

Globalization, Governance, and Social Conditions of Nigerians in post-2023 election period

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Abstract

It is an incontrovertible fact that Nigeria, just as every other nation, exists in a globalized world and its political economy is impacted by activities generated at the international sphere. These activities range from political, economic, socio-cultural, and environmental to religious milieus. This paper reflected on the post 2023 election eco-system in Nigeria and argued that the appalling, deteriorating and dehumanizing social/material conditions of Nigeria cannot be devolved from its integration into the international capitalist system. The paper adopted the dependency theory which argues that the poverty and wealth of nations can be situated in the context of the integration of Nigeria and other Third World countries into the international capitalist system dominated and controlled by the west. The paper utilized data from secondary sources such as journal articles, text books, internet materials, etc. and analyzed using content analytical technique. Analysis of the data revealed that the miss-governance or misapplied neo-liberal policies of the APC led government- much of which have been foisted on Nigerians by Bretton Woods institutions- which serve as global capitalist warehouses- have cascading effects on the social/material conditions of Nigerians manifesting in pervasive poverty, large scale unemployment, corruption, all time high inflation, insecurity and general underdevelopment. The paper recommended amongst other things, a remodeling or outright reversal of some of the neo-liberal policies adopted by the government in order to ease the suffering of the people and improve their social and material wellbeing.

Keywords: globalization, governance, social conditions, election, development

Introduction

Today, like never before, the world has become much more intertwined, interrelated and interdependent. Through advances in information and telecommunication technology, revolution in transportation network and the flow of international capital; people, ideas, goods and services can move across borders with much more ease than was

hitherto possible. As pointed out by Nissanke and Thorbecke (2005), the global economy has witness both quantitative and qualitative increase in the volume and value of international trade and financial transactions. National economies are increasingly linked through international markets for products and factor markets, leading to increased cross-border flow of goods and services, capital, labour, information, communication, technology and management skills. All these conduce to make the world economy ever increasingly integrated. The integration of nations of the world in political, economic and cultural dimensions has tended towards the homogenization of the world. Ihonvbere (2001), noted that “globalization seeks to bring all together in one global economic, social and political structure based on capitalist values and liberal democratic ideas”.

In today’s globalized world, no nation can safely claim to be self-sufficient and self-reliant” the axiom of uneven endowment of resources has naturally given rise to exchange. Exchange therefore becomes a veritable means through which a country consumes what ordinarily she was not endowed with. This exchange is predicated on the basis of mutuality of benefits between or among participants (Wonah, 221:23). Thus, globalization provides unique opportunities and possibilities for interaction between and amongst nations of the world for the redistribution of the world’s resources.

However, concerns have been raised over the potential benefits and risk associated with globalization. For example, it is argued that the integration of Nigeria into the international capitalist system leaves her in a serious disadvantage position. As observed by Johari (2009) the end of bipolarity has resulted in the lopsided distribution of capacities among states. In other words, globalization has heightened inequalities amongst nation-states. There is an asymmetric and unequal trade relation between Nigeria and the developed industrialized countries, such that she remains perpetually dependent on the west for her political, economic and technological development needs. Therefore, Nigeria and other African countries continue to look up to the west for policy direction in order to get out of their development crises hence, the adoption of Western neo-liberal ideas, such as is currently the case with Nigeria, seen as a panacea for national development aspirations, unleashing economic hardships, misery and worsening the social and material conditions of the average Nigerian.

Conceptual prologue

a. Globalization

Globalization is a highly contested concept in social science literature. Its different meanings and varied applications often leave scholars with a lack of consensus on its exact meaning and usage. As Heywood (2007:143 cited in Obo, Omenka and Abunimye, 2017), pointed out, “globalization, is a slippery and elusive concept, and its definition is still being contested, only few terms in modern history have ever been used as frequently as the term yet there is no single definition of it”. Globalization is essentially the integration of economies of the world through the mechanisms of trade and financial flow. Shahzad (2006), regards globalization as the expansion of economic activities across political boundaries of nations. It is characterized by a process whereby social

relations acquire relatively distance less and borderless quantities, so that human lives are increasingly played out in the world as a single place (Baylis, Smith & Owens, 1997). Corroborating the above position, Giddens (1999) opined that globalization is a process leading to the “intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa”. It is a process of intensifying economic, political, social and cultural relations across international boundaries (Akindele, Gidado and Olaopo, 2002). Globalization represents a broad network of economic, socio-cultural and political interrelationships or interconnections and processes that transcend national boundaries. Owugalu (2003) and Ekpe (2007), have provided a more comprehensive and detailed conceptualization of globalization in the following words. Globalization represents a technology driven process which de-emphasizes the importance of national boundaries, while at the same time encourages an unrestricted movement of capital, technology, goods and services across national boundaries, propelled by the industrial economies, multilateral financial institutions transnational corporations (TNCs) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). These institutions referred to above, are the machinery for conducting policies which perpetuate inequality and poverty in the Third World. Consequently, Ihonvbere (2001), referred to it, i.e., globalization as a more liberal or shorthand name for imperialism, domination, exploitation, marginalization and the ultimate reproduction of the injustices, inequalities and poverty that have now become the objective reality of the third world.

b. Governance/good governance

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (1999), governance is a multifaceted process through which citizens interests and fundamental human rights are articulated. It is a methodology geared towards delivery of public good’s purpose of the state. It is thus the administration of public policies and programmes for a given number of people living in any geographical territory recognized by both local and international laws.

The World Bank (1993), conceptualizes governance as a system through which power is exercised in the management of a country’s political, economic and social resources for development. Adegbami & Adepoju (2017) added that governance refers to all the actions and activities of government aimed at achieving good economic and political objectives. Governance, according to Ogundiya (2013), is the means through which the noble goals of the state can be achieved. In addition, governance represents all the systems by which a country is organized, controlled and operated as well as those mechanisms used by the people to hold those at the affairs of governance activities accountable (Governance Institute of Australia, 2022).

UNESCO–IBE, (2022), concluded that governance represents the culture and the environment of the institutions of government, where citizens and other relevant actors interface to regulate public affairs. Governance is thus, aimed at promoting democratic attributes such as the rule of law, inclusiveness, responsiveness, transparency and accountability. Therefore, the presence of these attributes in any given socio-economic formation promotes good governance. As observed by Madhav (2007), good governance

is the performance of all the sectors of the economy from the perception of its recognized actors and beneficiaries. Good governance entails responsibility, responsiveness, accountability and transparency among public officials – both elected and appointed or the governors, to the electorate - the governed, aspirations of the governed, as well as acting in accordance with their dictates (Jega, 2007).

c. Social/material conditions

Social conditions have to do with the living peculiarities of Nigerians. It is an attempt to understand the extent to which Nigerian have access to certain life enhancing facilities such as employment, per capita income, health, education, access to potable water and attainment of high life-expectancy etc. As observed by Udoms and Gogo (2012). The social condition of a given people is dependent on the health of its economy which is influenced by the interface between developments in the local and international milieu.

Methodology

As a qualitative study, the descriptive research design was adopted, focusing on the documentary method of data collection. The documented method, note Leedy and Ormod (2001), is a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of materials for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes or biases. It is a means of collecting data by reviewing existing documents (Bailey, 1994 cited in Abunimye & Adie, 2023). This paper therefore, utilized data mainly from secondary sources such as textbooks, journal articles, newspaper and magazines as well as internet sources, relevant to the study.

Theoretical framework

In order to properly situate and understand the challenges associated with the current existential social/material condition of Nigeria occasioned by its integration into the international capitalist system, the dependency theory was adopted in the analysis of the problem. In the main, dependency theorists, among them Furtado (1965), Dos Santos (1970), Sunkel (1969), Emmanuel (1971), Frank (1970), Ake (1981), Onimde (1982), argued that the dependence of the South on the North is the main cause of the underdevelopment of the former. These scholars maintained that the terms of trade between developed and underdeveloped countries had deteriorated over time because of the exploitative relationship that exists between the two worlds. In general terms, dependency theory is a general analysis of the process of capitalist development of peripheral socio-economic formations and its prevailing mode of analysis focusing on the asymmetric interplay depicted in many different ways including the identification and acceptance of imperialism as the principal adversary (Ndu, 1999, cited in Abunimye & Adie, 2023). It is argued that the prevailing socio-economic and political conditions in peripheral social formations are historically determined. It is first manifested in the incorporation and integration of peripheral countries into the world economy.

As a reaction to modernization theory, dependency theorists reject the view that peripheral countries must jettison their traditions and customs, (which they claim is the

cause of underdevelopment of peripheral states) and imbibe those associated with the west). The modernization adherents claim that the now developed and progressive part of the world was once underdeveloped and that the best strategy to bail underdeveloped countries out of poverty is to accelerate them along this supposed path of developed shared with the west through acceptance of foreign direct investment, technology transfer and closer integration into the world market. Dependency theorists rejected these ideas and rather hold the view that contemporary underdevelopment of peripheral social formations is the result of the exploitative relationship that have characterized the interaction between the poor nations and developed ones from colonial period till the present time. Nigeria remains a dependent peripheral social formation, relying entirely on the metropolitan West for her imports and technological needs. Also, Nigeria's position in international trade reflects asymmetric relation skewed in favour of the west, making her a dumping ground and a laboratory for the experimentation of all sorts of neo-liberal policies.

The utility of the dependency theory to the analysis of this phenomenon takes globalization-intensification of integration and incorporation of peripheral social formations into the global capitalist economy dominated and controlled by the west, as its point of departure. It can therefore, easily be seen that the incorporation of the Nigerian economy into the global capitalist economy with its concomitant asymmetrical trade relations between her and the global north, is the result of the current existential social/material conditions of Nigeria: inflation, insecurity, hunger, etc., is further exacerbated by further attempts to deal with the situation by adopting western neo-liberal policies. Therefore, the post-2023 ecosystem in Nigeria reflects a pervasive influence of western liberal policies on the governance architecture of the Nigerian political economy.

Literature Review

Globalization, Governance, and Social Conditions of Nigerians

There is lack of consensus in the literature regarding the relationship between globalization and governance. This lack of consensus has generated divergent opinions by scholars on the nature, character and context of the relationship between the two concepts. There are therefore, essentially, two perspectives to this debate: those who claim that globalization is indeed, beneficial to governance and those who argue that globalization negatively affect governance. For instance, Saich (2000), argued that globalization negatively affects the quality of bureaucratic governance, and he further argues that a country could face various governance challenges as a result of globalization. A country facing such a bureaucratic challenge, for instance, may have to change some of the structures of governance and enlarge its legal systems due to conflicts that could emerge between local and central governments as a result of inequalities within the globalization-induced economy. Similarly, Kahler and Lake (2003, cited in Wonah, 2021), observed that globalization drains political authority from nation-states, long the dominant form of political organization in world politics. The state's monopoly of familiar governance functions is ending as governance migrates down to newly empowered regions, provinces, and municipalities, up to supranational organizations, and

laterally to such private actors as multinational firms and transnational nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that acquire previously “public” responsibilities. In this view, globalization not only transfers the location of governance but also forces the convergence of state institutions and policies. In exercising their residual authority, states are constrained to look and act alike. Although a transfer of governance to subnational units may increase democratic accountability, these governance changes and the accompanying pressures for convergence are more often seen as a threat to the ability of societies to chart their own democratically determined courses (Kahler & Lake, 2003).

Also, globalization is said to have led to even more unequal distribution of incomes. This is as a result of the relative differentials in the mobility of labor and capital. Dutta and Mukherjee (2015), note that while it may not be easy for labor to cross international borders, because of some conditions attached to travelling, despite the various migration routes, capital can easily do so. It can easily be moved by investors and, in many developing countries, easily evade regulatory or tax regimes. This normally brings about differences and variations in the income gains by capitalists and labor groups, and so globalization has worsened social inequality. And social inequality has been found to have triggered mass grievances and uprisings on several occasions and in some instances snowballed into political instability

Furthermore, technology, which comes with globalization, has its associated challenges to governance. Globalization brought about the emergence of the internet, which facilitates information dissemination and opinions among the people and across the nations of the world. However, the challenges that come with disseminated through the internet are far beyond and difficult for many governments across the world to control. As pointed out by Deibert and Crete-Nishihata, (2012), the internet is becoming extremely difficult for governments to regulate. It has continued to provide a channel of opportunities for criminals, individuals and groups of people, as well as state-backed hackers, among others, to operate and perpetrate illicit activities. And Goldin, (2013) agrees that these activities pose challenges to governance affairs, apart from the fact that they can lead to the breakdown of essential government infrastructural systems, they can also result in financial waste and impose a financial burden on governments. Deibert and Crete-Nishihata, (2012), further averred that the lack of a globally or a centrally managed institution of governance to control illicit activities has created a responsibility gap in governance, which has, for instance, put an extra burden on banks and other financial institutions to develop security for themselves. In essence, private sector actors, especially those in the areas of cyberspace infrastructure, are being constrained and duty-bound to implement forms of regulation and control on behalf of states. This therefore implies that governance affairs and activities, which should ordinarily be handled by governments, have been forced on different actors, including banks, financial institutions and multinational firms. In a similar vein, open, free and unregulated internet devices have brought negative challenges to the people, which inevitably constitute governance challenges. Young people are negatively being influenced by the internet; consequently, affecting ethical values and moral conduct of the society. Adesina, (2012), is at pains to note that young people in Nigeria, like their counterparts in other African countries, are

being exposed to a negative alien culture, including money laundering, cultism, international terrorism, pornography, child abuse, nudity, drug abuse, and the proliferation of arms and ammunition, all these negative vices, he notes, constitutes serious threats to the governance system. The internet also brought about various cases of cybercrimes, in Nigeria. Those who are involved in these dastardly activities are called Yahoo Guys. They have developed various means of defrauding the people, from dubious extortion of money to operating illegal businesses and arranging fake marriages among other crimes. All these are the fallout from globalization, which has continued to constitute challenges to governance in Nigeria (Adeleke & Uche, 2023).

Furthermore, the activities of oil multinational companies, especially in Nigeria's Niger Delta, established as a result of globalization, have contributed greatly to environmental pollution. The activities of these multinationals have heightened the intensity of pollution in the country. Pollution of the environment came through different channels, namely the increase in industry and the exploration, exploitation, production, refining, and transportation activities of the multinational corporations in the oil producing areas of the country, this has become a major source of environmental concern to the government. Beyond this are other challenges, such as pipeline leaks, explosions, gas flaring, and drilling floods, all of which have caused widespread disruption of the natural terrain of the environment. Similarly, it contributes to climate change, food insecurity and health-related problems. In addition, the activities of multinational companies, especially their exploration and exploitation of crude oil, have continued to cause damage to the means of livelihood and sustenance of the masses. Their farmlands have been destroyed, and they cannot engage in fishing activities either due to pollution. In essence, the masses have been cut off from making ends meet, and as such, globalization has added to their suffering, and further widened inequality gaps. The consequence of this is the appearance of agitators and secessionists groups that are currently shaking the unity and existence of the country (Adeleke & Uche, 2023).

Also, as pointed out earlier, despite the many drawbacks of globalization, it is said to have a positive correlation with development. For instance, De Macedo (2001), notes that globalization and governance not only affect each other but also affect the countries' economic performance. He notes that, globalization and governance have influenced the countries' economic strategy, including their decisions on how much, as well as what type of foreign capital should be accommodated? How important is the countries' participation in multilateral trade negotiations or a regional trade zone? How can countries be affected by global challenges, and in what manner can local institutions respond to these challenges? (Braga de Macedo, 2001). Beyond this, globalization has caused economic interdependence among people, and such interdependence of countries and their population has generated further challenges for governments, especially in the area of controlling and regulating their economies. In essence, the integration of economies propelled by globalization has, therefore, necessitated harmonizing national policies for interlinking markets and economies (Esty & Ivanova, 2003). Furthermore, on a positive note, globalization, by enhancing press freedom, has significantly facilitated good governance. This is because the press has continued to play the role of watchdog in

the economy and economic development. In other words, the higher the freedom of the press, the better the governance and administrative activities of a country. It is to this extent that Ahrend (2002) states that freedom of the press helps in monitoring the capacity of society by creating effective checks and balances on bureaucrats' activities, as well as, curbing the political officeholders' excesses which allows for curbing corruption practices. In this sense, globalization, by enhancing press freedom, has contributed positively to good governance. (Adeleke & Uche, 2023). The point has been made that globalization and governance are closely intertwined concepts, one gives rise to, and accentuates the other; resulting in the current existential social and material conditions of Nigerians. For instance, the existence of Nigeria within the broader context of globalization implies that she is not insulated or shielded from the forces of globalization, which in affects public policy positively or negatively.

Discussion of Findings

Existential social and material conditions of Nigerians in the post 2023 election period

The post-2023 election ecosystem in Nigeria points a bleak and gloomy picture of the future of the country. The current situation is characterized by pervasive poverty, misery, hunger, inflation, unemployment, growing insecurity etc. The APC government led by President Ahmed Bola Tinubu, on assumption of office in May, 2023, embarked on a number of economic reforms such as the removal of fuel subsidy, floating exchange rate regime, increase in value added tax (VAT) hike in electricity tariff, etc. which have contributed to the worsening social conditions of Nigerians. Commenting on the impact of these policies on the social conditions of northern Nigeria, Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), a Northern socio-cultural organization, noted that "the policies of the current federal government have continued to make matters much worse, with little indications of needed sensitivity to the precarious existential conditions of Arewa people (The Punch, Nov 21, 2024).

Apart from insecurity in all parts of Nigeria especially in the north, Nigerians now face a serious threat to lives – hunger- orchestrated by the advertent or inadvertent blunders of the government. In 2024 alone, more than 150 lives were lost in stampedes as a result of the struggle for food palliatives.

According to the Vanguard newspaper of 27 December, (2024), "...approximately 40 children perished in a stampede during a carnival in Ibadan, Oyo state. Similarly, 20 residents of Okija in Anambra state lost their lives in a stampede at a palliative distribution event on the same day, over 10 people died in Abuja during a food distribution organized by Catholic Churches for vulnerable populations". The underlying factor behind all these deaths is the fact that there is pervasive poverty and hunger in Nigeria. Nigeria is said to be the country with the second largest impoverished population in the world, after India. Poverty rate in Nigeria stood at 38.9% in 2023, with 87 million citizens living below the poverty line. The figure rose to 40.7% in 2024, (World Bank,

2023). This poverty and hunger have exacerbated the already worsening security situation in the country.

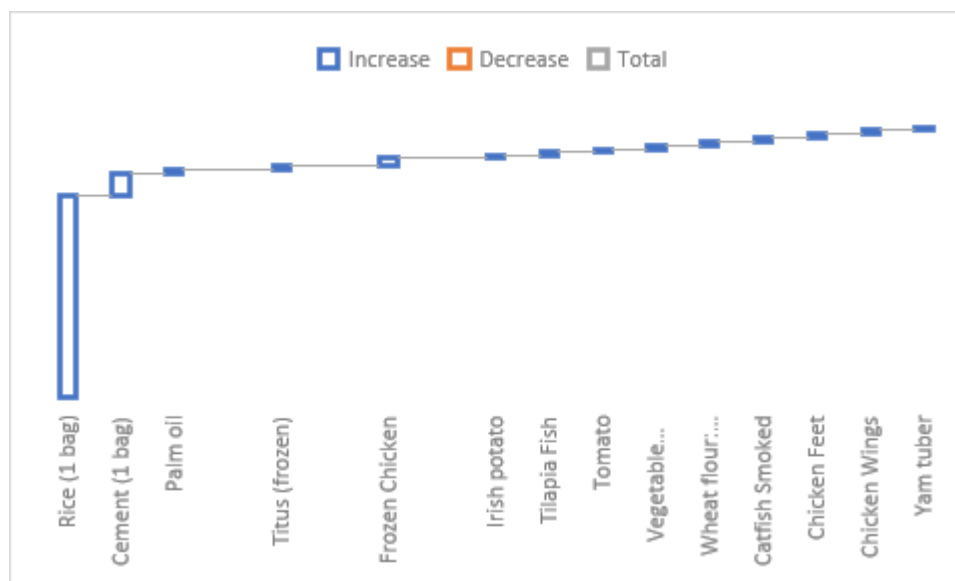
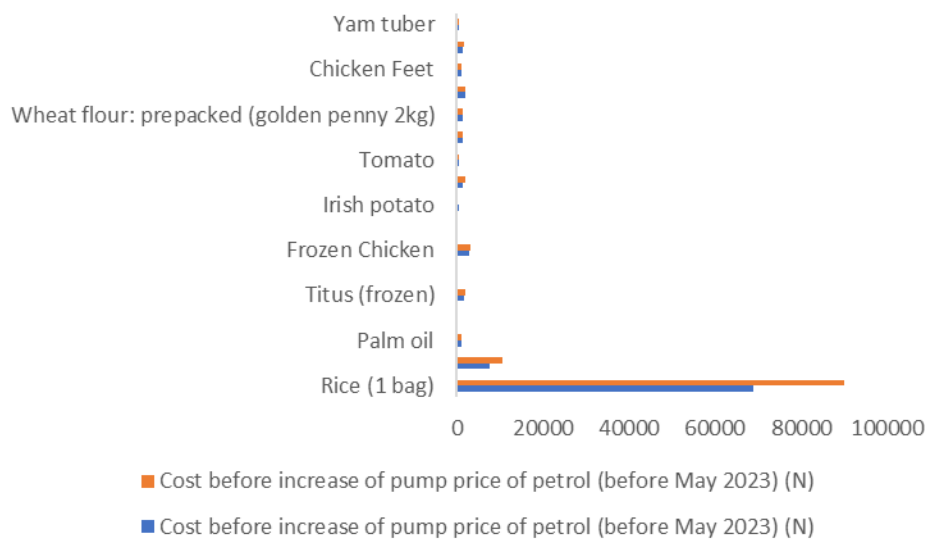
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Table 1 showing the costs of essential goods and services

S/N	Good/Service	Cost before increase of pump price of petrol (before May 2023) (N)	Cost before increase of pump price of petrol (before May 2023) (N)
1	Rice (1 bag)	69000	90000
	Cement (1 bag)	7500	10500
2	Palm oil	1107.14	1,174.20
3	Titus (frozen)	1796.46	1,900.12
4	Frozen Chicken	2853	3,063.37
5	Irish potato	567	2000
6	Tilapia Fish	1276	1,900.12
7	Tomato	485.10	547.28
8	Vegetable oil:1 bottle	1,239.58	1,322.24
9	Wheat flour: prepacked (golden penny 2kg)	1,295.17	1,380.45
10	Catfish Smoked	1,937.26	2,049.64
11	Chicken Feet	1,115.29	1,201.34
12	Chicken Wings	1,428.71	1,547.04
13	Yam tuber	444.69	2,500

Source: Fieldwork, 2025.



Furthermore, consumer price index (CPI) in Nigeria increased from 119.50 points in April to 121.40 points in May 2025. Consumer price index CPI in Nigeria averaged 24.03 points from 1995 until 2025, reaching an all-time high of 121.40 points in May of 2025 and a record low of 1.90 points in January of 1995

Item	Last	Unit	Reference
Consumer price Index	121.40	points	May 2025
Core Consumer Prices	120.8	points	May 2025

Core Inflation Rate	22.28	percent	May 2025
CPI Housing Utilities	130.70	points	May 2025
CPI Transportation	119.00	points	May 2025
Food Inflation YOY	21.14	percent	May 2025
GDP Deflator	346.63	points	May 2025
Inflation Rate YOY	22.97	percent	May 2025
Inflation Rate MOM	1.53	percent	May 2025

Source: Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics

The current social/material conditions in Nigeria today are characterized by pervasive poverty, high unemployment rates, worsening income disparity, insecurity, kidnapping, lack of access to qualitative education and healthcare facilities etc. all these challenges have continued to affect the socio-economic wellbeing of Nigerians, especially in the following areas:

1. Extreme poverty: Nigeria has one of the highest poverty rates in the world, having a huge number of its population living below the international poverty line, struggling to meet the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing and shelter. Consequently, many Nigerians lack personal assets necessary to produce income and wealth (Famoyin, 2007).
2. Unequal distribution of wealth: A significant gap exists between the rich and poor, with small elite controlling a large portion of the nation's wealth.
3. High unemployment: Nigeria's unemployment rate is very high accounting for about 65% unemployment is a major issue leading to social unrest and limited opportunities for economic advancement.
4. Insecurity and violence: Different armed groups including Boko Haram, bandits and other militia groups, operate in different parts of the country instigating widespread violence and displacements

Conclusion and Recommendations

The revolution in information and telecommunication technology (ICT), as well as several decades of interactions amongst nations of the world has resulted in unprecedented intensification of connections, and interactions across national boundaries, providing limitless opportunities for the exchange of goods and services. However, it is doubtful as can be seen from the findings of the study that the benefits of globalization do not accrue equally to both the developed and underdeveloped parts of the world, including Nigeria. The implications of the integration of Nigeria into the global capitalist economy can be seen in the pattern of the (miss) governance architecture. This

disarticulated intensified in the post 2023 election ecosystem. The adoption of certain neo-liberal policies by the government have impacted negatively on Nigerians, manifesting in extreme poverty, growing income, high inflation, poverty and hunger, insecurity and violence across the country.

It has been noted that globalization is a veritable instrument that can guarantee even development for all the members of the 'global village'. However, the countries of the south have not been able to benefit fully from globalization due to bad governance, and their inability to endogenously expand economic activities that can generate the much-needed capital that can 'move' and compete favourably with the countries of the south is a serious obstacle. Leadership is very important in driving globalization as it plays a decisive role in transforming societies. Leadership is capable of engineering society to new heights where ethnicity and other social vices can be reduced if not eliminated (Efemini 2002:22). It is the absence of this charismatic and purposeful leadership that has adversely affected governance, and by extension, development in Nigeria. Globalization fundamentally, is concerned about the market and not the people. Whereas, it is the cultivated people or citizens of a country that need to galvanize, harness resources, make and implement decisions that can foster socio-political development of their society. Market alone cannot engender development when the people are neglected (Wonah, 2021).

To address these challenges, the Nigerian government must begin to interrogate some of these policies with a view to either jettisoning them or adapting them to suite local needs and concerns. Furthermore, the government must begin to think inwards for homegrown solutions to our problems rather than depending on the west for her development needs. There must also be deliberate efforts at developing the agricultural and industrial sectors that would provide employment for the teeming youths and reduce over reliance on foreign aid and charity.

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