

OVERCOMING SECURITY CHALLENGES: CULTURAL IMPERATIVE TO THE RESCUE

Ayodele Samuel ADEGBOYEGA¹ and Olanike Justinah OLUSOLA²

¹Department of Media and Performing Studies, Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. Phone: 07062967702. Email: ulesherun@gmail.com and adegboyega.ayodele@bouesti.edu.ng

²Department of Media and Performing Studies, Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti., Ekiti State, Nigeria, 08166550560, Email: olusola.olanike@bouesti.edu.ng

Corresponding Author Email: olusola.olanike@bouesti.edu.ng

Abstract: *Security challenges in Africa, nay Nigeria, have become a hydra-headed monster threatening to unravel the attenuate links, made attenuated over the years, that holds the fabric of the country together. The combined efforts of the nation's forces to combat the menace of insecurity have been humiliated severely and severally. The qualitative approach mainly; descriptive, primary and secondary data and online sources are used. Findings indicate that current efforts to curtail insurgency and terrorism are not rooted in the culture and tradition of the people concerned; rather it is a case of employing state machinery vis-à-vis; the Police, the Army, and the Department of State Security Services (DSS) to enforce government laws and manage the security system. The paper concludes that for a meaningful impact in the security sector, the stake-holders need to compliment state apparatuses with traditional and cultural impetuses.*

Keywords; Security, Challenges, Stake-holders, Tradition, Culture, Media.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria as the social cum political hub of Africa cannot afford to be unraveled by insurgency and terrorism that daily gain currency at an unprecedented dimension. It is no longer fashionable, except at one's own risk, to sleep with both eyes closed through the length and breadth of the country.. Oghi and Akahomen (2020) claim that "the Nigeria State has a landmass of about 923,768 sq.kms and is said to occupy the size of France, Britain and Netherlands put together". If the country is pushed to the point of disintegration, it would not only spell doom for the African continent but also for the black race.

Activities of insurgents and terrorists have painted the country in bad light, internally and internationally. The Boko

Haram menace holds sway in the northern part of the country while agitations for self-determination in the form of secession are going on in the south. The activities of bandits cut across all the states of the federation.

It is apt to define the word insurgency, and the other phenomenon attached to it. The Collins Dictionary of the English Language (2010) defines insurgency as "rebellious or revolt against an established authority". However, the word insurgency apart from being polysemous, usually takes different interpretations arising from divergence in schools of thought. Although

Gbilekaa (2019) agrees that terrorism/violence is irrational, destructive, injurious, unjust and abusive, he however claims violence might be a legitimate option in certain situations. He observes that

“conflictual situations arise where there is poverty, deprivation, social and economic inequality, and extreme violation of human rights. All these injustices increase the

potential for violence and terrorism as people begin to rise against these socio-economic factors and political conditions using violence as a means”.

“conflictual situations arise where there is poverty, deprivation, social and economic inequality, and extreme violation of human rights. All these injustices increase the potential for violence and terrorism as people begin to rise against these socio-economic factors and political conditions using violence as a means”

Gbilekaa, to buttress his point cites Esiaba (1989) who asserts that:

“terrorism is a legitimate tactic of all down-trodden people seeking to combat oppressive governments. Without terrorism by the I.R.A. would the Republic of Ireland have gained their independence today? Without terrorism by the Mau Mau, would there be Kenya today? Without terrorism by the Irgun and ster gangs, would there be Israel today? Without terrorism by the Algerians, would the French ever have agreed to have North Africa in 1962? Without terrorism in South Africa, do you think Apartheid would ever be dismantled?”

Fatoba (1995) also agrees with Gbilekaa when he opines that “usually, it is the state which defines and interprets terrorism for the citizenry. This pre-supposes the myth that, “the state cannot be terroristic in its method of rule. However, this is not true. State terrorism is a situation in which a large proportion of the

governed is coerced or intimidated through economic lack into a condition of anxiety even about the most common things of existence”.

The above positions are collaborated by the New International Websters Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language which defines violence as follows;

“the quality or state of being violent; intensity; fury; also, an instance of violent action. Violent or unjust exercise of power; injury; outrage; desecration; profanation. Physical force unlawfully exercised; an act intending to intimidate or overawe by causing apprehension or bodily injury. The perversion or distortion of the meaning of a text, word or the like, unjustified alteration of wording”.

From the foregoing, it is apparent that the understanding and concept of insurgency/terrorism could be relative even subjective as it is a factor of the ideological perspective of the author. However, Sesan (2019) argues that “the relativism and subjectivity of the actions which constitute

terrorism and terrorist acts in Nigerian context are informed by the ethno-religious and political diversities of the country”.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework being adopted in this write-up has to do with traditional philosophy that served as bed-rock in interpersonal relationships among many

“Ubuntu is a quintessential human moral commitment to other people’s wellbeing ... A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others... He or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished...”

Omodele (2012) in a similar vein cites the late President Mandela of South Africa who claims “a traveler... would stop at a village (and) the people would give him food... (He) didn’t have to ask for food or for water... That is one aspect of Ubuntu... but Ubuntu has various aspects. Ubuntu does not mean that people should not enrich themselves. The question is: Are you going to do so in order to enable the community around you to improve?”

Omodele (2012) uses the declaration of Mandela when released from jail to buttress his points: “am not free until we are all free”. Omodele (2012) also, as a way of analogy, describes what operate among the Yoruba people of western Nigeria, when she gives an axiom from the language of the people; “Karin ka po ni yeni” which translates to “only in togetherness lies human dignity”.

Aluko (2019) on the need to incorporate African tradition into peace initiatives also asserts that: “the western idea of a person (individual being) thus, is fundamentally distinct from the African conception of a person. (communal being). The point here is that the individualistic western philosophy of ‘Cogito ergo sum’ meaning “I think, therefore I am” underlie the assumptions, presuppositions, and the fundamental principles upon which the western idea of peace is predicated”. To distinguish the African traditional philosophy from that of the western norm, she also cites Brock-Utne (2013). “a person is a person through other people” encapsulates the fundamental assumptions and pre-suppositions

African ethnic groups in times past. In a seminal article, Omodele (2012) cites Bishop Tutu who talks about Ubuntu, the traditional philosophy guiding the Xhosa people of South Africa’s way of life. To this end,

that undergird the idea of peace subscribed to in Africa, nay West Africa.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Security Challenges: Cultural Identity Markers to the Rescue.

The Collins Dictionary of the English Language (2010) defines Culture as “the ideas, customs and arts of a particular society; a particular civilization at a particular period”.

The above definition classifies culture into two broad distinctions, namely (a) the tangible aspect and (b) the intangible aspect. The tangible could be described as those aspects of culture that are concrete. Such concrete elements have physical presence and are easily noticeable even by visitors to the environment concerned. The concrete objects include buildings, artifacts, sites, clothing, etc. The other aspect is the intangible aspect of culture. Though such elements could not be physically touched by individuals, they are nonetheless easily noticeable as they could be experienced. They exist in the thoughts, behaviours, lifestyle of the people concerned. Because they capture the values of a people, they exist in the world views of a people. This intangible aspects manifest in the languages and other linguistic properties and nuances. They are discernible in the peoples arts i.e. plastic, performing, verbal, non-verbal etc. the oral traditions also show aspects of culture, thus proverbs, panegyrics, wise sayings etc. all bear the badge of culture. This paper is however concerned with how culture regulates the values, morals, behaviours of a given people, and how it helps to organize the

society. In times past, culture regulated life, so less crime was recorded. The modern approach to security issues, no matter the alluring, needs to be complemented with ideas from the people's cultural heritage. Postindependence governments in Nigeria made use of Local Governments authorities to complement the security apparatus used by the regions.

The conceptual framework will be hinged on the Ubuntu philosophy of the Xhosa people of South Africa and the Omoluabi idea of the Yoruba speaking people of Nigeria.

The Boko Haram Debacle

Boko Haram activities have greatly humiliated government armed forces and paramilitary support forces. Though, the horrific images are more intense in the North Eastern part of Nigeria, the whole nation is under fear of the incursion of Boko Haram into other states. The media daily inundate the citizens with gory tales from Boko Haram; the local, national and international; and social media report casualties as if it is no longer sacred. Saa-Aondo Moses Andza & Tyohee Okechukwu Agu (2014) claim that "reports of suicide bombings, hostage taking and demand for ransom by the insurgents, sporadic shootings and killings of innocent people in the north-eastern states of the country, ambushing and confrontation of out of prisons across the country among others by the insurgents scared away foreign direct investors not just only from the northeast but the country as a whole.

Separatist Agitators

The phenomenon of separatist agitators is one of the security challenges the nation is currently battling with. In the eastern part of Nigeria are the Indigenous People of Biafran (IPOB) and MASSOB. The aim is actualization of the Biafran State to be carved from the present structure of Nigeria. The activities of the groups have been daring, they include: bombing of pipe carrying petroleum, killing of perceived individuals to be against their agenda and attack on security posts and

personnel. The Nigerian civil war was as a result of political crises that rocked the country. According to Felix (2005), the antecedent of insecurity in Nigeria started after Nigeria gained independence in 1960 with series of political crises that culminated in the Nigeria civil war. At the end of the war, there were issues of agitation for true Federalism, Fiscal, Federal or political restructuring and since then the level of insecurity has continued to be on the rise... Political violence, small and large arms trafficking, ethno-religious conflict, cybercrimes, human trafficking, smuggling, and illicit drug peddling... others are armed banditry, kidnapping, pipeline vandalism, militancy, insurgency, terrorism, cattle rustling and farmers-herders clashes.

THE NATURE OF INSURGENCY/TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

Having opined that insurgency could be interpreted and viewed from variegated angles, this write up will explore those areas dealing with political, socio-economic and religious dimensions.

Governments' Action, Inaction as Terroristic

In the play, 'Once Upon Four Robbers' by Femi Osofisan, the thematic approach is an indictment on the government for failure to put in place ameliorating facilities that can eradicate social conditions that encourage armed robbery and banditry. In one of the songs that contribute to the unfolding of the social conditions that breed armed robbery the wordings read.

"Arun laawo, A mai woku o", which translates as illness is curable with death, it is too late "Fatoba (1996) asserts, "succeeding Nigerian governments in other to back up their draconian laws aimed at the symptoms of a rank social sore, carried out public executions. The position of the state in this circumstance is to fight terror with terror". Fatoba goes ahead to read the position of the playwright when he says:

"the playwright believes that the state is capable of providing conditions favourable to equity, however, the state does not. Whereas

the state has the mineral resources to plant a just-fair and equitable society and because the state neglects its duty by allowing conditions favourable to class divisions and these class divisions result in the poverty of the working class which leads to the attempt... to cure its poverty through violent means; and because the state then to confront the rebellious elements with a bigger force (though of doubtful effectiveness) the state then puts itself in a terror position”.

Asaba Massacre of 1967: Direct Government Involvement.

The Nigerian Army, the Police D.S.S. and the proscribed S.A.R.S. have one time or the other been accused of gross human right abuse and terrorism. Pius Mordi gives a horrific image of how men and young men on

suspicion of aiding Biafran Soldiers on October 7, 1967. The deed was carried by the Second Division of the Nigerian Army on innocent and harmless citizens who had gathered together to welcome the soldiers to Asaba donning their traditional attires to Ogeosowa, the town's square. According to Mordi (2021),

“the federal troops separated the women and children from the adult males and young men ... there and then ... the second division mowed down hundreds of the men in full view of the women and children... By the time a measure of restraint came, over 1000 men had been murdered in cold blood”

NAVIGATING A WAY OUT OF SECURITY IMPASSE

The Modern Approach

The 21st century has recorded tremendous progress and feat in technological breakthrough. Governments, federal and State spend billions purchasing military hard ware to combat insurgency and terrorism. The State governors are paid humongous amount as security votes to combat insurgency all to no avail. Just as the insurgents and terrorists daily pile-up arms, so also is the government acquiring all sorts of military works to confound the monster. The scenario is akin to setting two negative forces against each other. The issue of security challenge has remained unabated despite the several assurances given to the citizen by the governments. It is however not possible to do away totally with the modern option, it is expedient to merge it with the traditional approach.

The Need of Data Base

The bane of security starts from dearth of database for the citizens. This is what makes it possible for some people to be in possession of two or more birth certificates. Even with the use of N.I.N. and B. V.N., some

fraudulent individuals still beat the system, thereby making a reliable paternity Data base unreliable.

The Traditional/Cultural Approach

Having established that the use of force by the governments from both State and Federal level to meet the force of insurgents and terrorists to resolve the problem of security, it behooves stake holders to have a re-think on the way out to combat insecurity, it is apt to look inward; how people have been tackling security issues in times past should be examined. There is no doubt, measures adopted to resolve the issue should also involve the cultural beliefs and traditions of the people.

The kings and Chiefs in each locality should be involved. These locals should work in tandem with the security forces. The locals i.e. the traditional institutions, the government forces and the ministry responsible for keeping records of the population should all work together. If the whole country is divided into units with each unit having the record of those residing within it, strangers would be easily

identified and report made to the appropriate quarters.

According to Omodele (2012), Traditional African Systems insist on communal living; that is to say, on uniformly developing communities in order to guarantee each person's dignity and well-being. This approach recognizes and mandates sharing as a corner stone, a missing ingredient from today's society where inequality has become an acceptable way of life worldwide, where the wealthiest is allowed to be hundreds of millions of times richer than the poorest. Our tolerance for various forms of institutionalized inequality, homelessness, hunger, wages and gender discrimination has reached proportions" (XIVII).

Omodele continues, "a Yoruba proverb warns that if one stands by while a neighbor eats a food item that is known to induce coughing, at night when the coughing begins it will disturb every one's sleep, including that of the neighbor who watched the ingestion of the food item".

Omodele goes further to cite Nelson Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu (2012) when they speak of Ubuntu-Umuntu Ngumunta Ngabantu, "I am because you are", this is the traditional philosophy guiding interpersonal relationships among the Xhosa and many other ethnics in South Africa.

Ubuntu according to Bishop Tutu, it is a quintessential moral commitment to other people's wellbeing... A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming to others... He or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished".

Omodele also asserts that, in a similar vein, President Nelson Mandela tells us "a traveler would stop at a village (and) the people would give him food... (He) didn't have to ask for food or for water... that is one aspect of Ubuntu, but Ubuntu has various aspects. Ubuntu does not mean that people should not enrich themselves. The question is: are you going to do so in order to enable the community around you to improve?"

Omodele goes ahead to observe that, these ancient sentiments must have inspired Mandela who declared upon his release from jail that "I am not free until we're all free". In the case of South African nations... the subjugation and exploitation of Africans was a function of the absurd policy of apartheid. In West African, assimilationist or enculturation policies disguised the exploitation and subjugation, but the erosion of traditional beliefs has begun in earnest (Pg xlvi).

Omodele emphasises that our focus and approach to development must shift from the wasteful, grandiose and frequently useless projects to small. Relevant and sustainable ones and the measurement of the success of the new projects and program that they harbor must reside completely in the degree to which they bring dignity to every vulnerable person in the community.

The Use of Art and Media for Sensitization

To sensitize the citizens on the need for joint effort to combat insurgency and terrorism, it is necessary to involve the arts especially Theatre to engage in community awareness programmes. The use of the media especially Social Media will also help to motivate the people generally on the need for security awareness and alertness. To shed light on the social role of arts, Jerry, I.O, and Jacob, A.A. (2019) posit, "the field of arts, with particular reference to the performing arts has also made concerted contributions to the war against insurgency in Nigeria (85).

IMPLICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

Development cannot take place where life and property are not safe. Investors will be afraid to invest in a country where bandits, terrorists and social misfits hold sway. The whole world is closely monitoring the security situation and implication in the country. The Media for instance BBC, Channels etc. put the whole world abreast of the security situation and implications. Some countries warn and advise their citizens to be wary of investing in Nigeria. The negative implication of this on development is akin to taking one step forward and two steps backward on the issue of development. Thus, according to Saa-Aondo et al (2018), Niyi Ajao, the then Managing

Director, Nigeria Interbank Settlement System (NBSS) asserted that "...as soon as all these bombs explode, electronic Media – CNN, Associated Press, B.B.C., Sahara Reporters, Channels, Reuters and others quickly flash them to every part of the world". Niyi Ajao said every time bombing happens friends abroad would be the ones calling to give update about such unfortunate incidences; all these reports according to him are also heard by Nigerian prospective investors. The news of the bombing creates fear, such that whoever plans to come and invest will draw back.

CONCLUSION

This study has reviewed Any environment where terrorism is the other of the day cannot have any meaningful development. In Nigeria, both the leadership and followership are culpable of the heinous crime of terrorism. The political class and the declasses are also victims. Governments from post-independence like Nigeria have held to the colonial approach to tackling terrorism without any regard to the African peculiarities. To make matters worse, the security outfits see the institution as forces of occupation. Political office holders see their positions as avenues to amass wealth. The masses are also passive. The way forward out of the doldrums is annexing our cultural peculiarities with the modern approach.

Suggestions

- Challenges should be tackled collectively.
- The world-view of the people should be approached to forge a security blue print that would be workable.
- The mind-set of meeting force with force by the government should be reviewed.
- The whole country should be divided into units for a proper database.
- Kings, chiefs and elders should also have access to the database to monitor strangers to their domain.
- The security forces should work with the local people so as to know the culture of people concerned.
- Government should encourage the use of Theatre and the Media to sensitize each community on the need for cooperation and joint effort to tackle insecurity.
- Use of force by security agents to intimidate the masses should be discouraged.
- Proliferation of weapons should be discouraged

REFERENCES

- Aluko, B.A. (2019). *Philosophy and practice of Peace in West Africa. Readings in Peace and Conflict: Essays in Honour of Professor, Isaac Olawale Albert.* Ibadan: Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ibadan.
- Brook- Utne, B. (2006). *Peace Research with a Diversity Perspective: A look to Africa. Readings in Peace and Conflict. Essays in Honour of Professor, Isaac Olawale Albert.* Ibadan: Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ibadan.
- Collins Dictionary of the English Language (2010) Harpercollins Publishers; Glasgow.
- Esiaba, I. (1989). *Hangmen Also Die.* Enugu: ABK Books and Equipment Ltd.
- Fatoba, F. (1996). *The State as Terrorist: Once Upon Four Robbers.* Femi Osofisan: Interpretative Essays I. Lagos: Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization.
- Felix, E.O., & Sabastine, A.A. (2020). An Appraisal of Nigeria's Security Challenges: *Perspectives on Nigeria's Challenges in Nation-Building.* Abdullahi, M. Ashafa Gaius Jatan and Ayemga Tor. 1(1).
- Gbilekaa, S. (2019). *The Dramaturgy of Violence in Africa: A Study of Selected Plays. Nigerian Theatre Journal Special Edition.* 19(3).

- Jerry, I.O. & Jacob, A.A. (2019). When Theatre meets Victims: Theatre for Development, Counter- terrorism and Social Stability in Nigeria. *Nigeria Theatre Journal* 19 (2).
- Mord, P. (2021, November 12). *Asaba Massacre: movement as Balm for War*. The Nation, Friday, November 12, 2013 (5583).
- Omodele, R. (2012). The Growing Catastrophe: No Room for Wisdom (Ed). In Omodele Remi: *Weighing the Cot of Pin-Making: Ulli Beier in Conversation*. New Jersey. African World Press: XIV
- Osofisan, Femi (1980). *Once Upon Four Robbers*. Ibadan Mosuro Publishers.
- Saa-Aondo Moses Andza & Tyohee Okechukwu Agu (2018). *The impact of Boko Haram Insurgency on Foreign Direct Investment F.D.I. in Nigeria*. Kaduna Journal of Humanities. 2 (2).
- Sesan, A.A. (2019). Mismanaged Niger Delta Oil Conflicts as Terrorism in Amatas Black November. *Nigerian Theatre of Journal*. 19(2).
- The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language*. (2010)

This article should be cited as:

Adegboyega, A.S. & Olusola, O.J. (2022). Overcoming Security Challenges: Cultural Imperative to the Rescue. *Journal of Economic, Social and Educational Issues*, 2(2), 170-177.