
INSECURITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract:

Dueling security threats continue to rock Nigeria because of kidnapping, armed robbery, banditry, communal clashes, and the most offensive part, the farmers-herders disputes have persisted to strain peace and development. This research paper discusses socio-economic impacts of insecurity on development by taking Osun state as a test case. This is aimed at understanding the real causes of insecurity, the socio-economic effects of insecurity and the best ways of achieving security in the region. The research method that is implemented is the qualitative approach, and the main source of data would be secondary, which include government reports, journal articles, and policy briefs. The analytical framework of human security has been used where the effects of insecurity are considered not only in the welfare, rights, and opportunities of individuals and communities. The research decision shows that corruption and bad leadership, the lack of thereof security architecture, unemployment, pessimistic childhood background, substance abuse, and anxiety disorders are the significant sources of insecurity in the state of Osun. Consequences of insecurity are deep and far reaching: the citizens exist in a state of constant fear, crimes are on the increase, foreign/ local investments are reduced and business activity is reduced and significantly and noticeably, emigration and internal migration is on the increase. These manifestations eventually hamper the socio-economic fabric of the state and slow down sustainable development. The study makes a conclusion that insecurity can only be dealt with in a multidimensional way involving adoption of modernized security technology, enhanced intelligence gathering, presence of



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community policing and political will. It suggests that reforms towards security should be given high consideration by the government at all levels and there should be a broad comprehensive program that will guarantee peace and create economic stability in the state of Osun.

Keywords: *Security, Insecurity, Development, Socio-Economic, Nigeria.*

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INTRODUCTION

In the twenty third years of this era at the beginning of the twenty first century we are doing all we can to boost the economy and development in various countries across the world. The 2007 recession that began in the USA overturned to the global world giving a shock in the rate of economic growth and development. To make the matter worse, the COVID-19 pandemic plunged more than 100 million people around the world into extreme poverty (World Bank, 2020), leaving the consequence that indigence, criminality, and security turned out to be the rule of the day. In the meltdown of the global economy which has seen a tightening up of its economic growth and development and the as a result consequent hardship which ensued leading to a turn up in crime and other social vices, Nigeria is not left out (Odalonu, 2022). This resulted in a case of insecurity that had never been felt before. The threat to national security in Nigeria nearly assumed a phenomenal status where the national budget allocation to security was enhanced and the terrorism criminalized through enactment of Anti-Terrorism Act in 2011 (Agunbiade, 2024). Although the government in Nigeria has tried to bring about security in the country, insecurity has not been reduced in Nigeria since Nigeria has always ranked low in Global Peace Index (GPI 2012), an indicator of a deteriorated situation of insecurity in Nigeria (Popoola & Shittu, 2020).

Osun State, located in the southwestern part of Nigeria, has been grappling with significant security challenges in recent years, which have had adverse effects on its overall growth and development, especially in terms of socioeconomic progress. Factors such as poor governance, inadequate revenue mobilization, political instability, and insecurity, among others, have contributed to the poor

economic growth trajectory of the state (Agunbiade, 2024). These factors have resulted in a declining standard of living, high rates of illiteracy, and significant poverty levels. Insecurity has also undermined social cohesion and fostered criminality, adversely affecting local businesses and foreign investment (Shittu, 2020 & Olaosebikan et al., 2025).

To address these insecurity challenges, the local government has taken certain measures, such as establishing security agencies and instituting security-focused policies. However, these measures have not fully mitigated the security challenges, as the agencies face equipment shortages and the policies have not been innovative, comprehensive, or effective (Ayegbo et al., 2022 and Odalonu, 2022). This study on insecurity and socio-economic development in Osun State, Nigeria (2018–2022) is an effort to understand the impact of insecurity on the state’s socio-economic development.

THE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIES OF THE RESEARCH

The state has faced incidents of kidnapping, armed robbery, and communal clashes (Popoola, 2019), significantly affecting investment, tourism, and overall economic growth. The study aims to identify the root causes of insecurity, propose evidence-based policy solutions, and develop an action plan to improve socioeconomic development (Shittu, 2020).

The study seeks to answer: What are the causes of insecurity in Osun State, Nigeria? What are the effects of insecurity on socioeconomic development? What are the ways through which security can be guaranteed to foster strong socioeconomic development? Covering 2018 to 2022.

METHODOLOGY

The research will be based solely on the secondary sources of information that will include peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, internet publication, government reports, policy documents, and briefs of reputable institutions. These materials give the history of the situation, the dynamics of the trends, and the scholarly expertise on which to rely to comprehend the dynamics of insecurity in Osun State and what it prunes to the overall socio-economic development.

This is because it is strategic to use secondary data since it is very hard to access primary data in conflict areas and there is a pile of available literature on insecurity and development in Nigeria. The

content analysis is used to interpret and correlate the information gathered in a systematic way by identifying the pattern, relationships, and common themes using various sources. This would assist in making rational conclusions on causes, consequences and solutions to insecurity. Using the human security paradigm, the study brings out on how insecurity is detrimental to the fundamental liberties and welfare of people and society. The methodology guarantees a coherent and believable research based on the available empirical and theoretical information.

LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Security and Insecurity

Security is involved with the procedure related towards the appeasing of any form of threat to individuals and their cherished values. It is because of this fact that Buzan (1991) in his book people, state and fear confirms that security is freedom of threat and capacity of states to retain self-identity and their operational integrity in the face of the forces of change, which they perceive as hostile and the bottom line of which is survival (Bodunde, et.al, 2014). Security does not just imply military security or security against foreign attack. To most of the residents of the developing nations, security is perceived as the lowest tier of the survival struggle. Hence, an integrated African Security Assessment should include the non-military aspect of security to deliver. Therefore, it is necessary that the concept of security will be used in its expanded meaning to mean economic security, social security, environmental security, food security, equality of life security and technological security (Ochoche, 2017).

Insecurity refers to the state of feeling apprehensive, uncertain, and vulnerable about oneself or a particular situation. It is a psychological state that arises from a variety of factors, including past experiences, social comparisons, and perceived threats (Leary 2007). It can also be influenced by external factors such as societal pressures, family dynamics, and cultural norms (Leary, 2007).

Development

Hundreds of years, World government and non- governmental organizations and international bodies have been defining development with slight and extensive degrees of variation amongst them to suit, their policy and strategic goals (Boateng et al., 2008). The activities of these scholars and agencies

showed that the word development is a general concept that covers a wide range of issues with different levels of emphasis that makes the word development devoid of a single agreed definition that is internationally accepted. Putting aside this mess, we can take a glance at some of the influential definitions provided by the scholar of the field of development discourses who are singled out as the representatives of excellence. Seer (1969) believe that development must not be viewed in a compartmentalized manner as the aggregate growth in income and modernization and industrialization of a nation as was the case traditionally, but viewed in the eyes of reducing poverty, inequalities and unemployment.

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

Human Security was first summarized as an issue by the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues in 1982, and that framework became widespread after being advocated in the UNDP Human Development Report, 1994. Sen (1999) points out that the security of individuals is no longer a military issue only, but also a problem on economic, social and environmental levels. Human security theory came into existence as a complex theory that seeks to focus on the wellbeing and safety of people as security. It brings the concern of people and communities instead of concerning itself with state security and provides assured safety against economic, social, political, and environmental hazards (Schalkwyk, 2000). Lack of security is also a bigger setback to development in Nigeria, especially in Osun state where there are poverty and unemployment of youths, and is poor in health. The theory focuses on issues including inequality and marginalization and avails health, education, and justice (Chikere, 2021). According to Onje (2019), insecurity is a disturbance of livelihood and access to services, whereas Shaver (2017) focuses on policies that are inclusive of economies. According to Ojoye (2016), vulnerability is aggravated by environmental degradation. The theory facilitates the cooperation of civil society and participatory policymaking. Utilization of it in Osun state will assist to reverse the course of structural insecurity and lead to the attainment of stable socioeconomic development in terms of structural reforms based on dignified human rights and resilience.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF INSECURITY AND SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Insecurity in Nigeria goes way back to her colonial and post-colonial encounters. The British colonialism of indirect rule also worsened ethnic divisions in Nigeria by giving some groups of people advantage over others which brought about distrust and competitive attitude amongst the various ethnics in Nigeria (Osaghae, 1998). National unity was also shattered following political instability, military coups and the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) which led to the militarization of politics after independence in 1960 (Suberu, 2001).

This period after the war saw emergence of militias with ethno-regional concerns like the Oodua People Congress (OPC) of the Southwest, the Bakassi Boys of Southeast and Arewa People Congress (APC) of North, which all goes back to the localized reactions of the perceived state failure (Ikelegbe, 2005). Resource control, environmental degradation and marginalization were grievances that were brought into light when the Niger Delta militancy appeared in the 1990s (Watts, 2007). The violent activities of Boko Haram since 2009 took the country to another state of insecurity as the core values of this group have shifted to religious fundamentalism to a full-fledged terrorist threat (Adesoji, 2010). The depth and complexity of the ongoing crisis in Nigeria today takes the form of multiplicity of security threats including banditry, kidnapping, herder-farmer conflicts fueled by socio-economic inequalities, weak state institutions, and poor governance to name but a few.

The state of Osun, which is the southwestern state of Nigeria, has a long heritage of relative peace and stability. But it has been encountering a number of security challenges to the safety and security of its citizens. It happened as early as 1990s when the Oodua People Congress (OPC) as a socio-cultural Yoruba group was established, peaceful at the beginning but later engaging in violent conflicts, causing further tensions in the state. Lately, cultists, robbers, kidnappers, and herdsmen have been attacking farmers, locals, and travellers which increases the concerns of food security and economic stability. One of the outstanding events was the 2019-arm robbery in Osogbo where a number of people were killed in a gun battle that took place between the robbers and the police (Shittu, 2020; Leme, 2017). However, the farmer-herder crisis used to be a local problem but now emerged as a serious threat. According to Shittu (2020), these conflicts began in the Middle Belt but now they are expanded to Osun. An estimate provided by the International Crisis Group (2017) claimed that there were 2,500 deaths in 2016 alone related to such clashes. (Leme 2017).

In 2018, a group of gunmen kidnapped eight including two students outside the OSCOTECH. According to Evelyn and Victor (2020), an orthopedic surgeon was kidnapped in the Ibadan-Ife

expressway. Victims always wanted to point out Fulani herdsmen as culprits. It is observed that the Osun highways are becoming very unsafe as the kidnapping has been rampant, mostly during night or early morning hours.

Since its inception in 1991, the socioeconomic foundation of Osun State has been advancing in a dramatic way. The state which is located in the southwestern region of Nigeria is blessed with a variety of resources including agriculture, mineral resources and tourism which have enabled it to develop most sectors. With a large contribution to the economy of the state, agriculture has played a great role. The state government has facilitated agriculture and rural development through input supply, extension services, construction of rural roads and development of irrigation systems which also brought about more productivity due to their cocoa, kolanuts, palms trees and rubber production.

In education, the Osun State government has implemented policies to ensure access to quality education. The Osun State Basic Education Quality Assurance and Development Agency aims to improve the quality of basic education through teacher training, renovation of schools, and provision of classroom blocks and learning facilities. In healthcare, the government introduced the Osun State Health Insurance Scheme to provide affordable healthcare, especially for vulnerable populations (Osun State Government, 2013; Vanguard, 2013). As at 2012, Osun rose from 34th place to 8th place in WAEC results (Policy Reform report, 2021). However, debate remains over its cost-effectiveness and educational impact (Ige et al., 2021)

A lot of infrastructural development (making it possible to construct new roads and bridges, reconstruction of existing infrastructure and construction of modern markets, etc.) has also been achieved in Osun State. The government has also promoted tourism by promoting investment in the private sector as well as the development of tourism facilities. Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove The sacred grove is a major tourist destination and is ranked as a World Heritage site by UNESCO (Osun State Government, 2017; Guardian, 2014).

The establishment of the National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND) in the year 1990 was also through the government to facilitate the ability of SMEs to borrow funds within the World Bank and African Development Bank as well as in other international financiers. In the period between 1990 and 1998 NERFUND provided a total of 144.9 million (foreign exchange) and 18.1 billion (local currency). Other funding windows were Family Economic Advancement Programme

(FEAP) and the National Bank for Commerce and Industry (NBCI). SMEs were also benefited by sectoral lending as provided in the CBN credit directives (CBN, 2004).

A more contemporary one is the creation of the Small-Scale Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) of the Ministry of Industries. When this act has been approved, it is believed that SMEDAN will offer a new stratum towards SME development that will be coupled with the Poverty Alleviation Programme. The government is also setting up a Bank of Industry (to support SMEDAN) of larger capital of 35 billion Naira so as to provide long term lending to the SMEs and manufacturing firms (Edozien, 2015). This bank will additionally make funds accessible to the SMEs at the appropriate rates and also act as a facilitator of the subcontracting between the small and large businesses as proposed by Clive Carpenter (Making Small Business Finance Profitable in Nigeria) (Carpenter, 2003).

However, SMEs experience significant difficulties. The survival margin is very low and only half a percent manages to survive past the first year (Onugu, 2005). Small scale enterprises contributed 31 per cent of industrial employment in Nigeria as compared to extreme points in the developed countries where the figure was 64 per cent like in Germany and South Korea (Udechukwu, 2003). That is alarming considering the fact that there is high rate of unemployment, poverty and illiteracy in Nigeria. The share of the SMEs in the GDP and their share in industrial output is also not satisfactory. Most of the Nigerian industries have been functioning under 30 percent level, thus multinationals flourish and local SMEs crumble down increasing unemployment and crime (Ariyo, 2005).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Impact of Insecurity on the Socio-Economic Development in Osun State

Any responsive government has to be concerned with social, economic and political development. Nevertheless, in an atmosphere of fear and violence, sustainable development cannot take place. Insecurity interferes with peaceful coexistence, infrastructure is weakened and human and capital growth is thwarted. Case in point, the insurrection in Northern Nigeria has decimated economic endeavor and militancy within the state of the Niger Delta has impacted negatively on the national oil income (Akindoyo, 2025).

Insecurity in general in Nigeria has reduced the appeal of the country to local and foreign investors. The crimes based in violence, inter-communal conflicts, and terrorism have started to spill high because of which the rule of law is being eroded and traveling towards development is impeded. As it was observed by Onifade et al. (2013), there is only one way out of the insecurity issue the style of governance that would support inclusive growth and provide access to jobs, healthcare services, and education (Onifade, 2013). The insecurity that occurs in Osun State takes the form of cultism, armed robbery, herders and farmers confrontation, and police brutality. In spite of rising security budgets, a number of regions are tense. Police agencies, usually, lack resources or interest to act properly and even seem to be involved (Oriakhi & Osemwengie, 2014).

One type of insecurity which is very devastating is the herder-farmer conflict. Land has become a controversial commodity with increasing interest in agriculture as a substitute of oil. The increasing population of individuals practicing crop agriculture and animal rearing increases competition in the access of land. Livestock would feed at the farmlands killing crops and causing conflicts. The exchanges of reprisals between the groups result in the deaths of people, destruction of property and sectarianism. Amnesty International estimated approximately that more than 3,600 people died in Nigeria during a certain period, but those killed do not include the injured and kidnapped by Fulani herdsmen. The farmers in their turn have been assaulting and killing cattle owned by herdsmen (Crisis Group, 2018).

These forms of insecurity in Osun State have very many implications on socio-economic development. Noteworthy implications are:

- 1. Fear and Anxiety:** People fear to go out and they live in the fear of their lives and families and property. Any socialization, economic activities as well as mobility which are all referred to as being critical as far as development is concerned are then frustrated by such fear. Spirit of terrorism spoils the productivity and numbs the local business.
- 2. Loss of lives:** The trend that has seen lives continuously being lost in clashes, robberies and other violent crimes is a breach of the sanctity of human life and is threatening to destabilize the community. The undersupply of the public safety systems has fallen short because students, traders, and farmers have fallen victim to stray bullets and deliberate shooting.

3. Destruction of Property: Most crimes that are violent and militant in nature result to the destruction of property that was of great value. As an example, in the past oil pipelines have been vandalized leading to environmental degradation and the spoiling of lives of the locals. Such destruction has not spared farmlands, homes and businesses in Osun.

4. Industrialization: Industrialization is deterred by the element of insecurity as this is the stepping stone towards healthy economic growth and generation of job opportunities. Investors do not want to set up operations where there is a lot of conflict. The industry without a stable setting cannot raise or progress in technology.

5. Emigration and High Rates of Migration: The rates of high emigration as well as migration are as a result of insecurity, which has compelled many Nigerians to run away in their search of security. Internally displaced peoples (IDPs) migrate to the more stable states and this causes strain to the host societies. The able-bodied ones fly out of the country altogether, and this causes brain drain and lack of man power to develop further.

6. Less Immigrants and Foreign Investments: The view of Nigeria as a dangerous place makes tourists, business tourist and outside investors to avoid traveling there. Economic effects are immense because foreign currency and foreign skills are needed in the development of a country. As such, there is limited development potential of Osun due to security misperceptions (Akindoyo, 2025; Ajibua, 2025; Falana et al., 2021).

7. When security is weak, crime thrives. Insecure regions often report high rates of theft, kidnapping, sexual violence, and drug abuse. Young people, especially those unemployed, may be drawn into criminal networks, further endangering social stability.

8. Migration from insecure areas to safer zones results in overcrowding in urban centers. This puts pressure on infrastructure and leads to environmental issues such as poor sanitation, waste accumulation, and housing shortages. Makeshift homes under bridges and poor drainage systems become common.

Implications of Insecurity in Osun State

Political Implications



The increase in insecurity in Osun state is a reflection of the national crisis that has made leaders consider the country on the way of dealing with security. The security industry as Ibrahim Bashir (2011) observes should be able to adjust to the peculiarity of threats that Nigeria is experiencing currently. As the society gets tense with heightened fear particularly during election, the questions become loud whether the state will manage to save lives and preserve democracy. A key problem that is brought out is the fact that the Nigerian criminal justice system is ineffective. The slow-paced policy and inefficient court operations have faltered public confidence. Gen. Owoye Azazi pointed out that there should be a comprehensive legislation on anti-terrorism and one which gives the agencies powers rather than ethnic religious boundaries (Omede, 2011).

Naturally, instability in politics is usually entrenched in a lot of insecurity. Rising anger indicates that people are unhappy with their rule and view elections as fixed. Political philosopher John Calvin (cited in Savage, 2008) viewed the subjugation of poor as morally wrong in a spiritual and political sense. A government that cannot keep people safe is no longer considered a legitimate government since security is part of the fundamental responsibilities of a state. Karl Marx as quoted by Benjamin Ryan (2008) also said that insecurity undermines the economies as well as institutions and makes it impossible to govern or organize.

Religious Implications

Another hazardous effect of insecurity is religious violence or the violence labeled as religious. Attacks on sacred places including bombings have created a culture of insecurity in these sacred spaces and therefore preventing faithful to worship on a regular basis and develop a culture of fear. There is a risk of creation of fake religious practices since individuals would find shelter in the religious identity driven by fear and not by faith (Obiefuna, 2018).

In territories where people are not sure of their lives, it could be considered that by following a religion of the majority, one will survive. Religion therefore turns out to be more of a social protection than spiritual vow. This defeats the actual religious values. Nonetheless, it is possible to



notice that religion may serve peace, promoting tolerance and dialogue among warring parties when religious leaders become active.

Cultural Implications

The threat to insecurity is also being posed to culture in the Nigerian society. Common values and interethnic harmony should promote the unity. Nonetheless, ethnic separations, as interpolated are normally facilitated by violence such as which occurred in Warri. When there is lack of security there will be paranoia and animosity instead of cooperation (Imobighe, 2002).

The occurrence of suicide bombing and violence is unreceptive to the value system of the African culture that values life. To give an instance, suicide, slaughtering of sacred animals or destruction of crops as an act is a severe taboo involving Igbo culture (Okorocha, n.d.). Cultural decadence is evident through such acts of violence that have been normalised in specific parts of the country.

Moreover, most parents have taken their children to foreign lands due to educational insecurity. This hence protects them but this can cause loss of culture. The values that the children are brought up with are foreign, and it causes alienation to the culture and leads to identity crisis.

Solutions to Insecurity in Nigeria

For Nigeria to overcome its insecurity challenges, swift and deliberate actions are needed.

1. **Government's Role:** Security is the fundamental responsibility of any government. Through good governance transparency, accountability, inclusive policies, and effective service delivery government can restore public confidence. It must enforce laws without favoritism and prioritize the well-being of citizens above political or personal gain (Onifade, 2013).



2. **Religious Institutions:** True religion promotes peace. Religious leaders should actively preach and model peaceful coexistence. By emphasizing moral values and reconciliation, places of worship can become platforms for social healing and community unity.
3. **Corporate and Individual Responsibilities:** Companies and individuals also have roles to play. Responsible corporate governance includes community investment, employment creation, and supporting local peace efforts. On a personal level, citizens must reject violence and corruption, and instead, uphold justice, accountability, and mutual respect.

Supporting this, Eme, Nwachukwu, and Olise (2017) propose solutions including the development of visionary leadership, promotion of socio-economic equality, elimination of corruption, and building a balanced security strategy to address both organized violence and grassroots terrorism such as Boko Haram. Ultimately, defeating insecurity requires the joint effort of government, religious groups, civil society, and individuals alike.

CONCLUSION

Findings made in this paper have shown that Insecurity is the biggest issue that contributes to inhibited economic growth in Nigeria. The impulse response functions have shown that the impact that insecurity in Nigeria has on economic development with unit innovation is negative and this means that the economic development rate can be hampered by an increase in the impact and rate of insecurity as it would slow down the development process.

Insecurity in any setting is a form of threat to lives and properties, business encumbrance and discouragement to both local and foreign investors hence impairment and slowdown of socio-economic growth of a nation. Since 1960 when Nigeria gained its independence there has been an upward trend in the insecurity wave in the country. This wave of uprising has become stronger than before and now it has taken a risky level that is even endangering the corporate life of the nation as a single territory. Governments at all levels in Nigeria should make the removal of these threats their first priority because no meaningful development would take place in Nigeria when it is characterized by insecurity and violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made, for the government and the people of the state to enhance the effective improvement of socio-economic development in Osun state and Nigeria at large.

1. Government should take initiatives in handling security matters and challenges, by using modern technology in collection of intelligence, training, logistics, motivation, as well as adoption of sophisticated technology in managing security problem.
2. What governments need to do to come up with a panacea to insecurity problem in Nigeria is to hasten the rate of development. The development here is the development of the economy to make it capable of providing good economy in terms of social, economic and physical infrastructure in the context of carrying out business activities and development of industries so that the people can be provided with gainful employment, high quality education facilities, and medical aid.
3. The concerned governments at all levels should see to it that the increasing poverty index has to be set back and a realistic social security programme should be sought and implemented in systematic manner as to ensure that the populace is now in a position to satisfy their basic needs.

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