

**APPRAISAL OF THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF  
POLITICAL VIOLENCE ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN  
NIGERIA: 2007–2014.**

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**Abstract**

The study was undertaken to assess the causes and consequences of political violence on national development in Nigeria from 2007-2014. Political violence has been argued to affects National development owing to its accompanying destruction of lives and properties as was the case during the 2007 stretching to 2014 election period. **The group conflict theory was adopted for the study.** The study has its methodology rooted in the secondary source of data collection which has to do with the use of textbooks, journals, internet materials, etc. findings from the study shows that political violence has brought a lot of conflicts in Nigeria among ethnics groups, religions and tribes, the occurrence of conflicts in any society could be more violent leading to cruel destruction of lives and property which hinders sustainable national development. The paper suggested among others that; **Ethical re-orientation of persons and institutions, Viable and efficient Anti-corruption institutions, Addressing Unemployment problems, Poverty and illiteracy**, campaigns focused on the implementation of the critical national economic, political, social, cultural, educational, and health services, are way of curbing political violence in Nigeria.

**Key Words:** Politics, Violence, Causes, Development and Implications

## **INTRODUCTION**

The civilization of mankind which has witnessed an enormous transformation of man and his environment would not have been possible without political power acquisition, utilization and manifestation in the political system for his ever unstoppable search for relevance and advantage which has indeed, generated so many tensions and hostilities. Consequently, for most developing democracies of the third world countries particularly Nigeria, political violence has been a constant occurrence which character and dimension are quite frightening in the political arena. Nigeria in the recent decades has been in the news for a very ugly reason of the unprecedented political violence which has occurred in different parts of the country but with specific dominance in the Northern area of Nigeria. In the same vein, multifarious and multi-dimensional violence is not new to the Nigeria political landscape and the generality of the people (Egwu, 2006). The philosophy of violence in Nigeria political system has been sustained as part of the country's political conduct since independence and constitute one of the powerful causes of poor political participation of Nigerians in politics particularly during elections and other social activities, (Uche & Obi, 2016: Obi & Ocheja, 2016). In place of democratic rivalries, struggles for political offices have often been conducted violently in the street by gangs of thugs recruited, trained and empowered by politicians to help them

seize control of power. Many political figures openly recruit and arm criminal gangs to unleash terror upon their opponents and ordinary members of the public.

In Gombe State, for example, politicians openly recruit violent cult gangs to harass, intimidate and victimize their opponent and rig the voting on Election Day (Human Rights Watch, 2007). Nationwide polls in 1999 and 2003 were systematically rigged and local government polls in 2004 were plagued by similar abuses and the country's 2007 polls proved to be another violent farce. Many seasoned observers stated that the 2007 polls were the worst they have witnessed anywhere in the world (Human Rights Watch 2007:2). The multiplier implication of political violence is that it has resulted in the underdeveloped growth and development of Nigeria.

It is based on the foregoing that this paper is poised at exploring the causes, implications, or effects of political violence on Nigeria's development, growth and the measures to solving the problem.

### **Research Assumption**

Political violence does not negate national development.

### **Research Methods and Materials**

The paper adopted secondary source of data collection from text books, journals, Newspapers, commentaries, documentaries

and internet materials, etc. documentary approach was the tool of analysis used to interpret, describe and understand how political violence affects national development in Nigeria. The choice of document analysis was pertinent because the paper was primarily concerned with identifying and selecting relevant documentaries, literature, magazines and evaluating evidence in academic research. Duffy (2000) stated that the document analysis approach is dynamic in nature because it can be used as the central or exclusive method of research. Johnson (1984) further explained that document analysis is useful in research that focuses on organization policy or evaluating government reports. Hakim (2000) and Elton (2002) viewed document analysis as examining information that came into existence during a particular period of study. This study was undertaken in essence of critical enquiry, with the aim of bringing to limelight the multiplier implication of political violence on development in Nigeria.

### **Framework of Analysis**

#### **The Group Conflict Theory**

The group conflict theorists are of the view that there are groups in the society that have different interests. In this regard, they believe that social arrangement will tend to benefit some groups at the expense of others. Because of the existence of different interests, the potentials and the likelihood of conflict is always present. The group

conflict theory views violence as a product of a struggle for power among groups within the society. The proponents of this view, especially the sociologists, direct our attention to the cleavages within a society, especially between ethnic, racial and religious groups. Specifically, in this study, we are concerned with ethnic conflict models and also cleavages between political organizations. According to this theory, some groups come to dominate others, and to win for themselves a disproportionate share of the society's political power, which includes wealth and privileges in the society at the expense of the less powerful ones, (Verma, 1998)

They also incriminate the activities of the less powerful while they protect that of the most powerful persons, such situations according to this theory creates violence. The theory is of the view that, the masses are not bound to society by their shared values, but by coercion at the hands of those in power. This perspective sees social control, not consensus and conformity. Groups and individuals advance their own interests, struggling over control of societal resources. Those with the most resources exercise power over others with inequality and power struggles resulting. There is great attention paid to class race, and gender in this perspective because they are seen as the grounds of the most pertinent and enduring struggles in the society which often lead to political violence (Anderson and Taylor, 2009).

According to the theory, the nature of politicking in Nigeria abridges the basic right of citizens as the various institution of society such as the legal and political system are instruments of ruling class domination and serve to further its interests. However, the activities of citizens aimed at maintaining the resistance lead to increased escalation of political violence in Nigeria. Consequently, upon this ugly menace, politicians in Nigeria used to create many ethnic and social problems to the society especially when the masses attempt to fight back, for instance, the elections held in 2003 was preceded by widespread intra-party and inter-party violence that continued on the polling days (Human Rights Watch, 2007).

This further indicated that both Nigeria Federal and state elections in 2003 and local government elections in 2004 were marred by serious incidents of violence, which left scores of dead and many others injured. In April and May 2003, at least one hundred people were killed and many injured. The majority of the people were serious abuses and perpetrated by members or supporters of the ruling party, the People's Democratic Party (PDP). In a number of locations, elections simply did not take place as groups of armed thugs linked to political parties and candidates intimidated and threatened voters in order to falsify results (Alemika, 2011).

### **Political Violence**

Politics, according to Quincy (1955), is the

quest for power, order, justice and the art of manipulating, influencing and controlling others. This is to say that people in the quest for power, justice and order, can result to force to ensure compliance. Politics is the general process of carrying out the business of the government. It is the theory and practice of government, especially the activities associated with governing, obtaining legislative and executive powers or forming and running organs connected with the government (Encarta Dictionary, 2009). Marx Weber defines politics as the struggle for power. Harold Lasswell defines it as the game of who gets what, when and how of the public resources. David Easton, on the other hand, sees politics as the authoritative allocation of values for the general benefit of all. Violence is associated with Karl Marx's notion of politics as essentially a class struggle between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. Violence is an illegal and illegitimate act or the intricate web of deciding who gets what, when and how carried out by non-government individuals and groups in a political setting, Anifowose (1982).

However, Eckstein (1964) argued that political violence is:

*The use of threat or physical act carried out by an individual or individuals within a political system with the intent to cause injury or death to persons and damage to property and whose objectives, choice of targets,*

*victims, surrounding circumstances, implementation and effects have political significance that tends to modify the behaviour of others in existing arrangement of power structure that has some consequences for the political system.*

This implies that for violence to be political, there must be intent of affecting the political process (though it may not be immediately apparent whether an action has a political component or not). The political process is considered to be the system of distribution of values by specific individuals within specific organization/institutions.

In his contribution to the literature on political violence, Smith (1968) asserts that;

*Violence has always been part of the political process. Protest activities of one form or the other, efforts to dramatize grievances in a fashion that will attract attention or threaten the destruction of life and property, appear as the expression of political grievances even in stable consensual societies. The victim ratio of political action is force; political activity below the threshold of force is normally carried*

*on with the knowledge that an issue may be escalated into overt violence if a party feels aggrieved.*

Adding strength to Smith assertion, Azeez,(2005) opined that Political violence is the breakdown of consensual norms, political alienation and the cohesiveness of a ruling group; a response to frustrating circumstances.

The above assertion suggests that, in every political setting, violence tends to set in for the purpose of achieving desired ends. Hence, Adigba (2002) asserts that political violence disrupts the political process as can be seen in the truncation of the first and second republic in Nigeria. This affects the implementation of government policies. Political violence in Nigeria has not only become a phenomenon but has become a strategy used by politicians to advance their interest, a strategy used by groups in pursuing redress, also a strategy used by an opposing party to frustrate the ruling party and this, however, has serious implication on the state and the society at large. The effect of political violence on National development cannot be underestimated in Nigeria.

### **Development**

According to Seer's, (1969) Development means if the level of poverty, unemployment and inequality have declined over a period, then development

can say to have occurred. Then it is likely that the standard of living of individuals has improved, it is clear then, that economic progress is essential. For seers, before one can talk about development, there are four important questions to be asked,

- i. What is happening to poverty?
- ii. What is happening to unemployment?
- iii. What is happening to inequality?
- iv. What is happening to illiteracy

According to Seer's true development lay in the elimination of poverty, increase in literacy and improvement in the health system as opposed to the increase of per capita output. Dudley Seer's stressed the implication of social development in developing countries before moving to economic development seeing that in order for economic development to reach its maximum potential social development has to occur first. Seer was highly critical of using indexes such as unemployment and inflation when referring to Third World countries. In other words to Seers true development lay in the elimination of poverty, increase in literacy, improvement in the health system as opposed to the increase of per capita output.

Development is now seen as a transformation of the society, a move from the old ways of thinking, and old form of social and economic organization to new ones (Stiglitz cited in Afeikhena 2004:207). As Chandler (2007) rightly

observed that development has been redefined, taking the emphasis away from traditional economic indicators of GDP and trade and broadening out the concept to take in psychological and material factors related to the measurement of human well-being. Specifically, Rodney (1981), Nnoli (1981), Ake (2001) have argued that development is multifaceted and indeed centred on man. For Nnoli (1981) development could be seen as a dialectical phenomenon in which the individual and the society interact with their physical, biological and inter human environments transforming them for own betterment and that of humanity at large and being transformed in the process. This view or conception of development according to Okolie (2009) pointedly improves man's potentials and capacities and subsequently eliminates and/or reduces poverty, penury, inequality, unemployment and generally enhances the condition for human existence and self-reproduction.

Development, therefore, could be seen as the process of empowering people to maximize their potentials and the ability to exploit nature to meet daily human needs. It can also be seen as a process by which quality of human lives and capacity to surmount daily needs are considerably improved.

Development Report 2007/2008 stated that:  
*Human development is about people. It is about expanding*



*people's real choices and the substantive freedoms, the capabilities that enable them to lead lives that they value. Choice and freedom in human development mean something more than the absence of constraints. People whose lives are blighted by poverty, ill health or illiteracy are not in any meaningful sense free to lead the lives that they value, neither are people who are denied their civil and political rights. They need to influence decisions that affect their lives (UNDP, 2007:24).*

#### **Causes of Political Violence in Nigeria**

Political violence is a common phenomenon in Nigeria. It is a deliberate use of force to achieve specific political objectives. Obviously, political violence is encouraged by internal and external contradictions in the nation's political system. A range of political crises is triggered off by political differences of the ruling elites. The fact that politics deals with power acquisition and allocation of resources, the instinct and urge for political violence become the inescapable reality in social engineering; although violence in Nigerian politics sometimes seem to possess liberating and redemptive value. Corruption, poverty and high rate of illiteracy promote the culture of political violence in Nigeria. Again, discontent, strife

action and social disaffection could be predisposing factors. The influence of godfatherism in Nigerian politics further entrenched the culture of violence within the political space. Political violence is an expression of the apparatus of the state particularly the police, state security service and national intelligence system Kolade (2007).

The persistence of political crises symptomizes ugly trends in the political development of the Nation. Consequently, political violence could arise from wide spread frustration in the polity. In some instances, violence erupts in politics as a result of power tussle between parties and also the manifestation of high joblessness of people. Also, money politics has corrosive effects on the political system.

#### **The 2007 General Election Crisis**

The 2007 general election in Nigeria has been judged by most observers to fall short in a long way of the standards of credible, free and fair election and has proven to be the worst in Nigeria's post-independence. This view was however informed by the act of violence, display of madness, corruption, high-handedness of the incumbent president and the shameless rigging that characterized the 2007 general election. In the lead up to the 2007 general elections acts of violence were committed by supporters of competing factors within political parties, particularly during contests for the party nomination and against the member of

rival parties. Instances of this violence are evident in the murder of Funsho Williams, the leading contender of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) gubernatorial nomination in Lagos, Jesse Arukwu of Action Congress(AC) governorship candidate in Plateau State, Ayo Daramola of Ondo State.

Violence worsened once election campaigning began and particularly after President Olusegun Obasanjo was quoted as describing the 2007 elections as a do or die affair as well as a matter of life and death for the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Kolade (2007). In response, some opposition leaders called on the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) which answer directly to the president not to act as a partisan force. There were also several incidents of activists from different parties attempting to disrupt opponent rallies and other events.

The 2007 Election Day violence was followed by public protests in many states as INEC (Independent National Electoral Commission) announced results mostly in favour of the PDP that in some case were at odds with anticipated results. The winner of the governorship election in Delta State was already announced in Abuja before the collation and counting of votes. In Ondo State protesters set ablaze the houses and vehicles of known PDP supporters.

In Edo State, Adams Ochiomole of A.C.N was arrested for leading protest against the

declaration of victory for the PDP candidate. In Kogi State, riots broke out when the state was declared for the PDP and a deputy commissioner of police was among reported total of 15 (fifteen) persons killed (Chris 2007). In Nassarawa State as well, six persons were reported killed during the protest against the declaration for the PDP over the ANPP (All Nigeria People Party) candidate (Chris, 2007).

On April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007, President Olusegun Obasanjo broadcast a national appeal to quell tension and encourage citizens to exercise their civic right by voting in the April 21<sup>st</sup> polls. Despite the President's appeal, violence continued to rumble. In Benue State, 10 people were reported killed and 30 houses were burnt when violence erupted between the AC and PDP. Several police officers lost their lives in violent attacks on police stations in Kano State by a group that called itself the Nigerian Taliban group (Human Right Watch 2007:4).

#### **The 2011 General Election Crisis**

The April 2011 presidential election was heralded as among the fairest in Nigeria's history but also among the bloodiest. The violence began with the protest by supporters of the main opposition candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, a Northern Muslim from the Congress for Progressive Change (C.P.C) following the re-election of Incumbent Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian from the Niger Delta in the south, who was the candidate for the ruling P.D.P. The



Protests degenerated into violent riots and sectarian killings in the Northern States as Human Right Watch (2011) reported that more than 800 people died in election related and communal violence in Northern Nigeria.

The presidential election divided the country along ethnic and religious lines. As elections results trickled in on April 17, 2011, it became clear that Buhari had lost; his supporters took to the streets of Northern towns and cities to protest what they alleged to be the rigging of election results. The protesters started burning tires and protests soon turned into riots. The Muslim rioters targeted and killed Christians and members of ethnic groups from Southern Nigeria, who were perceived to be supporters of the ruling party. They also attacked police stations and electoral commission offices. In the predominantly Christian towns and villages of Southern Kaduna State, sectarian clashes left more than 500 people dead and Human right watch also estimated that in Northern Kaduna State, at least 180 people were killed in the cities of Kaduna and Zaria and their surrounding suburbs, Human Right Watch (2011)

#### **Key Indicators of Political Violence in Nigeria/Implication**

Of recent, political violence is now more alarming than what was observed and felt in the late 1960s and 1980s. However, there are various reasons advanced for the political violence in Nigeria, and perhaps

these reasons vary from one or regions to regions which among others include:

#### **A. Lack of Realistic Natural Identity:**

Nigeria is inhibited by a large number of tribal groups with population figures from a few thousand to millions and speaking over 400 hundred languages. Otite (2002) observed that Nigeria has about 300 ethnic groups. Taking a deeper look at background history of Nigeria you will find out that Nigeria is made up of sub-national groups who have no common desire of unity and as a result, the relationship between the various ethnic groups in Nigeria is characterized by antagonism and hatred. These, however, were manifested by the number of violent clashes witnessed between 1999 and 2007. Within this period ethnic clashes arose between Yorubas and Hausas in Sagamu, the Ibos and Hausa/Fulani in Kaduna, these violent killings led to the death of many. This level of acrimony antagonism between ethnic groups in Nigeria shows that they are not ready to live together and cooperate effectively in the realization of an integrated nation.

#### **B. Injustice and Marginalization in the distribution of Resources:**

discontent, as a result of injustice and marginalization suffered by many ethnic groups, states and individuals

from the distribution of socio-economic right have a direct bearing on the problem of political violence. Sharply unequal distribution of resources creates social and political divisions that undermine consensus and increased opportunities for political violence. The violent uprising in the Niger delta was a response to the frustration accumulated over their marginalization and regarding the distribution of political and economic resources.

The states in the Niger delta saw themselves sidelined in the existing social, economic and political institutions and this attitude generated to frustration and anger which gave vent to violent outburst in order to support demands for tangible responses. These violent actions were not only demonstrated in the destruction of oil pipelines but the property of oil companies in Niger delta. In the Eastern states as well, there was a strong demand for the creation of Biafra pioneered by a militant group MASSOB (Movement for the Actualization of the state of Biafra) and recently indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) movement led by Nnamdi Kalu. In other parts of Nigeria, there a number of evidences on how injustices and marginalization in the provision of social amenities

opened the flood gate of political violence.

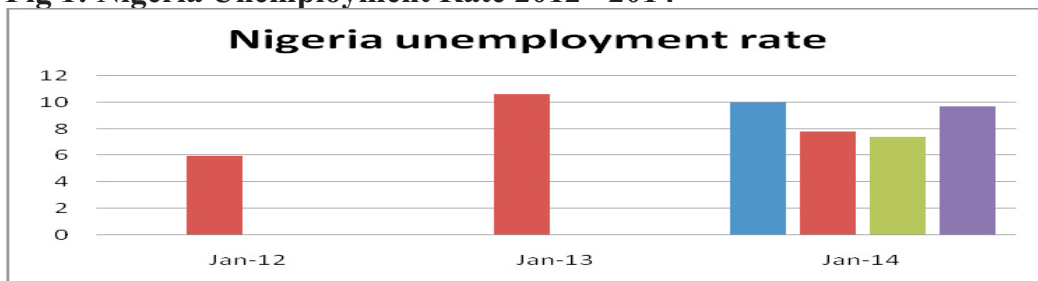
- C. The rate of Unemployment:** the high unemployment rate in Nigeria, triggers political violence. As state enterprises get privatized in the early part of the fourth republic, unemployment increased astronomically among displaced workers and youth as with low education and absolute skills. In March 2003, there was a composite unemployment rate of 10.8 percent as at when the Nigeria labour force was 61 million (Nwokoma, 2005). The chronic shortage of employment opportunities gives the politicians the leverage to mobilize the unemployed youth for a personal and parochial purpose.

In addition, unemployment, many Nigerians are underemployed, or better still exploited because they lack an alternative for a basic living. It is not uncommon to see even Master's Degree Holders earning ten thousand naira a month against the real salary. It is also not uncommon to see Nigeria University graduates becoming bus conductors – all because of frustration and perhaps maintaining family names. Some, too, are Okada drivers. It is because of these odd jobs engaged by this group of Nigerians that Gbenro Adesina

and Femi Ayodele of the News Magazine described them as "The Wasted Generation" (Adesina and Ayodele, 2011). It is also from this group that the dubious politicians usually recruit to do their bid during elections and promised juicy

rewards. Available statistics show that of the unemployed youth turn into trained militant sects and were recruited by politicians to intimidate, harass and assassinate political opponents.

**Fig 1: Nigeria Unemployment Rate 2012 - 2014**



Source: [www.tradingeconomics.com](http://www.tradingeconomics.com) national bureau of statistics,

Nigeria unemployment rate was recorded at 9.7% up from 10% in the fourth quarter of 2013, reaching the highest since December of 2009

**D. Poor and Low Economic Growth in the Country:** this is also considered as one of the primary cause of political violence in the Nigerian state. It is observed that between 1999-2007, Nigeria suffered economic growth rate of 0.8 percent per annum (Nwokoma, 2005) and one major consequence of this economic slow growth is the inability of the government to meet the needs of the citizens and this, however, causes wide spread frustration and disappointment in the country leading to protests.

**E. High Level of Poverty:** although Nigeria is recognized as the richest oil nation in Africa, majority of Nigerians are poor Opanyeni (1975:5) noted that *"It's now becoming evident that oil wealth does not mean an automatic prosperity for the people.... In Nigeria scarcity and wealth are companies"*

Nigerians both in the rural and urban centres find it difficult to feed clothe and house because of poverty. Children of thousands of Nigerians cannot go to school, increasing cost of living to neutralize the purchasing power of individuals and household thereby keeping them below the poverty level. Nigeria today is surrounded by catalogues of poverty which have become endemic in

her rural areas where over seventy (70%) percent of her population including small scale farmers resides (Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2010). There is declining well-being and rising poverty level as the impressive and sustained growth has failed to translate into poverty reduction which is inclusive of growth and development and this observation is substantiated by the significant deterioration in economic prosperity for the citizens, Iwayemi (2012), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP-2014) and (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012), stated that the level of poverty remained high at 65.5% at the national level. Unemployment level in Nigeria is high, for example, unemployment rate rose from 4.3% in 1976 to 6.4% in 1980, rose to 28.0 % in 1986, 28.57% in 2009, (Okigbo, 1989 in Obadan and Odusola, 2010; World Bank Report, 2009; Daily Trust, 2009;), and according to the then Minister of Finance Dr. Okonjo-Iweala, and Chairman of economic team in Nigeria as at then put unemployment rate at 37%, further research put it at 40% and claimed it will rise to 50% by the end of 2013, Ogunmade, (2013).

A study was conducted by a human rights group based in Lagos and it was discovered that 20 million Nigerian children below the age of fifteen are roaming the streets of the nineteen Northern state capitals as beggars. The study showed that in Kano State alone recorded 402,285 child beggars and seven out of every ten acts of violence are

perpetrated by these children (Obasi, 2002).

**F. Arms Build-up: the proliferation of arms is also a constituting factor for political violence.** In the Niger-delta area, for instance, politicians and militant groups acquire deadly weapons with which they use to incite political violence and to protect people who transform themselves into ethnic demagogues for instance Asari Dokubo, the leader of MEND (Movement for the emancipation of Niger Delta). Another example of Arms buildup is the arsenal of weapons built by the Boko Haram group and improvised explosive devices which they detonate at public places.

**G. Inordinate Corrupt and Selfish Desire of Political Godfathers (Godfatherism):** Not all aspirants to political office in Nigeria can rise on their own substantial resources usually necessary to compete in the country's violent and corrupt political system especially if they do not enjoy control over public resources. As a result, in many parts of Nigeria successful candidates are often those who are sponsored by wealthy and powerful individuals known in Nigeria as the "Political godfathers".

Godfatherism is the "States man" that was or still an influential politician who command respect in public because of material possession, wealth or charisma. A godfather can also be seen as a political Hulk who invest on a political Vulture with

the hope that the success of his protégé will translate to his political and economic interest. It is seen as king makers in most cases and all politicians within his area of influence become loyal to him, (Abia, 2008). Often times these Godfathers appear to be untouchables in the political chessboard. Indeed, whenever he sponsors a candidate for an election, it is expected that his candidate must win whether such candidate is accepted by the people or not. In such circumstance, they would do anything to make sure the Godfather's representative wins. Their actions would range from arming his boys, snatching of ballot boxes, and where there is opposition to their actions may result in killing, maiming of oppositions. It is from these actions that oppositions thrive and unnecessary elements take the centre stage.

#### **Nexus between Political Violence and National Development in Nigeria**

Based on the analysis of Political violence in Nigeria, it can, however, be deduced that political violence poses threat to National security. The Nigerian society is getting more and more insecure as a result of the unscrupulous activities of greedy politicians to wield power. More people are getting into crimes and they are getting more ruthless, desperate and deadly (Ukpere and Otto, 2012). Security according to Williams (2008:6) involves the ability to pursue cherished political and social goals. The relationship between the

two variables, which is political violence and National Development within the context of this work, is that National Development is dependent on the absence of political violence to thrive in other words; Political violence negates national development. That is the relationship between political violence and national development based on the effects it has on the economic, social and political well-being of Nigeria which is as well one of the objectives which this research paper seeks to affirm.

#### **Effects of Political Violence on Nigeria's Economy**

The growing rate of insecurity in Nigeria characterized by political undertones since 2007 has significantly affected the Country's economy. Before the Federal government's amnesty programme designed for militants in the Niger Delta region, the oil production and numbers of barrels produced per day, drastically declined and this was largely due to kidnapping and hostage of oil workers in the region thus most capital projects captured in 2007 and 2008 budget were not effectively implemented largely due to shortage of financial resources occasioned by militancy/unrest in the Nigeria. The spate of kidnapping in Nigeria's Niger Delta also resulted in serious economic problems as business men and investors were forced to relocate, (Obi, 2017).

The Boko-Haram activities in Nigeria

gradually changed the economic structure of the North, as the violence persists, the development of the region worsened. The evidence and fast change in indices in form of changing migration patterns from the North to the South, cost of insurance in the North, mass repatriation of funds, and dearth in skilled labour among others speak. Historically, each region in Nigeria compliments each other, what the North lacks in access to the sea, the South provides. The North wields 78 percent of Nigeria's land which supports most of

Nigeria's agriculture (Food, cash crops and livestock) and with the persistence of violence in the North, Nigeria experiences food scarcity as well as increase in prices of foodstuffs as the Northerners' claim the atmosphere is not conducive enough for them to supply. Finally as a result of political violence and other forms of unrest which the country is mired with, Nigeria's recurrent expenditure on security between 2007 – 2011 surpassed that of Agriculture, Education, Health, Road and Construction.

**Table 1 Federal Government Recurrent Expenditure 2007 – 2011 (Naira – Billion)**

CATEGORY	YEAR				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Internal Security	181.3	196.9	221.7	287.4	358.6
Agriculture	32.5	65.4	22.4	29.6	32.5
Education	50.8	164.0	137.1	158.6	162.5
Health	81.9	98.2	90.2	102.6	105.6
Roads and Construction	71.3	94.5	80.6	138.1	140.2

**Source:** Central Bank of Nigeria Annual Report, 2011

From the table, it is clear that Federal government recurrent expenditure on internal security supersedes all other sectors that would have improved the well-being and standard of living which National Development stands for. Expenditure on Agriculture would have contributed more to the GDP (Gross domestic product) of the country; increased expenditure on health would reduce the rate of deaths which is one of the indicators of Human Development Index (HDI).

From the foregoing analysis on the effect of political violence on Nigeria's economy, it is however evident that the only way that Nigeria can realize its goals of having a stable economy is by curbing political violence. Businesses no longer have a stay in our economy due to unrest and just as Clare (1998) rightly notes, businesses have a strong interest in the peaceful security of the countries which they are operating or wish to operate. The unemployment rate is on the increase as well as migration from the



North to the South which causes an economic catastrophe as well.

### **Effects of Political Violence on National Development in Nigeria**

A democratic country is however believed to be one in which power is held by elected representatives. Incessant political killings and explosion of violent ethno-religious and communal conflicts ethno-religious and communal conflicts in Nigeria have eroded the widespread expectation that the inauguration of the civilian administration in 1999 would usher in a democratic dispensation (Omotosho, 2007). Political violence does not only challenge the authority of the Nigerian state as the custodian of the legitimate instruments of coercion but also pose systemic threats to democratic governance. The unconstitutional interruptions through flawed electoral processes and dramatic upsurge in deadly clashes and among the various political parties during the election period have continued to affect the country's nascent democracy. Electoral violence has caused a lot of harm to the democratic stability in Nigeria. An uncontrolled electoral violence has the potentials of truncating democratic stability in a country.

In Nigeria's Fourth Republic there are disturbing evidence of the abuse and manipulation of election finance and political funding. Not only have election financiers and political godfathers impose candidates and practically hijack most

political parties, those in the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) have also created the impression of being above the law (Yagboyaju, 2009), Schori in his explanation on the role of peace and security in the operation of a modern state and sustenance of democracy asserts that;

*It must be realized that the security of the individual is as important as the security of the State and that human security is an essential element of democracy as insecurity of individuals occasioned by poverty, deprivation and social injustice, is a threat to democracy since one of the major reasons of individuals to form states is security” (Schori, 1996:59)*

As long as Electoral violence continues democracy in Nigeria cannot be said to be the government for the people, by the people and for the people and the wishes of the people will be a distant dream as their government lacks accountability, transparency and responsibility.

### **Acceptance of Research Assumptions**

Based on the overall analysis given on the effect of political violence on Nigeria's social, political and economic development it is however pertinent for us to accept our Alternative assumption which posits that political violence negates national development.

### **Ways of Curbing Political Violence in Nigeria**

Political violence in Nigeria has specific characteristics that make its re-occurrence persistence. Below are however the ways of curbing political violence in Nigeria;

- 1. Addressing Unemployment problems:** unemployment is one of the fundamental factors that are responsible for smooth running of political violence activities in Nigeria. With a large population of unemployed people, the idle hands cannot but be the devil's workshop; violence basically is carried out by idle Nigerian Youths or insurgents from neighbouring countries. Therefore creating employment opportunities would reduce the level of political violence in the country as the youths will be engaged in responsible activities (Wale, 2011).
- 2. Addressing Poverty and illiteracy:** this, however, would minimize the level at which people react violently to frustrating circumstances. Poverty in the Niger Delta led to their violent behaviour and mass illiteracy in the Northern Nigeria as well led to their being sensitized on Western education as forbidden (Sunday, 2011).
- 3. Anti-corruption Development:** Corruption affects every facet of life in Nigeria; therefore any meaningful developmental effort must incorporate anti-corruption. It is corrupt nature of

public office holders that makes them want to wield power at all cost, therefore, they engage in all form of violent activities to scare their opponents. It is, however, important to remove the immunity clause for political office holders from the Constitution. The institution of a viable social security regime can help checkmate corruption. Prosecuting former corrupt political office holders could also serve as deterrence.

- 4. Security Sector Reforms:** the police have a crucial role in ensuring law and order in any society, to this effect, they must be well trained, structured, equipped and motivated, and the Nigerian police force likewise needs to be restructured, re-equipped and motivated to play its role in ensuring the consolidation of Nigeria's democracy which is a sign of political development. There is also a need for capacity building for the police and other security agencies in the area of small arms proliferation for the purpose of enabling their operational efficiency. Also increased co-operation between the police and other security agencies like customs and immigration service would also be necessary (Thompson, 2010).
- 5. Communication:** this is the process of sharing and exchanging information between individual groups and potential parties in a conflict situation. Political violence in Nigeria can,

however, be curbed by giving positive consideration to the increasing demand by the people for a national conference as a credible platform for ascertaining prevalent grievances of the diverse ethno-religious groups for possible remediation (Ajayi, 2012).

6. **Ethical re-orientation of persons and institutions:** this, however, can guarantee the establishment and sustenance of national security and eradicate political violence as it would have as its primary goal the redefinition of the value systems, attitudes, beliefs of the human population and the key social institutions and structures guiding national life. This ethical rejuvenation must affect every segment of the society such as the leadership, education industries, state agencies, commerce, economy, social services and infrastructures, political parties and professional unions (Ujomu, 2001). Summarily, it is obvious that governance issues are the bane of national development and political instability, in order to break this cycle of violence, accountability, transparency has to be guaranteed and the people have to be involved in issues that affect their lives.

### **Conclusion**

Conclusively, this study analyses the causes and consequences of political violence on National Development with emphasis on

political violence in Nigeria from 2007–2014. Political violence manifest in acrimony, assault, assassination, intimidation, harassment, maiming and killing, consequently these affect the existing political and social relations in the society. This research reveals that as a result of political violence Nigeria's, economic growth has been negatively affected as it has reduced Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the economy which led to increasing unemployment rate. It also revealed how government current expenditure on internal security surpasses all other sectors due to the high rate of insecurity in present day Nigeria characterized by political undertones. This research paper also reveals how the political violence affects Nigeria's political development as it stands as a bane to viable democracy in Nigeria, it analysis the effect of political violence on social development through the use of youths which inadvertently affects Human Development. However, the only way to fighting political violence in Nigeria is by removing all incentives that propel political violence like unemployment, illiteracy, poverty and corruption to mention but few.

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