

## **Changing population structure and security environment of Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

Security has remained a crucial and important human aspect of existence from time immemorial. Human race have been confronted with security challenges within and outside the environment where it operates. It was the need for security that at the instance of the social contract the leviathan held the rights of the members of the society in exchange for security. It follows therefore that society had always made efforts to ensure that both the strong and the weak exist side by side without any holding the other one to ransom. But often security is undermined by the population situation. Changing population trends and differentials across regions, continents and globe has exacerbated the security situation around the globe and has intensified the security situation. Population composition of a country consisting of mostly youthful cohort is a double edge sword which could be positive or negative depending on how it is exploited. If wrongly exploited, they could fuel crime, civil conflict and insecurity. Fertility rate contributes in increasing the population density and population growth, thereby increasing pressure on food security. Population size, distribution and composition have a direct implication on the environment that would invariably constitute a security threat. The Nigerian population situation has been said to be the fastest growing in the world and it bears the features listed above. It has a predominantly young population that has been poorly harnessed, its size and distribution has been seen as bottom heavy with very large consequences on the security architecture and condition of the state. It is against this backdrop that this paper undertook to explore the influence of changing population structure on the security of Nigeria. These changing structures are manifested in the changing fertility, mortality, migration, size, composition and distribution trends. The Demographic transition theory was adopted as the theoretical framework to explain the relationship

among the variables. Results indicated that Nigeria has a rapidly changing population because the number of cohort recorded in the several censuses held in 1991, 2006 and the DHS have all shown that the population is truly changing and becoming predominantly youths and this has increased the insecurity situation in the country. The insecurity is manifested in food, health, economic insecurity. It was recommended that the teeming young population should be harnessed for productive activities in order to secure the environment.

## **Évolution de la structure démographique et de l'environnement sécuritaire du Nigéria**

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### **Abstrait**

La sécurité est restée un aspect humain crucial et important de l'existence depuis des temps immémoriaux. La race humaine a été confrontée à des défis de sécurité à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur de l'environnement où elle opère. C'était le besoin de sécurité qu'à l'instance du contrat social le léviathan détenait les droits des membres de la société en échange de la sécurité. Il s'ensuit donc que la société s'est toujours efforcée de faire cohabiter le fort et le faible sans rançonner l'autre. Mais souvent la sécurité est compromise par la situation de la population. L'évolution des tendances et des écarts démographiques entre les régions, les continents et le monde a exacerbé la situation sécuritaire dans le monde et a intensifié la situation sécuritaire. La composition de la population d'un pays composé principalement d'une cohorte de jeunes est une arme à double tranchant qui peut être positive ou négative selon la manière dont elle est exploitée. S'ils sont exploités à tort, ils pourraient alimenter la criminalité, les conflits civils et l'insécurité. Le taux de fécondité contribue à augmenter la densité de population et la croissance démographique, augmentant ainsi la pression sur la sécurité alimentaire. La taille, la distribution et la composition de la population ont une implication directe sur l'environnement qui constituerait invariablement une menace

pour la sécurité. La situation de la population nigériane a été considérée comme la croissance la plus rapide au monde et présente les caractéristiques énumérées ci-dessus. Il a une population majoritairement jeune qui a été mal exploitée, sa taille et sa répartition ont été considérées comme lourdes avec des conséquences très importantes sur l'architecture de sécurité et l'état de l'État. C'est dans ce contexte que cet article a entrepris d'explorer l'influence de l'évolution de la structure de la population sur la sécurité du Nigeria. Ces structures changeantes se manifestent dans les tendances changeantes de la fécondité, de la mortalité, de la migration, de la taille, de la composition et de la répartition. La théorie de la transition démographique a été adoptée comme cadre théorique pour expliquer la relation entre les variables. Les résultats ont indiqué que le Nigeria a une population en évolution rapide parce que le nombre de cohortes enregistrées dans les plusieurs recensements tenus en 1991, 2006 et l'EDS ont tous montré que la population change vraiment et devient majoritairement des jeunes, ce qui a accru la situation d'insécurité dans le pays. L'insécurité se manifeste dans l'insécurité alimentaire, sanitaire, économique. Il a été recommandé que la population jeune et foisonnante soit mobilisée pour des activités productives afin de sécuriser l'environnement.

## Introduction

People are among the inhabitants of the earth surface among many other living organisms. At every given period, the number of people (population) across the world or any geographic territory change. The change is either due to births, deaths, movements, marriages or change in social status. The change could occur in sex, ages with effects on growth, composition and distribution of the population. The characteristics of the population have implications on the security of lives and property. People are at the centre of sustainable development. Each of the four global demographic “megatrends”— population growth, population ageing, migration and urbanization – holds important implications for economic and social development and for environmental sustainability. The world’s population continues to grow, albeit at a slower pace than at any time since 1950, owing to reduced levels of fertility. Between the period 1980 and 2000, the world population rose from 4.4 billion to 6.0 billion (World Bank, 2009). From an estimated 7.7 billion people worldwide in 2019, the medium-variant projection indicates that the global population could grow to around 8.5 billion in 2030, 9.7 billion in 2050, and 10.9 billion in 2100 (United Nations, 2019). With a projected addition of over one billion people, countries of sub-Saharan Africa could account for more than half of the growth of the world’s population between 2019 and 2050, and the region’s population is projected to continue growing through the end of the century.

While, populations in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, Central and Southern Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe and Northern America are projected to reach peak population size and to begin to decline before the end of this century, some countries, including several in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, continue to experience high levels of adolescent fertility, with potentially adverse security, health and social consequences for both the young women and their children

(UN, 2019). Between 2015 and 2020, an estimated 62 million babies were born to mothers aged 15-19 years worldwide hence changing the population structure. A country's total population comprises of two groups of people: those in the labour force (within the age bracket of 18 years – 65 years as in the case in Nigeria) and people who are not in the labour force (those between the age brackets of 0 – 17 years and 65 years and above). The active population (as the labour force is often referred to) comprises of those who are actively employed and those who are unemployed due to one reason or the other.

In Nigeria, the population age structure shows the preponderance of children from 1963 to date. In 1963 census, the ratios of persons under 15 years, 15- 64 years and 65 years plus were 43.1, 54.9 and 2 percent respectively, thus giving rise to a dependency ratio of 0.82. The 1980 National demographic sample survey (NDHS) showed an age structure of 47.2, 50.2 and 2.8% respectively for the under 15 years, 15- 64 years and 65 years and above with a dependency ratio of 1.0. The 1990 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) portrayed a similar trend as the proportions stood at 47.2, 48.5 and 4.3 for the under 15 years, 15- 64 years and 65 and above with a dependency of 1.08. Nigeria Demographic survey and Health survey reports that the dependency ratio for 2003 stood at 0.92. According to 2012 revision of the world population prospects, the proportion of children below the age of 15 in 2010 was 44.0, 53.2 was between 15 and 64 years of age, while 2.7 was 65 years or older (NPC, 2009, 2014, Eze, 2018).

From these statistics, the age structure of the population reflects large proportion of children and young persons and equally an overall dependency ratio of about 1 to 1, which implies an almost equal proportion of the dependent and active groups in the population. So Nigeria's population as already observed in its stage in the transition theory is a youthful or a growing one. The sex structure of the population is equally almost one of equality between both sexes. The relative size of the working-age population is important in providing support for the dependent populations of children and the elderly. In many developing countries, as declining fertility leads to fewer children relative to the working-age population, it gives rise to an opportunity to increase investments in child and maternal health, education, infrastructure and environmental protection. This so-called "demographic dividend", if properly managed, can make a significant contribution to boost economic growth and to pull people out of poverty. The contributions of the working-age population to economic growth and development may be constrained or enhanced by the domestic labour market and other macroeconomic conditions (United Nations, 2011).

Another inevitable consequence of the demographic transition resulting from fertility decline and increased longevity is population ageing—the process by which older individuals become a proportionally larger share of the total population. Population ageing has a profound impact on a broad range of economic, political and social conditions through such factors as economic growth, savings and investment, labour supply and employment, pension schemes, health and long-term care, intergenerational transfers, family composition and living arrangements. For example, concerns are growing about the long-term viability of intergenerational social support systems, which

are crucial for the well-being of both the older and younger generations (Isiugo-Abanihe, 2003, UN, 2011). This is especially true where provision of care within the family becomes more and more difficult as family size decreases and women, who are traditionally the main caregivers, increasingly engage in employment outside the home.

In Nigeria, the changing population structure has become complex and problematic given the lack of effective institutional framework to harness the abundance potentials of the population overtime. The capabilities and credential of the people especially the economically active population are largely untapped and fully developed. The armies of unemployed youths, high rate of illiteracy, low level of education and out of school children, poverty have made this category vulnerable and available to engage in acts which constitute great threat to security of lives and property. Consequently, this chapter examines the influence of changing population structure in age, sex, location etc on the security environment of Nigeria.

## **Conceptual issues**

### **Population structure**

Population structure is the composition of a given population, which is broken down into categories such as age and sex. Population structure can be used to categorize population into many subsections and demonstrate population demographics on a local, regional or national scale. The population of any defined area is varied in terms of age, sex, marital status, the size and composition of families and household's economic activities, nationality, language and religion (Eze, 2018). Looking at the population structure of a place shows the population is divided up between male and female at different age groups. Thus, there could be sex structure, age structure and age-sex structure.

Sex structure refers to the sex composition of the population in any area which may be defined as the relative population of males and females within it. The standard measure of the sex composition of population is the sex ratio which is defined as the number of males per 100 females in a population. The sex ratio can also be recorded by relating the total number of males (or females) to the total population. The sex composition of a population has various implications for the safety (security), social, political and economic development of the country (Eze, 2018). Sex composition influences labour force participation, consumption, and political participation in many traditional settings as well as mortality experienced in the area.

Age structure refers to the relative proportion of people in different age groups/cohorts to the total population. In any collection of human population, three major age groups may be identified for the purposes of overall appraisal and planning for development and welfare of the people concerned. The first age group comprise people of between 0-14 years (child dependency). This group is made up of people who are largely non-reproductive and in most cases non-productive. The second group of people which lie between the ages of 15 and 64 years which are referred to as the adult categories are the most reproductive and productive and supports the rest (working class). The third group is made up of people of over 65 years (Old age dependency).

### **Population structure, growth and distribution in Nigeria**

The demographic transition associated with declining fertility and mortality levels is causing unprecedented changes in population age structures around the world. Different countries have been affected differently according to their stage of demographic transition and level of development. On the one hand, most developed countries and some developing countries have already attained older age structures and are experiencing declining proportions of youth and working-age adults, with negative consequences for labour supply and old-age support ratios (UN, 2011). On the other hand, many developing countries are experiencing increasing numbers and proportions of youth and working-age populations, which, under the right circumstances, can lead to a short-run demographic bonus but at the same time create obvious challenges in terms of providing education and creating employment opportunities.

Nigeria has one of the fastest growing populations in the world. With an estimated growth rate at about 3.2%. It is projected that at that rate, the population will double in size in just 24 years (NPC, 2009). According to the 2006 Census, Nigeria's population of 140 million comprises 71,709,859 males and 68,293,683 females with a sex ratio of 105. The sex ratios across the age groups are as follows: at birth: 106; 0-14 years: 105; 15-24 years: 105; 25-54 years: 97; 55-64 years: 85; 65 years and over: 85. The spatial distribution and residence pattern showed that about 60% of the population live in rural areas while about 40% live in urban areas.

The Nigeria demographic structure reflects a growing youthful population with a broad based population pyramid. According to the 2006 Nigeria census, about 42% of the over 140 million people were aged less than 14 years, 29% were aged 15-19 years and 24% were in the prime age 30-59 years, and the proportions are similar for the estimated 158 million population as well as the projected 176 million in 2015 (NPC, 2009; UN, 2013, Akinyemi & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2014). The population of the elderly was also estimated at 4.8% in 2006 and 5.1% in 2015. The median age of the population was estimated at 17.9 years (17.3 for males and 18.4 for females).

According to NDHS, 2018, 70% of women and 57% of men age 15-49 were in union. 31% of currently married women report that their husband has multiple wives (NPC, 2019). The median age at first marriage among women age 20-49 was 19.1 years. The median age at first marriage among women age 20-49 has increased slightly since 2013, from 18.3 years to 19.1 years. Within the same age group, the percentage of women marrying before age 18 has declined from 48% to 43%. Similarly, the percentage of women age 15-19 marrying before age 15 has declined from 12% to 8%. Men marry later than women, with the median age at first marriage among men age 30-59 being 27.7 years. The median age at first sexual intercourse among women is 17.2 years, while the median age among men is 21.7 years. The percentage of women who have had sexual intercourse by age 18 has increased since 2013 (from 54% to 57%), while the percentage among men has declined (from 19% to 15%).

There has been a gradual decline in the TFR over time, from 6.0 children per woman in 1990 to 5.3 in 2018. There has been a similar decline among women in both rural areas (from 6.3 to 5.9) and urban areas (from 5.0 to 4.5) during the same period. In the last three NDHS surveys (2008, 2013, and 2018), the age-specific fertility rate has been highest among women age 25-29. There have been no substantial differences

in median birth intervals over the last 18 years. Median intervals were 30.2 months in 1990, 31.7 months in 2003, 33.4 months in 2008, 31.7 months in 2013, and 30.9 months in 2018. In Nigeria, the median duration of postpartum amenorrhoea has declined steadily since 1990, from 14.7 months to 11.7 months (NPC, 2019). There has been a steeper decline in the median duration of postpartum abstinence (10.8 months in 1990 versus 2.9 months in 2018). Overall, the median duration of insusceptibility has declined from 19.2 months to 12.7 months. The percentage of teenagers who have given birth or are pregnant with their first child has decreased since 1990, from 28% to 19%.

With respect to number of living children as shown by the NDHS, 2018, the percentage of currently married women with three living children who want no more children has increased slightly since 2013, from 13% to 18%, while the percentage of women with four living children who want no more children has increased from 27% to 33%. : Over the past 5 years, the proportion of births that were wanted at the time of conception has remained constant at 90%. Similarly, there have been only minimal changes in the percentages of unwanted births (2% in 2013 and 3% in 2018) and mistimed births (7% in 2013 and 8% in 2018). The total fertility rate in Nigeria has declined slightly over the past 5 years, from 5.5 children in 2013 to 5.3 children in 2018. The wanted fertility rate has decreased to 4.8 since 2013, widening the gap between wanted and actual fertility (from 0.3 to 0.5).

According to NPC, (2019), contraceptive use among married women increased from 15% in 2013 to 17% in 2018. Use of any modern method of contraception also increased, from 10% to 12%. In addition, there has been a noticeable rise in the use of implants since 2008, from 0% to 3%. Total demand for family planning among currently married women has increased since 1990, from 27% to 36%. Over the same period, the proportion of demand satisfied by modern methods has increased from 14% to 34%. Unmet need decreased from 22% in 1990 to 16% in 2013 before rising to 19% in 2018. Under-5 mortality declined from 157 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2008 to 132 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2018. Similarly, the infant mortality rate declined from 75 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2008 to 67 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2018. There have not been any substantial changes in neonatal mortality in the last decade (40 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2008 versus 39 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2018). The proportion of women receiving ANC from a skilled provider has increased steadily since 2008, from 58% to 67%.

Between 2013 and 2018, there was a 6 percentage point increase in the proportion of women receiving ANC from a skilled provider. Over the same period, there was a 10 percentage point reduction in the proportion of mothers with no antenatal care. The proportion of women with four or more ANC visits increased from 45% in 2008 to 57% in 2018. Within the same time period, the proportion of women with an ANC visit in the first trimester of pregnancy increased from 16% to 18% (NPC, 2019). The proportion of mothers whose births were protected against neonatal tetanus has increased by 14 percentage points since 2008, from 48% to 62%, while the proportion of women receiving two or more doses of tetanus toxoid has increased by 8 percentage points, from 45% to 53%.

The percentage of deliveries taking place at health facilities has increased over time, from 35% in 2008 and 36% in 2013 to 39% in 2018. The proportion of births assisted by skilled birth attendants has increased over the past decade, from 39% in 2008 to 43% in 2018. Meanwhile, the proportion of deliveries attended by traditional birth attendants has declined during the last 5 years, from 22% in 2013 to 20% in 2018. There has been little change over the years in the proportion of births delivered by caesarean section (3% in 1990, 2% in 2008, and 3% in 2018). The proportion of women age 15-49 with a live birth in the 2 years preceding survey who received a postnatal check within 2 days after delivery has increased over the last decade, from 30% in 2008 to 42% in 2018 (NPC, 2019). Vaccination coverage in Nigeria has improved over the past 10 years. The percentage of children age 12-23 months who received all basic vaccinations increased from 23% in 2008 to 31% in 2018. The percentage of children who received none of the basic vaccinations declined from 29% to 19% during the same period. While these trends show improvement, they still fall short of Sustainable Development Goal 3, for which the target is achieving more than 90% coverage of all basic vaccinations among children age 12-23 months.

Nigeria has experienced a general decline in the four mortality indicators: infant, child and under-five mortality rates, and maternal mortality rates. The NDHS shows that infant mortality rates dropped from the 100 per 1,000 live births in 2003 to 69 per 1,000 live births in 2013; child mortality rates dropped from 112 per 1,000 live-births in 2003 to 88 per 1000 live-births in 2008 and to 64 per 1000 live births in 2013. Under-five mortality rate dropped from 201 per 1000 live births in 2003 to 128 per 1000 live births in 2013 (NPC and, ICF International, 2013).

### **Security/ insecurity**

Security may be defined as the near absence of real or imagined threat to human and material wellbeing. It is synonymous with safety. This is a broad perspective that incorporates holistic dimensions of security. It implies safety of the social, emotional, environmental and spiritual safety of man and his environment and all other things related to it. It encapsulates absence of hunger, unemployment, terrorism, cultism, criminality, diseases, spiritual threats, ethnic and communal crisis, religious conflicts and the likes. An analysis of security in its entirety must take cognizance of these elements. Such a general conception however makes it difficult in understanding security and even achieving it among humans. This explains why its discussion is always contextual. In sum therefore, security centres on absence of real or imagined threats to human lives and properties in society.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1994) human security may be defined to include such chronic threats as hunger disease and repression. Security means protection from hidden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life in homes, offices or communities. Security may also be defined as the state of being or making safe and secure from danger, etc. Security may also be defined as protection against something that might happen in the future or as the activities involved in protecting a country, a building or persons against threats danger, etc. (Otto & Ukpere, 2012). Essentially, security must be related to the presence of



food, peace, safety, happiness and the protection of human and physical resources or the absence of crisis, threats to human injury among others. The presence of peace could facilitate progress. The absence of security is insecurity.

Insecurity as a social concept has series of connotations. It is the opposite of security or simply absence of security. There are many definitions of the term as there are authors concerned with security issues. Scholars have variously discussed about national insecurity, food insecurity, job insecurity, emotional insecurity and security of lives and properties depending on the context in which the term is used. Insecurity thus, is the presence of real or imagined threats to human lives and properties resulting from human actions (war, pollution, terrorism, cultism, conflict, ethnic tension, all forms of criminality etc), natural occurrences (earthquake, drought, famine, tsunami, desertification, disease etc), and supernatural forces (evil spirit, deities, God, gods etc).

The series of earthquake, plane crashes, terrorism/militancy, kidnapping, armed robbery coups, religious conflicts, food shortages, epidemics and the effects these has on people their material possessions across the world are manifestations of insecurity.

Insecurity is a global problem that confronts countries and continents. The likes of America, Iran, Iraq, Burundi, Yemen, Egypt, Israel, Pakistan, Nigeria, Liberia, Libya, South Africa, Sudan, Asia etc have faced security challenges at different times. What differs is their level of knowledge and skills as well as approach in handling such occurrences. This has been on for many epochs of human existence (Kwaghga & Chinta, 2018). Though, it does not mean it is an inescapable dimension of human experience.

The factor leading to its emergence and persistence varies across regions. Some of the causes includes poor economic conditions as a result of government inability to prudently utilized its available resources for sustainable. Extreme inequality also produces tension among groups within a society which if not well managed leads to conflict. Neglect, discrimination and oppression of a section of a country's population in social scheme of affairs often generate to insecurity.

Furthermore, the fear of domination of certain groups by other groups, religious extremism, differences in ideology, resistance to change, illiteracy, overpopulation, poverty, unemployment, fear of the unknown about the ultimate concern of life (death, sickness, suffering, life after death), environmental pollution, imposition of alien political, social, economic and religious ideals on the citizens, availability of arms, ethnic agitations, struggle for power, corruption, secret cults, weak security system, porous borders, terrorism lack of good governance among others. Though it is rare to find human societies with no experience of insecurity given the context in which it is discussed, the causes can be controlled and the effects managed through collective efforts of all security stakeholders within the society.

Security of lives and properties of citizens is an integral part of the responsibilities of governments globally. It is often enshrined in the constitution of these countries which demand emphasis. This is the case in developed and developing countries across America, Africa, Australia, Asia, and other parts of the world. The social contract of these governments with the people requires them to ensure total maintenance of law and order and by extension, security of lives and properties.

Insecurity represents failure and breach of the agreement on the part of government. The citizens ought to perform their daily responsibilities without fear of intimidation, humiliation, harassment and other threats to lives and properties. The dimensions of security are explained in the following sections.

### **Health Security**

Health, according to United Nations Organization (UNO) (1995) is a fundamental human right and not merely a social good. It is an asset for individuals in the family, community and nation irrespective of age, sex, origin or race. Health is not only a physical condition of a person, but rather, they are also socio-cultural conditions of people or societies. The concept of health insecurity is used to mean a situation where people or group of people face real or imagined threats to their health while the absence of these threats is termed health security. Determinants of health insecurity may include generalized violence and food insecurity. It may manifest in terms of malnutrition, disease conditions, physical injury and death (Akpehe, Kwaghga & Akpehe, 2018). The WHO (2005) defined “global public health security” as “the activities required, both proactive and reactive, to minimize vulnerability to acute public health events that endanger the collective health of populations living across geographical regions and international boundaries”.

### **Food insecurity**

Food security involves access and availability of food stuff, stability of supplies and the quality of the diet. Absence of food security is food insecurity; food insecurity on the other hand represents lack of access to enough food and can either be chronic or temporary. Chronic food insecurity arises from lack of resources to acquire and produce food thereby leading to persistent inadequate diet. When analyzing food insecurity, it is not enough to know the duration of the problem that people are experiencing, but also how intense or severe the impact of the identified problem is on the overall food security and nutrition status. This knowledge will influence the nature, extent and urgency of the assistance needed by affected population groups.

Food insecurity exists when people are undernourished as a result of the physical unavailability of food, their lack of social or economic access to adequate food. Food insecure people are those whose food intake falls below their minimum energy requirements as well as those who exhibit physical symptoms caused by energy and nutrient deficiencies resulting from an inadequate or unbalanced diet or from the body's inability to use food effectively because of infection or disease (Otaha, 2013).

According to the 1996 World food Summit, food security is the people's right to define their own policies and strategies for the sustainable production, distribution and consumption of food that guarantees the right to food for the entire population on the basis of small and medium sized production, respecting their own cultures and the diversity of peasant, fishing and indigenous forms of agricultural production, marketing and management of rural areas, in which women play a fundamental role. Food security is also seen as a state of affairs where all people at all times have access to safe and nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life (Gurkarm, 2005). Accordingly,

Idachaba, (2004) described it thus: food security simply refers to the ability of individuals and households (especially the rural and urban poor) to meet staple food needs all year round’.

Food security can also be defined as a condition where all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Indicators of food insecurity in a given region can include numbers of hungry or malnourished people, of underweight children and of people suffering from micronutrient deficiency. The importance of food to individuals and households cannot be overemphasized (Eme, Uche, Onyishi, Ojeome, 2014).

FAO (2010) refers to food insecurity as the consequences of inadequate consumption of nutritious food bearing in mind that the physiological use of food is within the domain of nutrition and health. When individuals cannot provide enough food for their families, it leads to hunger and poor health. Poor health reduces one’s ability to work and live a productive healthy life. Poor human development destabilizes a country’s potential for economic development for generations to come (Amaka, Metu, Kenekchukwu, Okeyika & Olisa, 2016).

### **National security**

It is the control of real or imagined threats to the sovereignty of the nation and the lives, livelihoods and properties of its people. The socio-political and economic landscape in Nigeria has been bewildered with crime and violence. The persistence of poverty, unemployment, political instability, discrimination, inequitable distribution of national resources among ethnic nationalities among other factors have resulted to anger, agitation and violent crimes against the Nigerian state by some individuals and groups. Such crimes include militancy, kidnapping, bombing, armed robbery, destruction of public properties like schools, hospitals, and parks. The activities of these militia groups have resulted to low income for government from oil revenue, low participation of local and foreign investors in economic development and insecurity of lives and properties of the citizens.

In recent decades, there has been a dramatic twist on the waves, dynamics and sophistication of insecurity in Nigeria. It has been observed that, insecurity which used to be one of the lowest concerns in the hierarchy of Nigeria’s social problems has now assumed an alarming proportion. The pattern of insecurity in the country has been regionised. It ranges from the deadly Boko Haram, banditry and militia group in the North, kidnappers and armed robbery gangs in the Eastern and Southern part of the country, militant groups in the Niger Delta region, ritual killings in the west, political and nonpolitical calculated assassinations across the nation, communal crises, religious conflict and bombing of churches in the Middle Belt region. The regional structure of insecurity has also given rise to regional unlegislated security formation in the country in a bid to curtail the alarming rate of insecurity.

The bomb explosions, perpetrated by Boko Haram in Nigeria have caused severe damages to lives and property. This has been worsened by simultaneous attacks by unknown gunmen in various locations including, Maiduguri, Yobe, Kano,

Abuja, Plateau, Kaduna, Bauchi and others. There have been numerous unsuccessful attempted bombings at different locations across states in the country. This scenario has left an indelible mark of insecurity on the minds of the people who live in the constant fear of the unknown. It also poses serious threats to the unity and corporate existence of Nigeria as a sovereign State.

### **Changing Population structure and security environment of Nigeria**

The changing population structure has a nexus with security environment in Nigeria. The positive impact could be positive or negative. The positive influences include increased supply of labour essential for provision of defense/protection for the family and community. It also ensures lineage continuity, provide more opportunities for members to develop themselves, enhances family stability, and serves as a source of prestige and wealth. Others include enhanced division of labour, improved agricultural productivity etc. The negative impact identified include competition for available farmlands, source of conflict, breeds jealousy and hatred, causes family instability, increases economic burden etc. It also has impact on economic growth, poverty and inequality, education, health, food, the environment, and international migration.

According to Ademola (2002), the population of Nigeria has apparently tripled its size in the last four decades. A rapidly growing population is usually accompanied by a growing proportion of young people. Thus, a larger share of the population are dependent and non-productive, demanding food and other necessities of life, but contributing little or nothing to the economy. This limits the ability of the economy to meet the needs of the expanding population. Consequently, those whose needs are hardly met often resort to illegitimate ventures to eke a living. Also, the increasing number of people with corresponding number of vehicles, motorcycles (commonly called Okada) has released an unquantifiable fume into the environment, thus polluting the air (Kwaghga, 2018). Unfortunately, more people translate to more farmers. The increased agricultural activities using harmful chemicals, more vehicles and motorcycles, generators have release more pollution in the environment.

Another negative influence of changing population structure on the environment is increased pressure on land. Growing population has worsened the problem of land fragmentation and its concomitant reduction in agricultural output as in the case of Nigeria with labour intensive agricultural activity coupled with reliance on traditional techniques of agricultural practice. The decline in agricultural production, employment and income has resulted to social problems like the development of slums, increasing number of destitute and prostitutes, increasing cases of armed robbery, traffic congestion militancy and terrorism as is already abundantly evident in Nigeria (Eze, 2018). As earlier hinted, the basic occupation of the people is farming. It means that the higher the population, the higher the number of farmers. It also implies that the higher the farmer, the higher the pressure exerted on land which has not relatively increased overtime. Unfortunately, the higher the pressure exerted on available land, the faster it loses its value and productivity causing food insecurity. A disproportionately growing population increases the unemployment problem as youths have already flooded the labour market in Nigeria. This is even worsened as the economy has failed to seize the

opportunity of the prevailing potentially large market to expand and absorb the increasing number of people.

The competition over land due to changing population structure has complicated the problem of rearing animals for meat, milk and skin (an important aspect of food security) in the country. Also, unrestricted herding has not only reduced the crop yield but also limited the access and choices of the affected population to food and nutrition at a very high magnitude leaving them vulnerable to hunger, starvation and malnourishment. The indirect implication of open grazing culminate from the violent clashes that erupt between herders and crop farmers across the region as a result of open grazing of animals. The crises have displaced and/or sacked many farm families, disrupted and/or destroyed markets infrastructure, rural infrastructure and institutions. These had drastically reduced food output, availability, accessibility and affordability especially among victims of the clashes thereby resulting to food insecurity. It has also impoverished the affected households thereby heightening the spate of poverty in the area.

Thus, the influence of high fertility on the environment include pollution, pressure on land, deforestation, land/soil degradation, water scarcity, destruction of forest resources, loss of biodiversity, rising demand for energy, global warming and climate change among others. Pollution is the release of unwanted substances into the environment in quantities that is harmful to living organisms. When such substances are inhaled or consumed by living organisms, it causes damage to internal organs which often result in chronic diseases or death. The changing population structure has added to the number of farmers and the need to produce more food for subsistence and commercial purposes. The use of herbicides and pesticides has become a necessary option. Such chemicals are often flush into existing water bodies, thus, having a double effect of polluting the air and water bodies especially surface water

The changing population structure in Nigeria is associated with the rising demand for energy such as fossil fuel or fire wood. Rising demand for energy entails pressure on the available ones and by extension over utilization of such resources which is a threat to the environment. Such activities have resulted to the general crisis of global warming and climate change. Open grazing of animals have polluted the environment, contaminated water bodies and increased the numbers of flies acting as disease vectors. This has resulted in outbreak of air and water-borne diseases including typhoid and cholera in many communities since streams and springs constitute the major sources of their drinking water.

Water is one of the land resources that is necessary for human survival. This has made many to assert that “water is life”. If anything at all is to be scarce, it ought not to be water. In Nigeria, the changing population structure has mounted much pressure on the availability water sources. These have been overused resulted to its scarcity. The situation has been compounded by pollution of some water bodies through farming, fishing and domestic activities. In every environment forest areas serve as habitat for medicinal plants, timber, and fossil fuel, several species of animal and plant life. Forested areas also serve as a fertile and productive land for agricultural activities. Increasing population has led to competition and pressure over land. In most cases, the

alternative is to clear forested areas for other human activities. This has led to extinction of some animals and plant species within the environment. One of the consequences of such action is the loss of biodiversity which tempers with the ecosystem and threatens environmental sustainability.

Deforestation is a situation where trees are cut down without any deliberate effort to plant new ones. As explained above, high pressure on land due to increasing population has caused competition on the available land space. Leading to cutting down of trees in order to create space for housing, industrial or agricultural purposes when this occurs, it reduces the exposed areas to erosion and other degradation agents and makes it vulnerable to other dangers. Soil/land degradation connotes a situation where the value, fertility or productivity of a land area reduces such that it becomes difficult for plants to yield and animals to graze. Soil degradation often occurs due to over cropping and exposure of the land to erosion and sunlight over a period of time. This has negative impact on plants and animals life including humans.

Furthermore, the changing population structure has caused health insecurity. These include environmental pollution, physical injuries, torture, and rape. Others are hunger, starvation and malnutrition, psychological trauma, limited access to basic social services such as health care delivery, quality education, shelter and social groups. In terms of health insecurity, World Health Organization (2007) maintained that the armed violence rippling from actions and inactions of the people has negative impact on health of the individual victims. The indirect effects include fear, coercion, displacement and deprivation of essentials such as clean drinking-water, food and health care. A person wounded in a context of poor security resulting from widespread armed violence suffers the ballistic trauma and the indirect effects brought by difficulty in accessing medical care.

In respect to physical harm/injuries, the incessant clashes that results from conflict over resources has caused bodily injury, maiming and deaths of thousands of people over the years within the country. Some of the victims are permanently injured such that they are disabled and would have to live with their injury for life. This has not only reduced the population of people but has also left the victims in pain and perpetual fear thereby making their state of health deplorable. Furthermore, many women, young girls and sometimes, children have been raped, abducted and molested by the attackers leaving them to suffer the serious pains of Visco Vaginal Fistula (VVF), psychological trauma and shame.

Regrettably, the destruction of crops and animals, displacement of farmers and closure of local markets triggered by conflicts has led to food shortage, hunger, starvation and malnourishment of victims in the country especially, children and pregnant women. This is so because the state of security makes it difficult for their healthy wellbeing. These allow for constant sickness and diseases and high exposure to deadly infections. It has also hindered effective growth of children, contributing adversely to infant, child and maternal morbidity and mortality in the region. Also, large number of houses of the affected populations has been destroyed completely. This ugly incidence has resulted to the displacement of thousands of people who scamper for safety and shelter with relations, friends and in some designated internally displace

(IDP) camps which are mostly, public schools, market squares and Churches. The arrangement in these camps subject the people to overcrowding, open air defecation, risky sexual behaviour, emergence of infectious diseases, consumption of contaminated water and other unhygienic practices.

Changing population structure in Nigeria is not properly harnessed leading to consequences on the safety of all social institutions- the family, religion, economy, education, government. It often subject families to untold hardship including death of members, marital instability, economic and labour loss, lack of proper socialization, psychological pain, low productivity, and financial burden and destroys the family structure etc. The economic institution suffers from labour loss, low productivity, high expenditure, inflation, low industrialization and destruction of existing ones, impedes local and foreign investors, increased poverty and unemployment, under nutrition and upsurge in criminality etc.

Furthermore, the educational institutions during periods of insecurity are affected in various ways. This includes destruction of school buildings and other infrastructures, high cost of maintenance and renovations afterward, death of teachers and learners which depopulate schools, delayed academic calendar, high cost of security services, cost of fencing, and procurement of detective devices. It also causes suspicion by members of the public thus affecting the level of interaction and communication by individuals within and around school premises.

Government on the other hand incurs huge expense as a result of maintaining security agencies through training and providing modern security equipment such as helicopters, cars, riffles, jets. It also bears the cost of establishing emergency management agencies, employment and payment of salaries and allowances of such staff. There is also cost in the provision of relief materials to affected groups as well as their rehabilitation. Government also bears the burden of loosing foreign investors and withdrawal of foreign diplomats in the country. It often compels governments to formulate and implement new policies that will curtail further breakdown of law and order. The cost of renovation and provision of other social amenities to replace damaged ones is huge. Other effects include domestic debt and rising stock of external debt, and high rate of emigration. This shifts government attention from other development policies that would have brought about socio-economic development.

Moreover, insecurity hampers the smooth performance of religious activities. Its physical and psychological structures are destroyed with many recorded cases of death of adherents. It bears the cost of erecting new structures and in preparing funeral programme of members. It suffers reduction in population as a result of death or forced migration of members. It has more workload in terms of charity and spiritual welfare of members during periods of insecurity. Finally, insecurity brings about pressure on available health care facilities resulting to its short life span.

## **Conclusion**

Nigeria's changing population structure is heavily influenced by three main factors: high birthrate, low utilization of contraceptives, incidences of marriages, death

and migration. Increase in population is determined by the difference between birth and deaths while the growth in population is determined both by the increase in population and the difference between emigration and immigration. With an equally persistent high level of fertility accompanied by declining mortality rate – occasioned by improved health facilities, the growth rate of Nigerian population has been on the increase with an average growth rate of 3.20%. The lack of effective institutional mechanisms to developed and fully tap the potentials of the people has turned their dynamic numbers into severe security in recent time. This has affected in food, health and national security.

Consequently, the country has experienced a variety of deadly social problems that threatens the existence of human race especially in recent decades especially under harnessed changing population structure. This does not imply that the previous decades were good times for humans. Throughout the world, people have continued to suffer from one humiliating condition to the other occasioned by human and natural occurrences. These have persisted over time with little or no sign of diminishing. Nations in the world are plagued by changing population pressures, economic hardship, social unrest, corruption, mortality across ages, diseases, criminality, human rights violation, inequality, democratic challenges, ethno-religious conflict and tension of different magnitude that often results to insecurity of lives and properties. These have severe consequences on the social, economic, educational, cultural, political, and religious life of people and society hence the need to prevent and control its occurrence and persistence in society.

It is important to note that humans are the central thesis of governments across the world. People make the world's existence possible and also help to sustain it. Insecurity however threatens and most regrettably eliminates human lives. It causes unquantified destruction of material possessions that supports life. Democratic governments which the world celebrates will lose its meaning and ideals if people's lives and properties are destroyed hence democracy centers on the people. To address the pressure from changing population structure on safety in the Nigeria, deliberate and effective institutional mechanisms needs to be established through properly planned and implemented population policies involving formal and informal institutions. There must be conscious and long term strategies to develop and fully tap the potentials of the people to bring about safety and development.

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