insecurity, and it feeds into many other forms of insecurity such as economic and social insecurity. There are many sources and causes of insecurity in Nigeria. Andrew and Kennedy (2003) pointed out that, it is necessary to distinguish between different causes of insecurity as each may require different remedy. In Nigeria, the challenge is not so much about insecurity of external sources but rather that of internal sources. The internal causes of insecurity in Nigeria are lack of institutional capacity resulting in government failure. Igbuzor (2011) observes that the state of insecurity in Nigeria is greatly a function of government failure or can be linked to injustice. A situation where the country earns a great deal of revenue through oil sales but fails to use these earnings to meet the needs of its people and to develop infrastructures as well as the economy. It must be pointed out that material inequality and unfairness have increased the level of insecurity in Nigeria. According to Adagba, Ugwu and Eme (2012), unemployment/poverty among Nigerians especially the youths is a major cause of insecurity and violent crimes in Nigeria. Youths unemployment have contributed to rising cases of violent crimes in Nigeria. It must be stressed that the failure of successive administrations to address the problems of poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities have increased the level of insecurity in Nigeria. Onuoha (2011) maintains that a large number of Nigeria population are frustrated and have lost hope especially the youths.

However, Achumba, Ighomereho., and Akpan (2013) observed that the porous frontiers of the country, where individual's movement is untracked has contributed to insecurity in Nigeria. As a result of the porous borders, there is an

unchecked inflow of small arms and light weapons into the country which has aided militancy and criminality in Nigeria. Available statistics show that Nigeria has over eight million illegal weapons in West Africa (Edeko, 2011). Also the porosity of the Nigeria borders has aided the uncontrollable influx of migrants, especially young men from neighbouring countries such as Republic of Niger, Chad and Republic of Benin etc have continued to fuel criminal act in Nigeria. Ethnic/religious conflict is the major source of insecurity in Nigeria. Ethnic/religious conflicts is a situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic or religious group and another of such group in a multi-religious society is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear and a tendency towards violent confrontation, frequent and persistent ethnic conflicts and religious clashes between the two dominants religions. Other causes of insecurity include; weak security system, loss of socio-cultural and communal value system, rural/urban drift, terrorism among others. Weak security system is a major contributory factor to the level of insecurity in Nigeria and this can be attributed to a number of factors which include inadequate funding of the police and other security agencies, lack of modern equipment, poor welfare of security personnel and inadequate number of security personnel (Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpan 2013). According to Olonisakin (2008), the police population ratio in Nigeria is 1:450 which falls below the standard set by the United Nations. The implication of this is that Nigeria is grossly under policed and this partly explains the inability of the Nigerian police force to effectively combat crimes and criminality in the country.

The insecurity threat in Nigeria ranges from theft to organized armed robbery, kidnapping demand for ransom, assassination, repeated invasion, social injustice, rising cost of living and vandalisation of private and public property. Kidnapping of students is becoming a fad in the country. Forty two students of Government Science College, Kagara in Niger State were kidnapped from their hostel and a student who tried to escape was shot dead. In April 2014, 272 school girls from Chibok, Borno State were abducted. The insurgents took away the students, majority of who were Christians. According to Uke (2021), abduction of students from their school has increased in recent times. In May 2017, suspected militants abducted six students of Lagos State Model College Igbobi in Epe, Lagos. Also, in 2018, at least 110 school girls were kidnapped from Government Girls Science and Technical School Dapchi, Yobe State. Last December, more than 30 school boys of Government Boys Secondary School Kankara, Kastina State were abducted from their hostel. Apart from the fact that kidnappers are running riot in the North, bandits are also having a field day in the zone, with Zamfara and Kastina states most affected. Bandits attack villages, abduct and kill Nigerians at will. They also destroy property. From Borno to Yobe to Adamawa, insurgents are killing villagers, attacking military bases and convoys. Down South, criminal herdsmen are holding the South West, South-South and South-East to ransom. They have taken over forests, acting as kings in other peoples land. They take their cattle everywhere and the animals eat up farm crops of helpless farmers. Some elements among them are engaged in kidnapping for ransom, sexual abuse and rape. Some of them are just thirsty for blood as they visit villages with mayhem for having the audacity to complain about their impunity.

These cases of destruction of lives and property have very negative implications to the economy and Nigeria National Life. It must be pointed out that insecurity discourages investments as it makes investment unattractive to business men and women. It has even halted business operation during the periods of violence and also caused outright closure of many enterprises especially in the areas where incidences of insecurity is rife and are on daily occurrence. There is evidence that some businessmen and manufactures have to relocate particularly from the north to other peaceful parts of the country (Nwagbosa, 2012). However, Suleiman (2021), Oluwarotimi (2021) and Kufour (2012) observed that high level of insecurity in a particular area or region will lead to migration of people which could result to death of skilled manpower. Insecurity is a major factor hindering Nigeria development and eroded the country's economic progress. Insecurity destroys existing infrastructure and also prevents an environment for the development of further infrastructure and a safe environment for economic activities.

To check this ugly development, the federal and the state government must put in place measures that will solve the problems of insecurity in Nigeria. The community policing by indigenes of local communities should be encouraged. It is believed that community policing will go a long way to address the rising security in Nigeria. It would enable the natives control the forests and prevent their being used as hostage detention centre and ransome redemption sites. The federal government should support the re-location and the ban on open grazing. In addition, the most successful police investigation unit for instance, the famous Kyari unit should be multiplied to run kidnappers out of Nigeria. The government both at the state and the federal level should embrace good governance. According to Oluwarotimi (2021), good governance is the solution for the security challenges in Nigeria. She maintains that good governance is a function of effective, visionary, transparent, trustworthy and credible political leadership whose driving force is an improvement in the collective well being of the citizens through well conceived, effectively implemented economic policies and human development. Kufour (2012) has called on the government to accelerate the pace of development in this context consists of creating an economy with relevant social economic and physical infrastructures for business development, high level education facilities and medical care for the people. Through:

***Deliberate policies to create employment:*** It is important to address the socio-economic problems of the country that could be capitalized on by extremists. Government should be committed to addressing socio-economic issues that encourages extremism. The youths that possess a lot of energy need a place to dissipate the energy or else, it can be

diverted wrongly. Government should create enabling environment that can boost employment, to reduce idleness of youths and graduates. Poverty is unacceptably high in Nigeria with an alarming level at the Northern part. Poverty must be combated.

The Federal government should engage the traditional rulers in the peace process and mobilize a handful of the army to the violent ridden areas with definite instructions. Equip the army and the police very well with sophisticated weapons if effectiveness was the result expected. The indigent in our streets should be provided with the opportunity to learn trade. The government should establish skill acquisition centers to keep them busy.

**Strong boarder control:** It is believed that some of the agents or operative of Boko Haram are not Nigerians, how do they come into the country? The immigration, custom, police and naval checks at Nigerian boarders should be reinforced to prevent dissidents aliens, drugs and small arms and weapons entry into the account.

**Electoral transparency:** Electioneering process in Nigeria is always beclouded with lack of transparency and due process in the election of our leaders. This fraudulent process does not protect justice hence, do not go down well with contestants and the masses. This scenario can build up hatred, depression or frustration among contestants that have been short-changed and the masses whose votes have been undermined. Our leaders should set a good standard for leaders to emerge. There should be healthy debate process for contestants before selection or election of candidates and flag bearers.

Also, elimination of corruption and entrenchment of social justice will no doubt reduce high rate of insecurity in Nigeria. Adagba (2012) has emphasized the need for intelligence gathering and surveillance so that law enforcement agents could be proactive and reasonably predict potential crime with near perfect accuracy. In addition, government should adopt the use of computer based closed circuit television cameras in public places especially in Abuja to monitor and record events that take place in a particular location.

## 1.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the causes of insecurity?
2. What are the consequences of insecurity in Nigeria?
3. What are the government strategies in tackling insecurity in Nigeria?

## 2. METHODOLOGY

A survey research design was adopted for the study. The population is made up of one thousand public servants in Anambra state. Using stratified random sampling technique, three hundred (300) public servants in Anambra state were sampled for the study. The instrument for data collection is the questionnaire which has 18 items designed to elicit information on government strategies in tackling insecurity in Nigeria and the way forward. The instrument was first validated by an expert in government and public administration at Imo state University Owerri and expert in measurement and evaluation at Nwafor Orizu College of Education Nzugbe, Anambra state. The reliability of the research instrument was determined through measure of internal consistency of the items. The Cronbach Alpha was used to establish the internal consistency of 0.80 and it was considered acceptable for the research work. For data analysis, the research questions were answered using mean. Mean of 2.5 and above is said to be high and effective and those below 2.5 are said to be low and ineffective.

## 3. RESULTS

The following are the results of data analysis:

Research Question 1: what are the causes of insecurity in Nigeria?

**Table 1**

mean rating scores on the causes of insecurity in Nigeria.

S/N	ITEMS	X	REMARK
1	Pervasive material inequality has increased insecurity	3.5	Agree
2	Ethno-religious conflict is a source of insecurity	3.3	Agree
3	Weak security system is the cause of insecurity	3.5	Agree
4	Loss of communal values is one of the causes of insecurity	3.1	Agree
5	Abject poverty is a source of insecurity	3.5	Agree
6	Nigeria porous borders is a cause of insecurity	2.9	Agree
7	Youth unemployment is a source of insecurity	3.5	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The result presented in table one shows that items 1 – 7 were rated high by the respondents. This was clearly indicated from their respective mean scores of 3.5, 3.3, 3.5, 3.1, 3.5, 2.9 and 3.5 which are above the criterion of acceptance fixed

at 2.5 and above. It means that material inequality, ethno-religious conflict, weak security system, loss of communal values, abject poverty, porous borders, youth unemployment are some of the causes of insecurity in Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What are the consequences of insecurity in Nigeria:

**Table 2**

Mean rating scores on the consequences of insecurity in Nigeria.

S/N	ITEMS	X	REMARK
8	Insecurity discourages investment	3.5	Agree
9	Insecurity leads to migration of people from one part of the country to another	2.9	Agree
10	Insecurity destroys existing infrastructures	3.1	Agree
11	Insecurity makes the environment insecure for development	3.3	Agree
12	Insecurity leads to scarcity of skilled manpower	3.5	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The result of the analysis in table two shows that items 8 – 12 were rated high by the respondents. This was clearly indicated from their respective mean scores of 3.5, 2.9, 3.1, 3.3 and 3.5 which are above the criterion of acceptance fixed at 2.5 and above. It means that the consequences of insecurity include; discouragement of investment, migration of people from one part of the country to another, scarcity of skilled manpower, destruction of existing infrastructures and makes the environment insecure for development.

Research Question 3: What are government strategies in tackling insecurity in Nigeria?

**Table 3**

Mean rating scores on government strategies in tackling insecurity in Nigeria.

S/N	ITEMS	X	REMARK
13	The use of community policing arrangement like Amatekun, Ebubeagu will tackle insecurity.	3.5	Agree
14	The ban on open grazing will tackle insecurity	2.9	Agree
15	The government both at the state and federal level should embrace good governance.	3.1	Agree
16	The government should accelerate the pace of development.	2.9	Agree
17	There is need for the government to adapt the strategy of intelligence gathering and surveillance to predict potential crime.	3.3	Agree
18	Government should adapt the use of computer based circuit television cameras in public places.	2.9	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The result of the analysis presented in table three shows that items 13 – 18 were rated high by the respondents. This was clearly indicated from their respective mean scores of 3.5, 2.9, 3.1, 2.9, 3.3 and 2.9 which are above the criterion of acceptance fixed at 2.5 and above. It means that community policing, the ban on open grazing, good governance, accelerated development among others are government strategies in tackling insecurity in Nigeria.

#### 4. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The result of the analysis of research question one shows that material inequality, ethno-religious conflict, weak security system, poverty, loss of communal values, youths unemployment and porous borders are some of the causes of insecurity in Nigeria. These findings are in agreement with Onuoha (2011) who observed that a large number of Nigerians are frustrated as a result of poverty and inequality which has continued to fuel crises and insecurity in Nigeria. The result of the analysis of research question two shows that the consequences of insecurity in Nigeria include; discouragement in investment, migration of people from one part of the country to another, scarcity of skilled manpower, destruction of existing infrastructures among others. These findings are in line with Suleiman (2012), Oluwarotimi (2012) and kufur (2012) who posited that high level of insecurity will lead to migration of people which could lead to scarcity of skilled manpower. The result of the analysis of research question three shows that the use of community policing, ban on open grazing, good governance, accelerating the pace of development, intelligence gathering and surveillance and use of computer in public places will help in tackling insecurity in Nigeria. These findings are in agreement with Kufour (2012) who advocated that the government should accelerate the pace of development if insecurity must be checked. While Adagba (2012) has emphasized the need for intelligence gathering and surveillance so that law enforcement agents could predict potential crime with near perfect accuracy.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Security situation in Nigeria appears or at least has remained insurmountable and many people have argued that government at all levels has not done enough in dealing with the situation decisively. There is need to re-order priorities and to seek better understanding of the underlying causes and dynamics of the insecurity in the country with the aim of providing effective conflict prevention and management strategies. The formulation and effective implementation of policies and programmes capable addressing the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria are crucial, especially with regard to poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, injustice, corruption, porous borders and small arm proliferation. Therefore, effort to tackle insecurity can only be effective if there is robust combination of legislative and judicial interventions with government reforms that address some of the acute human security challenges confronting vast majority of the population. Based on the issues highlighted above, the following recommendations are made:

1. The use of community policing such as Amotekun in the south West and Ebubeagu in the South East will tackle insecurity in Nigeria.
2. The government both at federal and state level should embrace good governance.
3. The strategy of intelligence gathering and surveillance to predict potential crime should be sustained.
4. The government should accelerate the pace of development in the country.
5. The government should adopt the use of computer based close circuit television cameras to monitor crime in public places.
6. There is need for robust combination of legislative and judicial intervention to tackle insecurity in Nigeria.
7. The government must recognize the need to devote more attention to security intelligence, capacity building to meet the standard and acquisition of modern technology such as closed circuit television cameras to tackle insecurity in Nigeria.
8. The general public should be made to understand through public awareness that security is everybody's business.

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