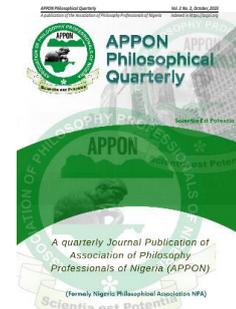# ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY AS A PANACEA TO THE PROBLEM OF SOCIAL INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Dr. Funmilayo A. Ade-Ali

Department of Philosophy, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State

Abstract:

Man is regarded as the measure of all things; the everyday meaning of life is therefore hinged on the existence of man. Unfortunately, human behaviors and attitudes in Nigeria have led to the problem of social insecurity. These human behaviors are predicated on non-commitment to moral principles, lack of mutual trust, and poor social relationship among people in the society. Social insecurity manifests in acts like rape, gangsterism, election fraud, public fund embezzlement, civil war, inter-ethnic conflict and rivalry, etc., which have damaged Nigeria reputation both home and abroad. The paper therefore recommends ethical responsibility as a solution to the problem of social insecurity in Nigeria. Ethical responsibility, if inculcated by all Nigerians will enable citizens to be alert to their civic responsibilities, encourage commitment to moral principles and foster friendly relationship among people.Moreover, the paper advocates the inculcation of ethical responsibility into Nigeria ethical codesof conduct to build morally responsible citizens who will serve as catalyst for social and economic development and in maintaining a positive reputation within the community. The methods employed in the research are expository and conceptual analysis.

Key Words: Ethical Responsibility, Man, Social Insecurity, and Society.

Introduction

Social insecurity is unstable state of affair in the existing social order. It can be related as poor psychological orientation associated with psychological distress. A lot of social vices are responsible for social insecurity in our society \nation today which had led to gross loss of lives

and properties. Such activities include terrorism, suicide bombing, robbery of banks, kidnapping, serial killing, rape, gansterism, internet fraud (yahoo yahoo), election fraud etc as major issues operating at an alarming ratewhich consequently resulted in the killing of innocent citizens and mass destruction of properties. This paper therefore aims to project a panacea for resolving these social vices and to find solution to curb the menace.

The Problem of Social Insecurity in Nigeria

Security as a concept is elusive in nature. Like many other philosophical concepts such as philosophy itself, "security" lacks a uniform definition. Nonetheless, scholars have attempted to define security in various ways. According to Albert[1] security can be defined as the protection of individuals and groups within a state with a view to ensuring the survival of the state. Thus, for Albert, security means states' survival, the ability of the state to protect its citizens and territory from external aggression and invasion.[2] However, according to Macfarlare,[3] security is the protection of individuals' lives and properties against damage, loss or injury from external and internal forces or causes. Sequel to the above-mentioned definitions of security, it can be deduced that security is the sole responsibility of nation-states.[4]

Consequently, insecurity can be defined as the absence of security. Simply put, insecurity is an antithesis to security. There are various forms in which insecurity can suffice. These forms include social insecurity, food insecurity, political insecurity, gender insecurity, health insecurity, environmental insecurity, economic insecurity, financial insecurity, amongst others. Social insecurity can be defined as the presence of fear, threats and other social vices in human society which serves as an impediment to the actualization of potentials, economic insecurity can be defined as the absence of socio-economic growth and development in the society. In our nation Nigeria today, the issue of social insecurity is the other of the day. The fear of what would happen next is the order of the day, man cannot freely move about at his own will without the fear of being kidnapped or disposed of personal belonging or even killed. Kidnapping and paying ransom are the order of the in the country and many youths see it as business as usual to keep them blooming aside internet frauds. Negotiating with the terrorists is now the business of our so-

1. O. Albert, "The Concept of Security in the Context of Urban Crimes and Segregation in West Africa Security, Crime and Segregation in African Cities since the 19th Century", Karthala; FRA, (2003) p. 53-69.
2. Ibid
3. F. Macfarlare, "The Private sector, security in industries in south Africa", Proceedings of the International Conference of the Institute for Defence policy and the Centre for policy studies on Rethinking South Africa Security Architecture, (25 July, Midrand Halfway house 1994)
4. T. Hobbes, , Leviathan, edited by J. C. A. Gaskin, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) p.104

called religious leaders now.

The social insecurity could be said to come into existence as Nigeria as a nation were faced with various socio-political leadership tussles in the history which was coupled with a rising waves of terrorism in the country.[5] During the early years of military rule, large quantities of arms were imported into the country during and after the civil war, some of which were possessed by civilians.[6] Ewatan and Urhie[7] noted further that after the civil war and the return of democracy in Nigeria, these ammunitions were still put to use by the civilians and security personnel's who were still in the possessions of them. This has been one of the underlying causes of social insecurity in Nigeria. The inability of those saddled with the responsibility of recovering the ammunitions to live up to their responsibility due to negligence or purposeful caused so many of these weapons of mass destructions to be available in the society at the risk of citizens. According to Nwabueze,[8] social security entails the collective protection of the individual and social protection against consequences arising from certain social risk of life. However, this has not been the case in Nigeria. Although this problem is not unique to Nigeria alone, social insecurity in Nigeria has reached an alarming rate affecting every facet of a typical Nigerian with no end to this crisis in sight.[9] The indicators of social insecurity in Nigeria include poor social and basic amenities, high rate of poverty and unemployment, ethno-religious conflict, kidnapping, political based violence, low life expectancy, political and systematic corruption, economic-based violence, cybercrime, inequality, social injustice, unfairness and uneven development, weak security system, organized violent groups, porous bordersand all forms of terrorism.

Be that as it may, corruption is one of the persisting problems facing Nigeria as a country. It has been a bane to social and economic development and it has defied attempted solutions to curb despite the measures and campaigns against it through government agencies such as Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).[10] Poverty and unemployment in Nigeria today is soaring very high as there is big gulf between the rich and the poor; it is evident that there is

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5.   A. D. Ali, Security and Economic Development in Nigeria since 1960,Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review, (Kuwait Chapter, 2(6), 2013)p. 1-7.

6.   O.O. Ewatan, &U. Ese, "Insecurity and socio-economic development in Nigeria", Journal of Sustainable Development Studies,(ISSN 2201-4268 5 (1), (2014) p. 42.

7.   Ibid., p.42

8.   B. Nwabueze, Social Security in Nigeria, (Lagos: Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies 1989) p.1

9.   I. O Emmanuel and O. A Emily, "Insecurity crisis in Nigeria: The law enforcement Agents a panacea?",Journal of Sociology and Social Work (June 2019, 7 (1), 2019) p.44-51.

10.   E. OkoroaforChibuzor and U. IhezieRemigius. "Insecurity and National Economic Development Implications for Nigeria's Vision 2020", International Journal of Development and Management Review (INJODEMAR),(8, (6), June 2013), p. 98

no longer middle class, it is either one is rich or poor. There is a symbiotic relationship between (un-employment and poverty which is also synonymous to the relationship between social security and sustainable development.[11] According to Gubak and Bulus,[12] 70% of the population lives below the poverty line. The high rate of unemployment and the human drive for survival has made individuals to engage in illicit acts such as cybercrime, kidnapping, robbery and theft and in the recent time vote racketeering etc.

Another major indicator of social insecurity in Nigeria is inequality, social injustice, unfairness and uneven development. The Nigeria as a nation is grossly challenged with incessant increase in the poor level of human resources management. As a result of this, there is increase in the level of social inequality in some parts of the country which can be said to have contributed to social injustice that has led to the formation of social rebellious groups causing unrest in the quest that their areas are being marginalized at the expense of others which in turn has led to (violent) protest by the group and the creation of armed militant groups, as evident in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and Boko Haram insurgency in the Northern part of Nigeria.

The Concept of Ethical Responsibility
Ethical responsibility can be defined as the social ability to recognize, interpret and act upon multiple principles and values according to the standards, norms in any social society. In every human social set up, we explore various complexities, dynamics and issues which are contingent upon human behavior and shrouded in ethical practices in order to understand the best ways to interpret our societal laws, make decisions and to resolve issues that are somewhat personal, group and societal. Some examples of the ethical responsibility include:

Collaborations, partnerships and team work
Service learning
Volunteerism
Social / political action

All these activities are engineered towards community advocacy in terms communal development through re-engineering of grassroots participations. Social advocacy involves

Leadership roles and trainings
Ethical training certificates
Teaching others, conducting trainings, and teaching workshops.
Development of policies, practices, standards criteria and organizational mission.
Exploring various dilemmas of unethical issues and solutions.

Questions to consider about ethical responsibility are: How have I handled a situation in an ethical or unethical manner? How did it challenge me? These

11. H. Gubak Daniel and K. Bulus, "National security challenges and sustainable development in Nigeria: A critical analysis of the Niger Delta region", Global Journal of Political Science and Administration, (6, (4), September 2018) p. 32-50.
12. Ibid., p. 33

and many more will help in demonstrating and re-orient an understanding of a range number of principles, standards and values involved in making ethical decisions and the application of knowledge to various problems in the society. That is, we should always examine our actions and inactions to checkmate our decisions in anything that has to do with the interest of others.

To this end, Socrates affirms that "an unexamined life is not worth living".[13] This is in tandem with the need for man to always examine and query his or her action whether it is in line with lay down moral principle in the society. In philosophy, moral and ethical responsibility is the status of morally deserving praise, blame reward, or punishment for an act or omission performed or neglected in accordance with one's moral obligations.[14] The term 'moral responsibility' covers the acts of having an ethical obligation and the fulfillment of the criteria for deserving blame or praise. We are praised when we do something worthwhile / morally significant and blame or even punished when we do unethical or wrong action or omission. The role of philosophers in this contemporary time is not to apportion blames but to critically and effectively act

as moral agents. Our various attitudes should be engineered towards individual's ability to make moral judgments based on the notion of knowing right and wrong and be held accountable for these actions.[15] The moral agents have the capability to reflect upon their situations and to form intentions about how they will act, in order to carry out the action for its consequence.

Be that as it may, ethical responsibility is synonymous to ethical obligations. That is, what is expected of every reasonable human being to possess in order to promote equity and smooth progress in thesociety. Ethical obligation is the moral requirement to follow a certain course of action.[16] That is, things to do or not to do. Therefore, ethical obligations are set of "ought to" standards that define a moral course of action and draw a line between rights and wrongs. In every human race, ethical principles of responsibility and accountability are required to foster genuine compliance with the code of conducts, norms, values of such society in order for steady progress and development.

Responsibility is an ethical concept that refers to the fact that individuals and groups have morally based obligations and duties to others and to larger extent

13. E. Stumpf, "Knowledge", Philosophy: History and Problems,. (U.S.A.: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc 1994) p. 24
14. R.B. Klein, Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modelling, (2nd Ed.), (New York: Guilford, 2005)
15. A. S. Hornby, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, (Oxford University Press) p. 953
16. H. Thoreau, David, "civil Disobedience", Reprinted in Civil Disobedience in Focus, edited by Hugo A. Bedau, (New York and London: Routledge) p. 28-48

ethical and moral codes, standards and traditions. To be more specific, responsibility refers to more than just the primary function of a role; it refers to the multiple facts of that function which includes both processes and outcomes, the consequences of the acts performed as part of that set of obligations. A responsible person is seen as one whose job involves a predetermined set of obligations that need to be met in order for the job to be accomplished. Aristotle opines that moral / ethical responsibility grew out of an ability to reason, awareness of action and consequences and willingness to act free from external compulsion. This is to say that a moral agent as an ethical responsibility rooted in ethical thinking. A person who reason and evaluate his action based on lay down principles, societal standards and must be ready to give account of his stewardship or prepare to give an explanation, justification to stakeholders for his judgments , intentions and actions. A key part of ethical responsibility is finding ways to minimize any negative social impacts along the line of ones operations. This may imply sourcing to avoid anything that could result in harms to the lay about principle or norms, standard of the social group / society.

Furthermore, ethical responsibility entails protecting the environment, social norms and values of the society both locally and globally.

Ethical Responsibility as a Panacea to the Problem of Social Insecurity in Nigeria

Ethical responsibility is a solution to the problem ravaging the social insecurity in Nigeria. If every man can take up his social responsibility of being his brother's keeper then the society would be a peaceful abode for all. Social responsibility is what defines man's character. When one knows that something is ethically wrong and one is able to shield oneself from committing it then such person is said to be ethically responsible. The unethical behaviors ravaging our society in Nigeria would have been abated if everyone is harkened to be responsible and live decently. The social vices such as corruptions in high places and offices, kidnappings, killings, embezzlements of public funds, etc., would not have been the order of the day if we apt to the clarion call of social responsibility. Ethical responsibility is the way out of these menaces ravaging our nation. It is our collective duties to live uprightly and ethically within the framework of the norms in the society for the benefit of all. Aristotle considers it a fact that we praise and blame people with respect to their virtues and blame.[17] To this effect, he believes that virtues are the character dispositions that are praiseworthy and of paramount effect to the society. He argues further that what makes these dispositions virtues is that they are directed towards the intermediate in action. Aristotle draws the connection

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[17.] S. Bobzein, Determinism, Freedom and Moral Responsibility: Essays in Ancient Philosophy, (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2021) p.55

between virtues and vices, praise and blame. To him, positive value is nobility, goodness, fineness, worthy of any man to be acclaimed responsible and contribute to the social and political development of his society; while he considers negative value as shameful, wickedness and bad.[18] In this sense, moral responsibility plays a vital rolein controlling social insecurity in any society. Since all action in accordance with choice is voluntary, we can make explicit a second implicit conclusion in Aristotle's argument. If a person is morally responsible for an action, this is a necessary and sufficient condition for moral appraisal of that person for such action.[19]

To this end, the only surest way out of social insecurity in Nigeria society is taking responsibility for our actions and be morally guided. One should know that unguided principles and vices will only bring shame and bruise our dignity as man and bring shame into our society. The Yoruba people believes that if a man should steal once and robe himself with fine linen such person will not be respected in the society because of his previous unethical action, *bi eniyanbajalelekan, to wa da asoaranbori, aso ole lo da bora*. This is apt for individual and collectively corporate organization to shun any act that can tarnish ones image in the society and equally embrace that which will promote our societal dignity and bestowed honor upon us. For instance, there was a scenario

that played out just recently that a very trusted person planned and executed a kidnapping case against her boss, even killed the boss after taken lump sum of money. She got away with that because no one ever suspected her for such gruesome act of wickedness but was caught when she and her accomplices planned to kidnap the wife and son of the late boss again. In such a case, the woman in question has lost her ethical morale by engaging in such atrocious behavior. In life, everyone needs to take up responsibility of being our brother's keeper.

Another way to curb the menace of insecurity in our society is for our leaders to be prompt in their responsibility and not bring chaos to the citizens and the society in their quest for power. The quest for political powers create unnecessary quest for fame and greed which premediate corrupt practices in the society. If our leaders could come out clean or live a virtuous principle of equity and put an adequate measure to forestall any forms of corruption then there will be reduction or total eradication of social vices among us. This non commitment to social and moral principles endears people to commit crime in the society. Government should provide adequate social amenities such good roads, electricity, pipe borne water and give good job opportunity for its citizens. It is said that "an idlemind is the devil workshop", it follows that when someone does not have job that engages and

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18.   Ibid., p.55
19.   Ibid., p.128

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provides food for him such person can easily be lured to commit any crime that can tarnish his person and that of his community. Although, there are cases where people who are well to do also commit crime that are even worse than that of poor but credible people. The level of poverty in the society has seen as the cause of most of the social crimes recorded in every society. Let us take a clue from the just concluded electioneering in Nigeria; there was great record of malpractices and inducement in the name of vote buying. The economy in the recent time plays a vital role in such crises as people find it difficult to meet their daily needs. The gleeful politicians used such situation to their own advantage. Many people could not have said to freely exercise their franchise. It is on this note, that this paper is vehemently calling on our leaders to adhere to their responsibilities in other to forestall adequate measure to curb corruption and insecurity in the society.

Conclusion

The social insecurity in Nigeria can become a thing of the past if we incorporate ethical value into our social living. Let every man be ethical conscious in our daily activities and human endeavors. Our outward appearance must be in tandem with our human behavior to promote an ideal social living which fosters harmonious living. It is evidence that man is the measure of all things therefore; man relationships with other man should bring about peace and tranquility. Our social responsibilities should gears towards helping one another in achieving their goals in life and to uphold social stability. Ethical responsibility is a gamut for social stability and moral living if well embraced will channel our ways and manners of handling social situation in an ethical way. If properly incorporated; it will give healthy relationship and give us a new re-orientation about human standards and principles that will foster adequate development.

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