

The Deficit of Human Security in Nigeria: The Youth Perspective

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Abstract

Although the definition of human security is a topic of much debate, its initial use was most frequently cited in the 1994 Human Development Report (UNDP) with the emphasis on human security, UNDP has expanded the concept of security by defining human security as "protection from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and oppression" and "protection from sudden and harmful disturbances in everyday patterns". This moved away from the centralized approach that existed to encompass seven key distinct components: economic security, food security, health security, perimeter security, personal safety, community security and political security. Judging by the seven components of human security, the failure of the human security system in Nigeria is a major problem with many ripple effects. This has led to the emigration of young people into the country, and also worsened the already bad situation in Nigeria by causing a stronger brain drain effect and a lack of experience in the country. This chapter will focus on explaining concepts and identifying defective components. In addition, this section will look at the effects of a failed human security system and finally suggests practical solutions to those effects.

Introduction

The rate of youth emigration in West Africa Nigeria has sporadically increased in the past decade. In 2010, Nigeria had a total of 1, 030,322 registered migrants, while in 2017, according to Dabiri Erewa, The Senior Special Assistant to the President on Foreign Affairs and The Diaspora, as reported in Vanguard Newspaper¹, it had increased to 15,000,000 registered migrants. This is 2020 and the number of youths that are either planning to migrate or have migrated calls for an urgent look into the factors encouraging the exodus. People have evolved from migrating to prove their class in the social strata, as part of the upper echelon who can afford the luxury of migrating just for the sake of it, to migrating as a means of survival or as popularly put, in search of greener pastures.

There is a new saying that negates an old saying, ‘the grass is always greener on the other side, it says ‘the grass is not greener on the other side, it is only greener where it is watered’. This is a rebuttal to the perception that someone else’s land, country, experience or life will always look attractive from where you stand. It is in fact, saying that I won’t be looking at another, person’s land, country or experience if I was provided with the same opportunities in my own country. Before now, the thought or desire to migrate was based on the desire to draw a line of social stratification, however, in past years, young people, male and female have had to sell off properties, give up on jobs, desert family ties for the purpose of migrating from Nigeria that is, migration from Nigeria which used to be an addendum has now become a matter of urgency and a means of survival from insanity. Young professionals who prior to this time, had looked

forward to growing up, becoming professionals and working in Nigeria have succumbed to the pressure of seeking greener pastures. Even unskilled persons who find an opportunity to leave the country are willing to take up menial jobs as long as it is outside the country. Nigerian parents will take loans and sell properties just to get their children out of the country as if, anywhere outside Nigeria is a potential better life.

In this desperation, a lot of Nigerian youths who could either not afford the regular travelling process have resorted to irregular migration through deadly routes; such as the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea. These are deadly routes recently exposed in 2017, when the news of the modern slavery in Libya was exposed by CNN in November 2017². Pictures of Africans being sold for 500 dollars in auction were all over the media, a lot of them were Nigerians who were eventually repatriated and had a privilege to narrate their ordeals as they attempted passing through Libya in a bid to get to Europe. It is needless to say they literally went through hell. Recounting their experiences on how they left Nigeria, their expectations that were cut short by the rude shock they met with in Libya, the death of fellow Nigerians and in some cases family members, the shocking discovery of the fact that Nigerians like them were involved in the process of selling and kidnapping too and many more, nothing could have prepared these youths for everything they went through. These are the sacrifices these young people are willing to go through in their desperation to leave Nigeria.

Literature Review

Human Security

The human security approach was introduced in the 1994 Global Human Development Report (HDR) and led to a number of literature and initiative and a number of discussions based on this idea. United Nations in 2012, the General Assembly adopted a general definition of the concept.³

The human security approach extends the scope of security analysis and policy from regional security to human security. The 2012 GA decision emphasized the role of "Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and widespread challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of their people". In other words, the threat (s) to people's lives and the values endangered are the main starting point of the human safety report. The 1994 HDR identified two main components of human security: "freedom from fear" and "release from desire". These freedoms, from the beginning to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are part of the four human freedoms that President Franklin D. Roosevelt famously mentioned in a speech in 1941. He advocated a world based on freedom of expression and expression. freedom of worship, freedom of desire and freedom of fear.⁴ Subsequent discussions in the 1990s added the freedom to "live in dignity".

According to the International Intervention and State Sovereignty Commission in the report titled "Responsibility for Protection, Human Security" is a newly emerging concept. This means "the safety of people in a broader sense which includes their physical security, economic and social well-being, respect for their dignity and values as human beings, and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms." Like the working definition suggested here, this one focuses on

“where the humanitarian needs of asylum seekers should be most focused. The General Assembly came up with the following common understanding to guide the implementation of the human safety approach within the system. United Nations:

a. The right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair. All individuals, particularly vulnerable persons, have the right to be free from fear and desire, with the opportunity to enjoy all their rights equally and to develop their full human potential;

b. Human Security requires human-centered, context-specific and prevention-focused responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all people and all communities;

c. Human security recognizes the links between peace, development and human rights, and also addresses civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights;

e) The concept of human safety differs from protection and implementation responsibility; to. Human safety does not lead to threats or the use of force or coercive measures.

f. Human security is based on national property. As the political, economic, social and cultural conditions for human security vary significantly from country to country and within the country, human security at different times strengthens national solutions in line with local realities⁵

Governments ensure the survival, livelihood and dignity of their citizens. The role of the international community is to complement and provide the necessary support to governments to strengthen their capacity to respond to existing and emerging threats on demand. Human security requires greater cooperation and partnership between governments, international and regional organizations and civil society.

In essence, Human Security is centered on the total well-being of individuals as a duty of the state. There are seven pillars/components of Human Security. If these components are fulfilled, human security is at its best, but if one or all of these components are not fulfilled, human security is said to have failed. The seven essential dimensions of human security:

- Economic: This implies that the state must ensure that poverty is at its barest minimum, unemployment rate has to be very low, easy access to credit and economic opportunities.
- Food: This implies that there will be no sudden rise in food prices, there is zero hunger and food is in abundance.
- Health: Epidemics, malnutrition, poor sanitation, lack of access to basic health care will be almost non-existent and the common man will have access to good health care system.
- Environmental: This means absence of or well controlled environmental degradation, resource depletion, natural disasters
- Personal: This means absolute absence of physical violence in all its forms, human trafficking, child labor and brutality.
- Community: There has to be no Inter-ethnic, religious and other identity-based tensions, crime, terrorism
- Political: This implies that political repression, human rights violations, lack of rule of law and justice must be absent or properly accounted for.

Migration

Migration is a truly global phenomenon, both within nations and across international boundaries of states. There are an estimated 244 million international migrants in the world⁶. That is, migrants make up more than 1 billion people or a seventh of the world's population. Although population diversity in most developed countries can be attributed to migration, this diversity in developing countries is largely driven by internal migration. Immigration to global cities, which are advanced service producers, major economies, international gateways, and internationally important political and cultural centers, is increasing, with migrants making up more than a third of the population, for example in Sydney, London and New York, Dubai and Brussels. Different factors play a role for different cities. Dubai, for example, has a transient population due to immigrant restrictions on citizenship, while in Brussels immigration is more permanent with the large community of European citizens working for European institutions.⁷

Migration as a 'movement of individuals and / or a whole group of people' is a fact and activity that has occurred throughout the history of man since the Stone Age. Often pressured by circumstances beyond their control, people moved from one place to another in search of food and water, seeking safety, and escaping various natural disasters and / or internal conflicts.⁸

As Wood points out, "Migration is often defined as a change of permanent or semi-permanent residence across some form of administrative boundaries". Today, migration is a multifaceted

and complex global problem that touches every country in the world. For immigrants, almost every state is now either of origin, transit or destination, often all three at once. So this migration phenomenon is an ongoing reality. In particular, people from developing countries are migrating to escape violence, persecution, improve their economic conditions and change their lives. Some migrate in the same country, for example from north to south, with the intention of staying permanently at the new location. Other people emigrate because of socio-political issues such as demographic and tribal disorders, religious unrest, and restrictions on political freedom.

Types of Migration

- a. **Internal Migration:** This is the migration that occurs within a country from crossing political boundaries, either within a state or between states, whether urban to rural, urban to urban, rural to rural, or rural to urban. The term associated with migrants arriving at their destination is in-migrants, and with those leaving their place of origin is out-migrants. This type of migration also includes movement between villages, towns and cities.
- b. **International Migration:** This is the migration that occurs across country boundaries. Such migrants are known as immigrants which means people coming into a foreign country and emigrants, which means people leaving their own country. This also includes continent-to-continent migration. For the definition of international migration, the space criterion does not raise difficulties since it is clear that the places of departure and destination belong to two separate countries and that, consequently, the movement which forms the basis of the change of usual place of residence is made at least once across a national border. From this spatial point of view, international migration

consequently appears as a change of usual country of residence. If for any reason the individual cannot or does not declare their new usual place of residence in the country of destination, there will be no record of this change of country of administrative residence and the individual will not be included in the de jure population of the country of destination. There will be no account of the related international immigration. At the opposite side if somebody leaves the country without declaring it he will be considered as still living in the country and will remain a member of the de jure population of the departing country.

Human Security Failure as a Major Causative Factor of Massive Youth Migration in Nigeria

Youths between the ages of 18-35 have only one dream in the Nigeria of today that is, to migrate in the best possible way. It is as though there is a general consensus among the youths to leave the country to its failed state. The government of today doesn't make it easy for the youths as daily news is filled with reports of hopelessness and lack of provision for the youths. In fact, the youths now believe that the people in power run the country as though they are the last generation that will live in the country. Nigeria ticks all the boxes of human insecurity in the world today.

Types of human insecurities and possible root causes in Nigeria	
TYPE OF INSECURITY	ROOT CAUSES

Economic insecurity	Persistent poverty, unemployment, lack of access to credit and other economic opportunities
Food insecurity	Hunger, famine, sudden rise in food prices
Health insecurity	Epidemics, malnutrition, poor sanitation, lack of access to basic health care
Environmental insecurity	Environmental degradation, resource depletion, air and land pollution,
Personal insecurity	Physical violence in all its forms, human trafficking, child labor, police brutality
Community insecurity	Inter-ethnic, religious and other identity-based tensions, crime, terrorism
Political insecurity	Political repression, human rights violations, lack of rule of law and justice, unaccountable office holders

Source: Author

Economic Insecurity in Nigeria: The rate of poverty in Nigeria has consistently increased over the years. Forty percent of people in Nigeria now live in poverty in a country that has Africa's biggest economy. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), in a report about poverty and inequality from September 2018 to October 2019, reported that 40 percent of people Nigeria

lived below its poverty line of 137,430 naira (\$381.75) a year. This represents 82.9 million people of the total population.⁹ Unemployment and underemployment in Nigeria mostly affects the youths of the country. Nigeria's unemployment rate as at the second quarter of 2020 is 27.1% indicating that about 21,764,614 (21.7 million) Nigerians remain unemployed¹⁰. Nigeria's unemployment and underemployment rate (28.6%) is a combined 55.7%. This means the total number of Nigerians who are unemployed or underemployed. This can be seen in a recently released unemployment data report published by the National Bureau of Statistics. Nigeria's unemployment rate was 23.1% in Q3 2018 confirming it increased by 4% points between then and the second quarter of 2020. Nigeria's youth remain the greatest victims of unemployment with over 13.9 million people aged between 15 and 34 years unemployed. The data also shows 7.6 million of this subset do not have any means of livelihood.

Added to this, is the difficult educational system in the country. The university lecturers association ASUU embarks on strikes at will, the federal government does not see the need to prioritize education either. A four-year long course of study ends up as a six-year long course, leaving the young graduates at a disadvantage already. Graduates and post graduates combined made up about 2.9 million of the total Nigerians that are unemployed. ASUU embarked on a nationwide strike since February 2020 and till date, the federal government is yet to reach a compromise.

Food Insecurity: The rate at which food prices increase in Nigeria is quite disturbing, with no notification of obvious reason, prices keep skyrocketing. The biggest exposure of the level of food insecurity in Nigeria is the ongoing pandemic. When countries had to be locked down and take responsibility of feeding their citizens, some parts of Nigeria like Lagos, Abuja, Ogun State was locked down while curfews were in place in other parts, but the country was unable to

provide for or feed its citizens in these times. We saw ridiculous portions of food being distributed to communities and more painfully, we saw young people take to the streets and houses to steal. Not money or luxurious items, food items either raw or cooked food. The level of hunger that hit the citizens during this pandemic is a proof that food insecurity is a major challenge in Nigeria today.

Health Insecurity: An average Nigerian does not have access to adequate health care. The health system in the country is at a broken state. So bad that the political leaders or elites will not visit hospitals in Nigeria for their treatments even if it is a minor health issue. The system is not being fixed because they can afford to embark on medical tourism. The pandemic also exposed the decay of the health sector in the country. A good number of political leaders, legislators and elites died as a result of the virus. This is because they could not be flown out of Nigeria as usual and they were forced to face the death traps they helped in creating in the health sector of the country. Most federal hospitals are inadequately equipped to cater for emergency situations. Until the pandemic grew worse, the entire country only had two ventilators which had to be hoarded and used as a matter of priority. These and many more shows that health insecurity is also a major issue in Nigeria.

Personal Insecurity: This refers to Physical violence in all its forms such as; human trafficking, child labor, police brutality, daylight robbery. All of these are fast becoming a normal trend in the country. One in four Nigerian youth have experienced police brutality. An attempt at peaceful protest in Nigeria leads to loss of lives and arrests. In fact, peaceful protests have been called comedy or drama. Peaceful protesters are usually held in police custody with no date of release in view.

Community Insecurity: Starting from the North Eastern part of Nigeria, to the middle belt, to the North, terrorism and inter-ethnic tension is still a major issue. Recently, there has been constant killings in Southern Kaduna, Nigeria. A particular community is being wiped out gradually and till date, the government has not commented on it. It is as though they chose to turn a deaf ear and a blind eye to it. No one wants to be killed or maimed because of their ethnicity or the community they belong to. The controversiality of the government's response to these issues is also a major subject of concern.

Political Insecurity: The 2019 presidential election that brought President Muhammadu Buhari back into office for a second term were marred by political violence, some of it by soldiers and police officers, Human Rights Watch said¹¹. Buhari should take concrete steps to address the widespread political violence, and to ensure accountability for human rights abuses by soldiers and police as he begins his second term.

The election period included persistent attacks by factions of the insurgent group Boko Haram in the northeast; increased communal violence between nomadic herdsman and farmers spreading southward from north-central states; and a dramatic uptick in banditry, kidnapping, and killings in the northwestern states of Kaduna, Katsina, and Zamfara. Security forces have failed to. Human Rights Watch interviewed 32 people, including voters, journalists, election observers, activists, and Independent National Electoral Commission officials in Rivers and Kano states, and documented 11 deaths specifically related to violent interference in the election process during the February 23 presidential election and subsequent state elections.

The national and state elections in February, March, and April 2019 contributed to the general insecurity across the country. The politically related violence reported in many states was in

contrast to the relatively peaceful 2015 elections that brought Buhari into his first term in office. According to a report SBM Intelligence¹², which monitors sociopolitical and economic developments in Nigeria, 626 people were killed during the 2019 election, starting with campaigns in 2018. Kano state, in northwestern Nigeria, has the highest number of registered voters in the country. Rivers state, in the Niger Delta, receives the largest share of crude-oil-based national revenue, representing significant electoral value to any political party. The history of elections in both states is replete with violence by state security agencies and criminal elements. Human Rights Watch focused its research on both states in view of projections and reports of violence during the 2019 elections. Despite police claims of increased security measures to ensure peaceful voting, there seems to have been little or no police response to reports of threats and acts of violence by hired political thugs and soldiers against voters and election officials, Human Rights Watch found.

Voters and election officials said that policemen either fled or stood idly by, fueling allegations of complicity, as perpetrators stole election materials, disrupted voting, and harassed voters. Witnesses said that the police also shot live rounds of ammunition and used teargas to disperse people protesting voting disruptions.

Effects of Youth Emigration in Nigeria

Brain Drain: The Sociological term, brain drain, refers to the emigration of intelligent, well-educated individuals to another place for better pay or more conducive living conditions, causing the place they came from to lose those skilled people. Brain drain occurs when scientists, engineers, doctors, IT- professionals and other intellectuals migrate to another country for higher studies, to undertake research activities, to get better job and work experiences which they are

not getting from their country of origin. Nigeria is a very prominent source for supply of professionals, elites and highly qualified professionals from Nigeria all over the world. Nigeria is very rich in resources including human resources. Nigeria and other African countries need to put these resources together for optimum utilization to bring amazing results for the countries. The intellectuals that developing countries lose every year can help in the effective utilization of their natural resources. Government needs to take timely and effective efforts to bring these resources back to the country.

ii. Talent Shortage: Migration results in talent shortage in the home country. The educated crowd instead of serving their own country prefers to work for the developed nations for the sake of better pay and standard of living or any other reason. This is evident in Nigeria as well as other developing countries especially in the field of medical services. Rural areas face acute shortage of medical practitioners. Also, there is huge demand of IT professionals in Telecom software companies which is unfulfilled. Most of the available professionals prefer to go abroad to meet the requirements of software companies abroad. This results in the crunch for professionals in these sectors.

Recommendations

The strength of a country is in the percentage of their youths. The youths are the strongest and most agile age group, they are also the future of every country. A country that exposes her youths or underestimates her youth is set to lose it all. While migration is a natural occurrence and man will naturally migrate at one point or the other, massive migration is a problem. People only migrate massively and desperately when the conditions are no longer favorable and irredeemable. The Nigerian government is now saddled with the responsibility of presenting a

bleak of hope to the youth population of the country. This chapter recommends the following as practicable ways to encourage youth establishment in Nigeria

- **Youth Inclusion:** There is need for the government to allow the youths be a part of policy formulations and implementation. This is because the contemporary knowledge and practicable inventions of the youths, coupled with the experience of the older generation will definitely birth a Nigeria that is forward and progressive.
- **Increase in Employment Rate:** The Nigerian Government should create employment opportunities and stop making entrepreneurship difficult. Unnecessary levies and payments should be abolished, loan and credit structures should also be put in place.
- **Develop the Educational Sector:** Given a Nigeria where quality and premium education is available, one that is able to compete with other developed countries, where wages are adequately paid and students complete their studies in a definite time, void of victimization, more parents will be willing to let their children study in Nigeria.
- **Refurbishment of the Health Sectors:** In other developed countries, the health practitioners are part of the most paid. In Nigeria, the case is different. Health professionals are paid peanuts with no adequate insurance. They also get billed different fees and levies that are unnecessary. If the Nigerian government can look into properly equipping hospitals, paying health officials adequately and ensuring that access to good health care is subsidized, the country will be more desirable to habit.
- **End police brutality and violence against Youths:** This is a very important line of action. The Nigerian government has to come up with penalties and workable consequences for misuse of power and weapons among the police. No one should live in the fear of the one who is expected to give protection.

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