

Impact of Social Unrest on Nigeria's Socio-Economic Development

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Abstract

One goal successive Nigerian regimes have vigorously pursued since her return to democracy in 1999, is the attempt to woo international investors into the nation's resource-laden economy. The push for foreign direct investment (FDI) is because without foreign investments, no nation can make quantum leaps in her developmental strides. Over the years, Nigeria has been caught in the web of social unrest and insecurity like strikes, protests, secessionist agitations and demand for restructuring, terrorism, kidnapping and banditry. In 2020, Nigerian youths protested against police brutality leading to the famous #ENDSARs protests. There were also cases of labour unrests in the educational and oil sub-sectors of the economy, all of which took enormous tolls on Nigeria's economy. Social unrest and insecurity have scared away potential investors and forced foreign investors in Nigeria to relocate to more secure African countries. Nigeria recorded N8.9 trillion trade deficit between 2012 and 2020, due to insecurity. This study examined the impact of social unrest on Nigeria's socio-economic development. The paper utilized secondary data such as research reports, institutional publications, journals, magazines, newspapers and the internet. Anchored on the Frustration/Aggression theory, the paper identified poverty, unemployment, insecurity, police brutality, marginalization and trust deficit, as drivers of social unrest in Nigeria. The paper recommends job creation and empowerment opportunities to mitigate unemployment and poverty, rejigging Nigeria's security architecture to safeguard lives and property; subjecting the police to civil authority; promotion of fairness, equity and justice to address marginalization and entronement of transparency and accountability to regain public trust.

Keywords: #ENDSARs protests; Foreign Direct Investment; Frustration/Aggression theory; Marginalization; Social unrest.

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Introduction

Social unrest has been in existence worldwide since time immemorial. However, the uniqueness of the civil disturbances being witnessed in the 21st century is that they are more systematic in nature involving several countries simultaneously expressing discontent over several of forms of injustice and social ills in the society and demanding that something needs to be done to address the situation (Bowman, Caccioli, Coburn, Hartley, Kelly, Ralph, Ruffle & Wallace, 2014). One of the main reasons the recent wave of protests has attracted the attention of experts and the general public

is because of its global reach (Silver, 2018). This is true because between 2011 and 2019, the number of riots, protests, strikes, and anti-government demonstrations increased by 244 percent worldwide (Vaskov, Pienknagura & Ricci, 2021). Causes of such protests range from frustration over government's handling of identified crisis to mounting inequality and corruption.

The trio of Pienknagura, Ricci and Vaskov, in a 2021 publication titled, "IMF-How Social unrest can inspire changes in policy" identified some of the real-world examples of social unrests to include the demonstrations that followed former Mexican president Enrique Pena Nieto's election in 2012, Chile's presidential election in 2013 as well as the Yellow Vest protests in France in 2018 and the July 2019 Hong Kong SAR. Other notable examples of social unrests include the Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter, the Arab Spring, and the anti-austerity protesters in Greece, etc. In Nigeria, as in other parts of Africa, civil disturbances are not new. As far back as 1929, a group of women led by an activist, Mrs. Margaret Ekpo, protested against the imposition of taxes by the colonial administration in what became popularly known as the Aba Women's Riot. There was also the general strike that took place in 1945. Similarly, decades of autocratic rule by the military junta in Nigeria also resulted in various kinds of civil disturbances such as protests, strikes and demonstrations. Apparent from the foregoing, is that social unrest is a global phenomenon even as its intensity, focus and results may differ from one part of the world to another.

It's also worth noting that most people immediately conjure up images of chaos and disorder when they hear the word "social unrest". This is a contrived and anecdotal notion of the term, social unrest. However, there is also a positive side to social unrest. In other words, social unrest can be termed positive or negative depending on the side of the divide one stands. For example, Renn, Jovanovich and Schroter (2011) argued that from a more systematic or functionalist point of view, social unrest can pose a threat to the society. Furthermore, people in position of authority see social unrest as a threat. However, scholars within the conflict tradition view social unrest as a spring board for change. In others words, social unrest can be positive or negative depending on how it is conceived.

However, over the years, it is the disruptive and negative effects of civil unrest that have become major sources of concern to social scientists and political leaders globally. The reason for this is that major disruptive events such as protests, civil war, and politically motivated violence can sabotage a country's socio-economic progress (Brigid & Chinonso, 2021). Similarly, Vaskov, Pienknagura and Ricci (2021) also emphasized that the frequency of civil disturbances has increased recently with serious implications on social, political and economic progress around the world.

Since the return to civil rule in 1999, Nigeria has seen an increase in civil unrest, religious, ethnic, and communal conflicts, all of which have had disastrous effects on human lives and property. According to the United Nations Development Programme (2021), the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria's north-eastern region has killed around 32,000 people since 2009. Similarly, Amnesty International (2020) stated that intercommunal violence and bandit attacks had murdered over 1500 persons in the north-west and north-central regions of Nigeria. Other forms of social unrest, such as the actions of separatist groups like the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB), militancy in the south-south area, and, most recently, the #EndSARs protests, have major consequences for Nigeria's socio-economic growth. For instance, Nigeria's economy recorded N8.9tn trade deficit in nine months and experts believed that insecurity was the major cause of the decline (Orjiude, 2021).

In addition, labour unrests which constitute an integral component of social unrests have become common place in Nigeria over the years with serious drawbacks on the nation's economy. For example, strike actions by the Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC), the Academic Staff Union of

Universities (ASUU), National Association of Resident Doctors (NARD), National Union of Petroleum and Gas Workers Association of Nigeria (NUPENG), Petroleum and Gas Workers Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN), Judicial Staff Union of Nigeria (JUSUN) have at one time or the other, grounded socio-economic activities in Nigeria. According to the Trade Union Services and Industrial Relations (TUSIR), a unit in the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, there were 103 labour complaints and trade disputes in 2021 alone (Peterside, 2021). The report stated that, out of this number (103), 14 resulted in strike actions. The report noted further that 74% of those industrial disputes are public sector based while 26% are private sector based (Peterside, 2021). The aforementioned strike actions impacted negatively on employment, decreased business confidence, and increased the risk of economic stagnation. In addition, strike actions slow down economic growth and investment opportunities (Peterside, 2021). Based on the foregoing, it is obvious that social unrests under whatever guise have the potential to undermine economic growth and development. This study investigates the impact of social unrest on Nigeria's socioeconomic development in light of the preceding context.

Conceptual Clarifications

This section of the paper clarifies the concepts used to foreclose possible misunderstanding. The concepts are: social unrest and socio-economic development.

Social Unrest: The term social unrest does not have a universally acceptable definition. This is due to the fact that different scholars and organizations conceptualize it from different perspectives. Social unrest encompasses civil disorder, acts of mass disobedience and strikes by groups of people that are intended to disrupt a community or organization (Seattle Emergency Management, n.d). According to Giddens and Sutton (2013), social unrest refers to the stage of frustration with existing society, which can give rise to more focused collective behaviour and social movements. Whatever the definition offered, social unrest from the point of view of the authors of this paper, is a form of collective action that has attracted much attention from researchers over the years not only as an instrument for social change but also with regards to its disruptive tendencies.

Gonzalo de Cadenas, Herrero, Vidal-Abarca and & López (2015), identified four levels of social unrest. These are:

- (a) **Vindication.** This category expresses the initial level of societal unrest and covers solely, occurrences involving private persons' verbal displeasure. It does not involve deeds, but rather words such as voiced criticism, threat, accusation, and so on.
- (b) **Protest.** It denotes a rise in social unrest and involves physical acts such as protests, strikes, riots, and other types of protest by private agents.
- (c) **Conflict.** This is characterized by the highest level of societal unrest and involves acts such as armed attacks, property destruction, assassinations, insurgencies, civil wars, armed conflicts, and so on. It symbolizes the most heinous acts of civil upheaval.
- (d) **The state's reaction.** This refers to government's (State) efforts intended at quelling societal unrest or upholding the rule of law.

Based on the foregoing, it can be safely concluded that social unrest from the simplest forms such as verbal threats and criticisms to the most dangerous variants such as armed attacks, property destruction, assassination, insurgencies, civil wars, armed conflicts can subvert socio-economic development. Therefore, the scope of social unrest as used in this paper encompasses all the four levels of social unrest examined above.

Socio-Economic Development: Socio-economic development is a very important component of development that features prominently on the calculus of the state. Changes in the social sphere, mostly of an economic nature, are referred to as socio-economic development (Chojnicki, 2010). Socio-economic development, according to Litwinski (2017), is a series of quantitative, qualitative, and structural changes that occur as a result of people's actions in social (economic) practice. Such changes, he claims, have an impact on life conditions in the areas of material conditions, economic structure and entrepreneurship, access to public goods and services, social relationships, environmental conditions, and life satisfaction. Gross Domestic Product (GDP), life expectancy, literacy, and employment levels are some of the metrics used to measure socioeconomic development (Agricultural and Environmental Data Archive, 2013).

Methodology

This study being theoretical in nature, made use of secondary sources of literature. Secondary data were gathered from diverse literature sources such as research reports, institutional publications, journals, magazines, newspapers and the internet.

Theoretical Underpinning

The Frustration/Aggression theory provides the theoretical underpinning for this research. In 1939, John Dollard and colleagues established the frustration-aggression theory, which was later refined by Berkowitz and Aubrey (1962). It appears to be the most typical explanation for violent criminal behavior, as well as related behaviours such as social unrest and disturbances, which may be caused by a lack of demands being met (Ugwuoke, cited in Odoma and Akor, 2019). Frustration, defined as the state that arises when circumstances interfere with a goal-response, typically leads to aggression. Aggression, according to this notion, is the outcome of a person's attempts to achieve a certain goal being blocked or frustrated. It goes on to say that when the source of the dissatisfaction cannot be confronted, the violence is directed at an innocent target.

The responsibility of every government is to provide the enabling social, economic and political environment for people to get by in life. In many cases, such enabling environment hardly exists. For example, every year, Nigerian universities and other tertiary institutions churn out hundreds of thousands of graduates. Many of these graduates have little or no prospects of securing paid employment in the already saturated Nigerian labour market (Odoma & Akor, 2019). What is more, many poor and vulnerable people are confronted with existential challenges. Faced with such bleak future, the natural tendency is for such people to become frustrated. This probably explains why since Nigeria's return to civil rule in 1999, the country has witnessed a rise in the incidences of civil unrest, religious, ethnic and communal conflicts with devastating impact on human lives and property. Furthermore, insecurity has led to over 70,000 deaths in Nigeria between 2012 and 2020. The activities of the Boko Haram insurgents, Independent Peoples of Biafra (IPOB), Niger Delta Militants and more recently, the #EndSARs protests have serious implications on Nigeria's socio-economic development. The foregoing disturbances may not be unconnected with bottled up anger and frustration.

The relevance of the frustration-aggression theory derives from the thesis that the triggers of social unrest in Nigeria such as poverty, police brutality, insecurity, marginalization, etc. appear to be the by-products of various frustrations encountered by many Nigerians, particularly the youth and the poor, in their socio-cultural, economic and political environments. Social unrests and their spinoff impact on Nigeria's socio-economic development can be explained as the outpouring of accumulated

anger, frustration and grievances motivated by trust deficit between the citizenry and the government, unemployment, poverty and general deprivation.

Discussion

Causes of Social Unrest in Nigeria

This aspect of the paper interrogates the key drivers of social unrest in Nigeria. Such triggers include but not limited to insecurity, poverty, unemployment, marginalization and police brutality.

Insecurity

Insecurity remains one of the key drivers of social unrest in Nigeria. There is no region in Nigeria that has not come under the grip of one form of insecurity or the other. The North Eastern part of Nigeria has been under the throes of more than a decade of terrorism masterminded by the Boko Haram Islamist sect; while the North Central zone has been grappling with farmers-herders clashes that have resulted in enormous casualties in human and economic terms. The South-South region has been buffeted with issues of militancy while in the South East and South West; there have been rising agitations by secessionist groups. Momodu (2021, page number not provided), best captures the deteriorating state of insecurity in Nigeria when he opined that:

Everywhere you turn, East, West, North or South, danger lurks. No one sleeps with their two eyes closed anymore; we now sleep with our eyes wide open and our eyes more alert to the slightest whiff of danger. Our noses sniff the air constantly for ominous signs of kidnappers and bandits.... Travelling on road is now such a frightening and hazardous endeavor that it's a miracle to make safe to one's destination.

The above quotation mirrors the sordid state of security in every part of Nigeria. The cumulative impact of insecurity on lives and property in Nigeria is enormous. For example, between January and June 2021, there were 5,800 deaths and 2,943 kidnappings, according to the Nigeria Security Tracker's security incident report (Sahara Reporters, 2021). This equates to about 32 killings and 17 kidnappings every day.

These killings have contributed to rising tension, anger and frustration among the Nigerian public. The current wave of insecurity has prompted many Nigerians to organize peaceful rallies to voice their displeasure with the indiscriminate destruction of lives and property across the country. For example, youths in Katsina State, President Muhammadu Buhari's home state, recently staged a peaceful protest to express their dissatisfaction with both the Katsina State government and the Federal Government of Nigeria's failure to protect them from armed bandits, kidnappers, and other criminal elements in the society.

Poverty

Poverty continues to be a major source of social upheaval, particularly in developing countries. According to Acemoglu and Robinson (2013) poverty is the key source of discontent in many nations of the world. In Nigeria, poverty remains one of the most serious social and economic issue the citizens have been contending with. According to the World Bank (2021), prior to the Covid-19 crisis, almost 4 out of 10 Nigerians were poor, with millions more at risk of sliding into poverty as a result of lack of inclusion. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2019), noted that 43 percent of Nigerians, or 83 million individuals, live on less than 137, 430 Naira (\$381.75) every year. Not too

long ago, precisely in 2018, Nigeria was first declared as the world's poverty capital in a report by the Brookings Institution, knocking off India from the unenviable position (This Day, 2021). The country's negative poverty profile has remained the same even in 2022. There is a strong correlation between poverty and social unrest. When people are poor and cannot meet their basic needs, it could lead to frustration and agitation. When these frustrations and agitations are poorly addressed they could boil over into collective action. As rightly observed by Tade (2021), in the midst of poverty, social unrest is birthed and nurtured. This is exactly the picture of what is happening in Nigeria today

Unemployment

Unemployment remains one of the major factors propelling social unrest in Nigeria. According to the World Bank (2021), between 2010 and 2020, the unemployment rate in Nigeria rose five-folds, from 6.4% in 2010 to 33.3% at the end of 2020, significantly affecting youth in their quest for gainful employment opportunities. The implication of the above statistics is that many Nigerians may not be able to cater for their primary needs such as food, shelter, clothing etc. When this happens, the resultant consequence is that a large number of people willing to work but unable to secure gainful employment may deviate and embrace anti-social behaviour (Tade, 2021).

Marginalization

Marginalization remains a key trigger of social unrest in Nigeria. A system where some social groups continue to suffer from systematic marginalization in the hands of others has the potential to breed tension and agitation. This is not new in Nigeria because marginalization has been at the foundation of the Nigerian State the very first day the colonialists yoked the northern and southern protectorates together in 1914. For example, the resurgence in the agitation about restructuring in Nigeria today is a mere reawakening of the problem that has been hibernating for the past five decades. Agitations from secessionist groups such as the outlawed Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) in South-East Nigeria over the alleged political marginalization of the Igbo nation have contributed in heating up the Nigerian polity. The group has directed a "sit at home" order in the Eastern States every Monday and members of the public obey such orders. Persistent demands from the Niger Delta region over resource control and the need to address issues of environmental degradation are central to understanding the rising tension in Nigeria. Recently, the emergence of Sunday Adeyemo popularly called Sunday Igboho defend the rights of the Yoruba people and demanding for the creation of an Oduduwa Republic are all indications that the current structure of the Nigerian state is deficient and in need of urgent restructuring to assuage the feelings of every section of the country especially those who have been unjustly relegated to the backwaters of the country's socio-economic and political development.

Police Brutality

State institutions especially the police and the military have been implicated as drivers of some of the incidences of social unrest in Nigeria. The Nigerian police have been fingered in a number of human right abuses and extra-judicial killings in Nigeria. Some Nigerian youths held the EndSARs protests in 2020 in response to long-running and uncontrolled cases of police brutality in the country. The protests were products of outrage and dissatisfaction about human rights breaches, intimidation, torture, and extortion by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a special unit of the Nigerian Police Force (Dajo & Akor, 2021). The Nigerian Army is accused of killing and burying 347 members of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) and other civilians in 2015. (United States Department of State, 2020). There was also no indication that any member of the military forces was held responsible for the October and December 2018 violence in Abuja with IMN demonstrators,

which reportedly killed at least 42 people (United States Department of State, 2020). Furthermore, the Nigerian government's response to social unrest has been characterized by excessive use of brutal force as evidenced by the government's continued denial that no lives were lost even after the findings of the Judicial Panel of Enquiry established by the Lagos Government confirmed that there was actual massacre of innocent Nigerians during the Lekki Toll Gate killings.

While submitting its report titled "Report of Lekki Incident Investigation of 20th October 2020", to the Lagos Government on Monday, November 15, 2021, the eight-member Judicial Panel of Inquiry headed by retired Justice Doris Okuwobi, on page 13 of the report dubbed "Executive Summary" noted as follows:

... At the Lekki Toll Gate, officers of the Nigerian Army shot, injured and killed unarmed helpless and defenseless protesters, without provocation or justification, while they were waving the Nigerian Flag and singing the National Anthem and the manner of assault and killing could in context be described as a massacre...

The above revelations by no less a panel set up by the Lagos State Government, eventually put an end to any denial by government officials about the killing of innocent civilians at the Lekki Toll Gate when youth under the banner of #ENDSARs protests trooped out in their numbers to voice out grievances against acts of brutality by operatives of the Nigerian Police Force.

Impact of Social Unrest on Socio-economic Development in Nigeria

This section of the paper examines the impact of social unrest on social- economic development in Nigeria.

Effect of Social Unrest on Social Infrastructure

Social infrastructure is a major catalyst of economic growth and development especially in developing countries. Infrastructural facilities such as good roads, railways, health, water, energy among others can stimulate societal transformation. The African Infrastructure Country Diagnostic (AICD, 2011) examined more elaborately the key role of infrastructure in accelerating socio-economic development by stating that infrastructure adds a net contribution of 1% point to Nigeria's improved per-capita growth performance in recent years. It has also been estimated that Nigeria would need to spend \$14.2 billion or earmark 12% of her Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over the next decade to address her infrastructural deficit (AICD, 2011). The above facts underscore the importance of social infrastructure in stimulating economic growth and development.

Despite the fact that social infrastructure requires significant financial investment in both construction and maintenance, there is growing concern about the rising incidences of social unrest on social infrastructure and its cascading effect on economic growth and development in both developed and developing countries. According to Renn, Jovanovich and Schroter (2011) social unrest damages or dislocates critical social utilities. In Nigeria, social unrest caused by the Boko Harm insurgency, farmers and herders conflict, ethnic and religious conflicts, #EndSARs protesters, IPOB, and Niger Delta militants has caused massive damage to critical social infrastructure that took decades to build. In North-East Nigeria for instance, conflict in the region has destroyed 75 percent of water and sanitation infrastructure (United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, 2017). UNICEF (2017) stated that in Northeast Nigeria, at least 496 classrooms have been destroyed while 1392 classrooms were damaged but repairable.

Similarly, Olasupo (2020) stated that the EndSARs protests in 2020 resulted in the damage of 205 key national security assets, corporate facilities, and private property. The riots also resulted in the looting and destruction of 71 public warehouses and 248 private establishments throughout 13 Nigerian states (Olasupo, 2020). In the same vein, the Nigerian government has claimed that separatist groups such as the Independent Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) through its paramilitary outfit code named the Eastern Security Network (ESN) was responsible for the destruction of eighteen (18) INEC offices and 164 police facilities (Ejekwonyilo, 2021). The significance of the preceding revelations is that civil unrest can disrupt social infrastructure, resulting in a negative impact on socioeconomic development regardless of location.

Social Unrest and Foreign Direct Investment

Foreign direct investment (FDI) plays a critical role in stimulating and accelerating economic growth and development. According to Bitar, Hamadeh, and Khoueiri (2019), FDI inflows boost technology transfer, local company productivity, and financial capital requirements, resulting in job creation and economic growth. In spite of the enormous importance of FDI to economic growth especially in developing countries, social unrest has become a major obstacle to the flow of FDI in Nigeria. According to the US Department of State (2020), security remains a major concern to investors in Nigeria due to the high rates of violent crime, kidnappings for ransom, and terrorism. Social unrest lowers confidence and increases uncertainty (Vaskov, Pienknagura, and Ricci, 2021). The Seattle Emergency Management (n.d), also noted that cities that are prone to social unrest could be stigmatized and consequently lose investments and tourism.

As a result of this, no investor would want to invest in an environment where their investment cannot be protected. Looking at the rise in the incidences of social unrest and tension that comes out of Nigeria, many international investors would be scared of investing in the country. They would prefer to invest in environments where such investments can be protected. Onyebuchi (2018) echoed the above sentiment when he stated that several significant investors have fled Nigeria for nations with more secure and stable atmosphere thereby leaving the Nigerian economy gasping for breath. Empirical evidence from a study of the most attractive economies for the location of FDI from 2007-2009 showed that Nigeria was listed among the 40 most attractive economies for the location of FDI (UNCTAD, cited in Onyebuchi, 2018). The report placed Nigeria in the fourth position in Africa, behind South Africa, Egypt and Morocco. Today, the situation is completely different. According to the 2018 UNCTAD World Investment Report, FDI inflows into Nigeria decreased by 21%, while capital flight increased by 8% (Adenyuma & Onyeche, 2019). One of the reasons for the decline in FDI is the rising incidence of social unrest which has literally chased investors away to other more secure and investment friendly neighboring African countries notably, Ghana and Rwanda.

Economy

Social unrest can severely disrupt economic activity through the destruction of productive assets, diversion of resources, death and injury to the population, and damage to health and education facilities (UNDP, 2021). According to Vaskov, Pienknagura, and Ricci (2021), social unrest leads to a decline in economic activities especially in countries that face post low growth figures prior to social unrest as well as those that experienced above average growth before the event. In Nigeria, a World Bank (2016) assessment estimated cumulative GDP losses from 2011 to 2015 at \$6.21 billion (\$3.54 billion in Borno, \$1.57 billion in Adamawa, and \$1.1 billion in Yobe).

The Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI, 2020), for instance, confirmed that the Nigerian economy lost 700 billion Naira (N700 billion) within 12 days of the EndSARs demonstrations. Likewise, Akinkuotu (2020) also claimed that the EndSARs demonstrations caused the Lagos State government to lose N234 million in revenue as a result of the Lekki toll gate closure.

According to the report of a survey conducted by SB Morgan (SBM, 2020) involving 180 business owners in the aftermath of the #EndSARs protests, majority of the respondents representing 91% of business owners agreed that their businesses were affected by the protests while 98% agreed to losing customers and revenues within the period. The report stated further that 43% of respondents lost over 1 million Naira to the looting while 26% lost between N500,000 -1 million. The report concluded that the protests resulted in business owners being unable to meet their debt obligations, destruction and looting of shops, and the general slowdown of business deals which they fear would take a while to pick up. Social unrests negatively impact on export receipts and oil production in Nigeria. According to Onime (2018), the activities of militants and the violent agitations for resource control in the Niger Delta have led to the destruction of oil installations, incessant pipeline vandalism, oil theft and bunkering, resulting in the persistent decline in export receipts and oil production.

Social Life

What differentiates a social being from a biological being is the ability to interact. Incidences of social unrest greatly interfere with the way people interact. The movement of people is restricted whenever curfews are imposed by the government. Acts of social unrest such as protests and riots, as well as strikes, usually disrupt the movement of people from one location to another thereby restricting social interaction at social events and other engagements. In Nigeria, social unrest occasioned by the issuance of quit notices by different ethnic groups for instance, has greatly affected relationship among different ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. According to Howell (2004) social unrest affects peaceful coexistence and alters social relations among groups. This is very common especially in countries that are heterogeneous such as Nigeria with diverse ethnic and religious groups.

Conclusion

This paper interrogated the impact of social unrest on Nigeria's socio-economic development. Social unrest encompasses civil disorder, acts of mass disobedience and strikes by groups of people that are intended to disrupt a community or organization. The study noted that no nation, no matter its level of economic development and prosperity, can do without foreign investments and investors. This probably explains why successive Nigerian governments since the country's return to democracy in 1999, have vigorously pursued the goal of wooing international investors to take advantage of her resource-studded economy. However, social unrest and insecurity, manifested in strikes, protests, secessionist agitations, kidnapping and banditry, etc. have conspired to scare away potential and actual investors from the country. Part of the consequences of that is that the country reportedly recorded N8.9tn in trade deficit as well as lost N700bn within the twelve days of the #ENDSARs demonstrations.

The paper further x-rayed the impact of social unrest on the country's socio-economic development with particular focus on social infrastructure, foreign direct investment, economy and social life. A major finding of the paper is that the triggers of social unrest included poverty, unemployment, insecurity, police brutality, marginalization and trust deficit between government and the citizenry. The major take away from the foregoing is that social unrest is counterproductive to Nigeria's socio-economic development and every attempt must be made to mitigate the predisposing factors.

Recommendations

Deriving from the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for policy guidance and implementation:

- (a) There is no doubt that poverty and unemployment are key drivers of social unrest and other forms of criminality in Nigeria. There are millions of Nigerians living in poverty as well as a growing army of unemployed youths. This is definitely a time bomb waiting to explode. Therefore, Government must go beyond rhetoric and public speeches to create more job opportunities and empowerment programmes to keep the youths gainfully engaged.
- (b) Civic engagement is an important component of all democracies. Therefore, the different groups in Nigeria involved in agitations over various forms of marginalization creating tension and restiveness in the country, must not be hounded down by the government as is the current practice. Government should look into the complaints of these restive groups and dialogue with them. Dialogue does not imply weakness but a more civic way of engaging people in liberal democracies.
- (c) The protection of people and property is the government's foremost responsibility. When citizens have the feeling that the government is not doing enough to protect their lives and property as currently being witnessed in Nigeria, they may resort to self-help and this will create chaos and disorder in the society. It is therefore imperative that government must ensure that it safeguards the lives and property of her citizens.
- (d) Labour unrest has become a reoccurring decimal in Nigeria. Different labour unions in Nigeria have been at loggerheads with the government over their members' welfare and this often leads to the halting of economic and social activities in different segments of the Nigerian society. It is true that government may not have enough resources to address all the problems of labour unions in Nigeria. However, the government must learn to constructively and timeously engage with labour unions to avoid breakdown in negotiations that could potentially lead to a buildup of avoidable tension.

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