

GOVERNANCE, SECURITY AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN THE SOUTHEAST GEO-POLITICAL ZONE, NIGERIA

Elechi, Felix Aja

Department of Political Science, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki

Etea, Etea Awa

Department of Public Administration, ESUT Business School Enugu

&

Mbanusi, Emmanuel Chukwuemeka,

Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, University of Agriculture
and Environmental Science

Abstract

Governance is politics in action and because it is a crucial determinant of authoritative allocation of resources such as public goods in a country or region. The southeast region of Nigeria is one that is endowed with different economic, natural and human resources which can be exploited for mutual benefits. Also, the existence of industrial clusters, state-owned public enterprises, and mineral resources which constitute considerable sources for revenue generation in the different states of the region should have been strong bases for economic cooperation among the states. This has not been the case as there has been serious disunity among the political leadership and major stakeholder and also a rising level of insecurity within the region that has paralysed economic activities and posed a serious challenge to governance. This paper examined how the intertwining challenges of governance and security has impacted on the need for economic cooperation among the Southeast states in order to drive development. Methodologically, the study employed secondary sources of data gotten from literature assessment on our subjects of inquiry. The state fragility theory guided our discourse in the paper; while findings amongst others revealed that; failure of the political class within the southeast to form united block and pursue economic integration and development of the Southeast region has seriously affected negatively the development of the region; The insecurity in the region is as a fallout governance failure by the Governors and the political elites of the five Southeastern states who have failed to address the crisis of development within the region. The paper recommends that; there is need for the leadership of the Southeast to form a united front through cooperation in the areas of governance, economic and policy making and implementation that are geared toward the development of the region. Also there is need for a united stand and common voice by the leadership against the rising levels of insecurity, as this will create a secure environment that will in turn engender development in the region.

Keywords: Governance, Economic Cooperation, Security, State Fragility Theory Southeast Leadership

Introduction

Governance is politics in action and because it is a crucial determinant of authoritative allocation of resources such as public goods in a country or region. Nigeria is the largest country in Africa both in population and economy with an estimated population of over 200 million people with enormous potential and undoubtedly, good access to skills, fertile land, mineral resources capital and technology, and a favourable geographic location, with a GDP of \$488 billion and a GDP per capita of \$2,688 (National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria, 2014).

The southeast region of Nigeria is one that is endowed with different economic, natural and human

resources which can be exploited for mutual benefits. Also, the existence of industrial clusters, state-owned public enterprises, and mineral resources which constitute considerable sources for revenue generation in the different states of the region should have been strong bases for economic cooperation among the states. This has not been the case as there has been serious disunity among the political leadership and major stakeholder and also a rising level of insecurity within the region that has paralysed economic activities and posed a serious challenge to governance.

The integration of the Igbo speaking parts of the then Eastern Nigeria was achieved by the Igbo State Union, through its structures and activities, which provided all the necessary socio-economic, cultural and political binding force to integrate and propel the Igbo in an unprecedented fashion in all spheres. However, economic disorganization, the burden of surrender and 'defeat' that occurred as a result of the Civil War coupled with the creation of states and the six geopolitical zones, curtailed seriously the ability of the Igbo to unite as they used to before the war. Decades of out migration by South Easterners in search of opportunities has left their homeland unattended to, and denied it the investment of the energy of its youth, which has been exported elsewhere (Okoye, 2017).

The Southeast region have suffered from long term marginalization in the allocation of Federal investments; a region avoided by its indigenes and foreign investors alike mainly because of infrastructure failure and lack of opportunities for employment and leisure, which heightens insecurity and scars away domestic and foreign visitors and investment. Currently, effort at regional integration in the Southeast is primarily driven by trade, investments and tourism. There is no doubt that increasing the level of foreign direct and domestic investments, especially in strategic infrastructure, commercial and knowledge intensive digital sectors would help the zone (Okoye, 2017), but the government of the states within the region must be seriously involve in providing not only the environment but also the needed and required support.

The desire and calls for the Igbo to re-invent their pre-war unity and integrate for progress has been on since the war ended, and many see it as an antidote for the zone's political and economic backwardness. Despite numerous and resounding calls by think tanks, socio-cultural groups, conferences, and individuals for integration in the Southeast, little or nothing has come out of it. The pervading apathy has frustrated some of the governors who wanted to do something about it, but failed to get the cooperation of their colleagues (Okoye, 2017). Deriving from the above, this paper examined how the intertwining challenges of governance and security has impacted on the need for economic cooperation among the Southeast states in order to drive development. Methodologically, the study employed secondary sources of data gotten from literature assessment on our subjects of inquiry.

Conceptual and Theoretical Review

2.1 Leadership

Leadership is a necessary feature of government and governance, a weak leadership leads to government failures, while effective leadership is a requisite of success for any government. Good leadership ensures prosperity for their people in the long run; while bad leadership engenders failure or catastrophe. For Northhouse (2013) and Riggio and Murphy (2003) cited in (Onolememen, 2015), leadership is seen as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal, or accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Good leadership is important and fundamental to the success of organizations (Grint, 2005).

2.2 Governance

Governance has become an essential concept in the union of democracy, security and development with core elements which include; effectiveness, transparency, inclusiveness, accountability, efficiency, equity and rule of law (Bryden & Chappuis, 2015), thus the quality of governance determine the value of state affairs and the development of a state can be hindered by insecurity. World Bank Institute (2012) cited in (Coker & George-Genyi, 2014), noted that governance refer to the way power is exercised in the management of the country's economic and social resources to the development of a society. In addition, Ndehfru (2007) conceptualized governance as essential process through which the lives and aspiration of the entire citizenry are collectively pursued by purposeful and orderly strategies and policies, for the bringing to fruition their maximum potentials.

Governance is seen as the act of governing which depicts the process of supervising the achievement of national or organizational goals. In other words, governance is what a “government” does (Orji, 2012). One of the major functions of governments includes the provision of basic public goods and the provision of public infrastructure and protection of lives and properties of the people residing in their territory. For instance, security is a major public good that in most cases, the governments must deliver. This has made the provision of security to become an important benchmark for measuring government performance (Ukiwo & Chukwuma, 2012).

Otu (2012) noted that there is a deeply interconnected link between governance, security, peace and stability. The southeastern states of Nigeria since 1999 become an epitome of bad governance. The governments are expected to provide basic public goods which include among others security that has do with the protection of lives and properties and the provision of public infrastructure of the individuals residing in their territory. The implication of this is that one of the key benchmark for measuring government performance is the provision of adequate security for all who dwell within the sovereign territory. Concepts such as “strong”, “weak”, “failed”, “collapsed” state has been used by analysts to describe and rate the capacity of a state to ensure the protection of its people especially against social disempowerment, economic impoverishment, physical danger, and other threats to their wellbeing (Orji, 2012).

Jega (2007) cited in Alozie (2017), observes that in order to harness and develop natural resources as well as meet the basic needs of the people; there is need to ensure good, responsive, responsible, and accountable governance. In other words, governance is aimed at touching people's lives in positive and concrete ways which requires the establishment of a broad consensus especially among the elites and major stakeholders that will incorporate and empower and encourage the people to be co-partners in the development process and national transformation. This can be realized through a strategy of self reliance which entails that the citizens are not just an end, but means of bringing about all-round development (Ake, 2001; Alozie, 2017).

In their report, the World Bank Group (2011) noted that governance can be seen as the way in which power is exercised through a nation's economic, political, and social institutions. In other words, governance is the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised for the common good with the political leadership playing a major role by exercising power. This includes the following characteristics as outlined by (Onolememen, 2015):

- The processes by which those in authority are selected, monitored and replaced.
- The capacity of the government to effectively manage its resources and implement sound policies.

- The respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.

2.3 Security

Security is seen as the feeling of safety from harm or danger, that is, it has to do with the defense, protection and preservation of values, and the absence of threats in the process of acquiring values (George-Genyi, 2013). For Adeleke (2013), security is seen as freedom from threat or violence which could lead to loss of lives and properties. Deriving from the above, security can be seen as a situation where people are free from all forms of threat or fear to their lives and valuables (properties). In other words, security means that citizens are free to go about their everyday life without fear or threat to their lives and livelihood in any part of the country. The UNDP (1994), in its report noted that security has to do with protection from hidden and hurtful disruptions in everyday activities of individuals or groups both at homes, offices or communities. The implication here is that security is a situation of being secure and safe; that is a state of being safe from threats such as disease, hunger, among others. The above reminds us of the vital role of the government in the provision of security.

In the same way, Ogunleye, Adewale, Alese and Ogunde (2011), cited in (Nwokwu & Ogayi, 2021), argued that security include all mechanisms that are put in place to protect and safeguard the citizens and resources of a country against sabotage and violence. The failure to protect the citizens from any of the identified components above is an indication that there is no adequate security of lives and properties; therefore, the quest to guarantee security must ensure safety for the people and the environment (Nwokwu & Ogayi, 2021).

Security is important in the protection of human rights which essential to the livelihood of people and remains the fulcrum of government responsibility that is key for social and economic development (OECD, 2005). Security is freedom from danger and threat to a nation's capability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interest in order to improve on the well-being of its people (Umaru et al, 2015, cited in Saleh, 2021). For Albert (2003), security involves state survival and the protection of lives of the people in the state. The implication of the above is that the sovereignty of a nation state is determined by the capacity of the state to protect her citizens and resources against attacks, both within and outside the territory of the state (Ezeajughu, 2021).

2.4 Economic Cooperation

Economic cooperation is a part of international cooperation which engenders the conditions that help to facilitate trade and financial integration through the implementation of actions with the purpose of obtaining economic benefits in the medium and long term. Economic cooperation among regions within a country, and states has always lead to cost reduction of trade, improved availability of goods and services and gains in efficiency that lead to greater purchasing power parity among the citizens. It is beneficial as it tends to promote commercial harmony through the elimination of barriers in areas such trade, infrastructural deficits, multiple taxations, security and governance, and contribute significantly to national development.

2.5 Southeast Geopolitical Zone

The southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria is made up of five states, namely, Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo, with eighty-five Local Government Areas (LGAs), and a land area of about 40,000 km² and a 2020 estimated population of 40 million people dwelling in over ten commercial cities and large towns. The zone has a density of 400/km² which is spread over mangrove, rain forest and savannah vegetations. South East Nigeria could support a variety of products and muster a large consumer demand. Population density in the zone is highest in the country, which means a large reservoir of potential for both production and consumers. The population of the zone is under-estimated in Nigeria's National censuses, and it is considerably scattered in the 'domestic Diaspora' in the West, North and South South (Okoye, 2017).

The zone is also known for its commerce and trading activities with a predominance of micro, small and medium indigenous industries that are into manufacturing, fabrication and agro-allied produce. Agriculture which is the mainstay of economic activities thrives very well in the area because the zone is endowed with arable land. Yam, cassava, rice, cocoyam, maize and cash crops such as oil-palm, rubber, cocoa, banana and various types of fruits are the main food crops grown in the zone. Solid minerals and natural resources in rich deposits such as crude oil, natural gas, bauxite and iron ore, sand stone, lignite, kaoline, clay, coal, tin, columbite, etc. are all found within the zone in large commercial quantities (Asita, 2022). The zone has the potential to attract investments in the following areas:

- i. Agro-allied industries; which include cassava starch and flour as well as fruits and vegetable canning;
- ii. Textiles; which include Cotton Socks, Fishing nets and Mosquito nets;
- iii. Industrial Minerals/Quarrying; which include Glass industry, Table ware, Aggregate plant including stone crushing plants;
- iv. Plastics Industry; which include Plastics manufacture, Bottles, flask, cans, tubes and bags tiles; and
- v. Chemical Industry; which include Polyethylene, Explosives, Self-Adhesive Tape, Pulp and paper.

The Southeast zone has a huge reserve of natural resources and sits strategically as the connecting bridge between Northern Nigeria and the South South. Also homogeneity and common history of the population makes for easier marketing of heritage/cultural endowments, with a highly entrepreneurial population waiting for incentives and opportunities to be activated (Okoye, 2017). Few industrial clusters (automotive manufacturing, automotive and machine tools manufacturing, garments/apparels and leather/shoes, technical services, film making (Nollywood), beverage making) are already an established parts of the zone, such as Nnewi, Onitsha, Aba etc., with Aba in Abia State being described as the 'SME capital' of Nigeria. The Southeast has been associated with a general multicultural tolerance of the indigenes and the relative near absence of spontaneous and violent sectarian conflicts (Okoye, 2017).

3. Theoretical Framework

The discourse of this paper is anchored on the state fragility theory which argued that a fragile state has weak capacity to carry out basic governance functions, and lacks the ability to develop mutually constructive relations with society (Jackson & Rosberg, 1982; Migdal, 1988; Gros, 1996; Fukuyama, 2004; Kaplan, 2008). Fragile states are more vulnerable to shocks (both internal and external), such as economic crises or natural disasters. States are said to be fragile when state structures lack political will and capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard

the security and human rights of their population' both in peacetime or war, especially when faced with natural or manmade disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic (OECD, 2007; OECD, 2012).

This approach justifies our discourse of the Nigerian state which has failed in her efforts to address the yearnings and aspirations of the citizens, especially in the Southeast. In addition, the institutions of the Nigerian state have only succeeded in creating and sustaining conditions of poverty, inequality, stagnation and underdevelopment, hence the lack of trust in government within the southeast zone. Also, the inability of the government of the five states in the Southeast to cooperate among themselves in addressing the economic, governance and security challenges facing them, has continue to portray them as being weak and fragile.

4. Governance, Security and Economic Cooperation the Southeast

4.1 Governance and Security in the Southeast

The people of southeast are historically known for their “Ubuntu philosophy”, which is a sense of collectivity and brotherhood. This philosophy is expressed in common slogans such as, 'onye aghala nwanneya' (which means no relative should be abandoned or left behind), Nwanne di na mba', and so on. The people of the southeast are known to be involved in progressive self-help development projects. The Igbos have always looked forward to the end of the year when they join their kith and kin at home without fear of either being robbed, kidnapped, molested, raped or defrauded in any manner (Otu, 2011; Otu, 2012). This is no longer so as all the types of security challenges mentioned above are currently bedeviling the region.

In South East Nigeria in particular, the spate of kidnappings and other high profile crimes in the southeast such as; armed robbery, kidnapping, ritual killings, advance fee fraud (419), bribery and corruption, youth restiveness and political thuggery and violence. These have become a major threat to the people of the region (Out, 2003). Criminal gangs and syndicates have stalled social and economic activities as they raided homes, markets, banks, churches and social events such as burial and marriage ceremonies in the region. The security situation in the zone has become a serious challenge to state agencies who find it difficult to arrest the situation. The state security agencies appear to have failed in their efforts to contain the rising level of insecurity in the southeast, and this has forced inhabitants of the region to seek alternative measures to protect themselves (Ukiwo & Chukwuma, 2012). The poor security infrastructure in the region is as a result of the marginalization of the region by the Nigerian state. This situation has given rise to a serious advocacy for a president of Igbo extraction in recent years, and has also promoted the tendency to believe that region's woes are externally influenced or manipulated (Ukiwo, 2012).

4.2 Separatist Insurgency in the Southeast

There have been separatist agitations in Nigeria before and after independence and the indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) is only one of such numerous groups that have been agitating for the independent of the southeast region of Nigeria and form the independent nation of Biafra. This has led to many clashes between members of IPOB and Nigerian security agencies. In 1967, leaders of the Eastern region declared an independent state of Biafra, which led to a brutal civil war and the death of about three million people. The IPOB group has been accused of attacking government offices, prisons, homes of politicians and homes of community leader (Aliyu, 2021). These accusations have been denied by the IPOB which claimed that their militant arm known as Eastern Security Network (ESN) operations were mainly aimed

at defending local communities from armed herders and bandits instead of fighting the Nigerian government (Chidi, 2021; Asita, 2022).

4.3 Economic Cooperation in the Southeast

The pre-civil war enabling organizational structure, the organizing principles and strategies of South Easterners were terribly shaken by the fallouts of the war, and this has spiraled into temporary self-doubt, self-negating stereotyping and so on, but nobody can deny that the natural entrepreneurial instincts, the resilience and determination of the South Easterner remain potent today, waiting to be optimally ignited again (Okoye, 2017). The Igbo State Union was actually a socio-cultural platform for regional economic integration of the Igbo, which we have failed to reinvent after the War and the balkanization of the Igbo home land into several states (Okoye, 2017).

The development potentials of south east Nigeria are manifested in the existence of industrial clusters, state-owned public enterprises, and mineral resources which constitute considerable sources for revenue generation in the different states (Agbo, 2009). Essentially, the industrial clusters which abound in the south east geopolitical zone include the furniture cluster in Enugu, the spare parts cluster in Nnewi, Nnewi Automotive Cluster, Onitsha Plastic Cluster, Aba Leather Cluster, Umuahia/Aba Garment Cluster, etc. A survey of industrial establishments in the south east in 1995 credited the geopolitical zone with about 18% of all establishments, second only after the South West which had 45% (Agbo, 2009). The south east economic landscape was dotted with industrial clusters and enterprise hub which formed the huge potentials for enterprise development, wealth creation, industrial growth, and employment generation. Although these economic potentials exist in the geopolitical zone, there is low level of partnership among the states towards collective development initiatives (Eboh, Okoye, and Ukwu, 2006).

Similarly, a lot of state-owned enterprises are largely neglected, wasting and decaying beyond the capacity of independent states to revitalise (BusinessDay Newspapers Report, cited in Agbo, 2009). Some of these enterprises include the steel factory in Enugu, the Nkalagu cement factory in Ebonyi, Anambra Vegetable Oil Products, and Imo technological potentials, Anambra Vegetable Oil Products Limited (AVOP), Anambra State Livestock Products Limited, Golden Guinea Breweries, Premier Breweries, Ikenga Hotels, Aluminium Products Limited, Premier Cashew Industries, Imo Hotels, Adapalm Limited, Standard Shoe Industry, Avutu Poultry, Amaraku Power Station, Ezinnachi Clay Industries, Resin Paint Mbaise, Ikwo Salt factory, the Nkaliki Hatchery, Ebonyi Hotels, and Ezzamgbo Building Materials Company, in Ebonyi state. These state-owned enterprises are decaying because of neglect (Nwogbaga, 2011). Agbo (2009), cited in Nwogbaga (2011) argued that the economic resources are either under-exploited or completely left unexploited while state-owned enterprises are depreciating. These are partly blamed on the isolated development efforts of the different states in the south east.

4.4 Southeast Leadership and Economic Cooperation in Southeast

The Igbo have worked individually and corporately to recover lost grounds since the end of the civil war. There was a significant economic recovery in the despite unfavourable policies and politics being played by the central government by the end of 1970s. As noted by Brautigam (1997), even when the country as a whole was faced recession with manufacturing output falling below record level, the South East rather experienced economic boom and prosperity in the 1980s. Nnewi, Onitsha, Aba and Enugu emerged as industrial hotbeds due to the presence of extant social capital and the capacity for innovation and

adaptation which produced low transaction costs. Another factor which played a key role was the import substitution industrialization commitment engaged by the political elite of the then Anambra and Imo States (Ukiwo, 2012).

It has been argued the Southeast has not been getting its fair share of the Nigeria patrimony (Ukiwo, 2012). Federal government-owned health facilities are scarce while there is the presence of high number of private health facilities which has made the people in zone to depend more on private initiatives for healthcare delivery in the social sector and also less kilometer of federal roads network in the Southeast. The high neglect of the zone by the federal government has made the zone to be the friendly to do business with as the states in the zone are ranked lowest on the business environment aggregate score.

The failure of the leadership of the Southeast to build strong economic ties among themselves revolve around issues such as lack of the 'enabling environment' encapsulated in issues ranging from; inappropriate/poor government promotional and regulatory strategies, failed infrastructure, social discontent/insecurity, dented ethical values to poor sense of service excellence among others (Okoye, 2017). The struggle for power among the elite has engendered the tendency for every new administration to discard the policies of the previous administration no matter how good the policies are. While some of the reasons for such actions was to dismantle and devalorize unfriendly patronage networks and political structures of the previous administration, other reasons were aimed at creating new patronage networks and dividends for the new governor (Ukiwo, 2012).

There has been a consistent downward slide of development indicators in the Southeast placing it behind other zone in the southern part of the country in the areas of inequality and poverty. Of concern is the poor performance of the zone which is quite different from the historical past in the areas of human capital development, educational attainment, industrialization and all round growth within the zone. The struggle for power among the political elite coupled with the devastating deployment of terror which threatened the security of lives and properties has ended up crippling the good governance and has further undermined the security of lives and properties in the southeast region (Ukiwo, 2021).

4.5 Establishment of a Joint Entrepreneurial Development Board in the Southeast

The states government of the Southeast can come together and help develop the entrepreneurial skills through the establishment of a joint entrepreneurial development board in order to encourage their people who are mostly engage in commerce. Entrepreneurs of Igbo extraction have been proven to be enthusiastic, visionary and result driven and oriented. This has constantly made manifest in their undertaking of high business risk (Orugun & Nafiu, 2014). These entrepreneurs have continued to triumph within the business environment in Nigeria not minding the absence of suitable policies and programmes for growth. It is not gainsaying the fact that in Nigeria, the people in the urban and rural areas heavily depend on the initiatives, inventions and efficient outcomes of the Igbo entrepreneurs. The Igbo entrepreneurs have not only dominated the Nigerian business environment, but their dominance has extended beyond national boundaries to countries such as Cameroon, Ghana, South Africa, Mali, Gambia, China, etc. (Orugun & Nafiu, 2014). The effect of the Igbo entrepreneurship have not been felt back home due largely to the failure of the states government to pay keen attention to this sector and help develop it.

4.6 Joint Establishment of International Development Fund for Southeast Development

There is need to establish a joint the International Development Fund for Southeast development, which will serve as a public-private venture run by experts and expatriates and its shares will be sold to mainly Igbos. The governors of the five Southeastern states with Igbo leaders of thought in conjunction with the Igbos in Diaspora should launch the Igbo Development Fund (IDF) which could be the financial backbone of not only the provision of critical infrastructure but also the industrialization of the region through funding of entrepreneurship, research and development (R&D), technology and innovation, scholarship and other forms of skill development. The Fund should be designed like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), and should be headquartered outside of Nigeria. Igbos at home and in Diaspora must become the major shareholders by buying majority of the IDF shares (Ihejirika, n.d.). One of the major focuses of the IDF will be to identify and supervise the reconstruction of the devastated land of the Southeast caused by the civil war and post-war neglect which include the erosion menace which has become existential threats the people. It will also provide the needed capital that would support the state government of the Southeast to fund the provision of critical infrastructure and entrepreneurial development.

5. Challenges of Governance, Security and Economic Cooperation in the Southeast

However, there are various challenges that have bedeviled the Southeast and these have affected governance and other forms of cooperation in the region. Some of these challenges are briefly discuss below.

5.1 Lack of Federal Presence in the Southeast

The overbearing burden placed on the Southeast by war-induced marginalization, deliberate avoidance in allocation of Federal infrastructure and industries and projects, structural and political imbalance, etc, have induced capital flight away from the region (Okoye, 2017). Competition among the microenterprises in the region is very high but not controlled and nurtured enough with appropriate governance and regulations, thereby leading to irresponsible use of common resources. Interestingly, the region, in spite of these, continues to be attributed with the lowest poverty level in Nigeria (Okoye, 2017).

5.2 Lack of Cooperation among the Governors of the Southeast

The political leaders and governments have disappointed the people in the quest for integration in the South East. The governors of the five Southeastern states have been working at cross purpose with one another. There is hardly any form of cooperation among them especially in the areas of the provision of critical infrastructures such as road and rail network that can link up the five states, the building and establishment of industrial clusters within the states taking into cognizance the peculiarity of the states in terms of the type of resources found in the states. The security challenges in the Southeast are taking their tolls on all the states within the region, therefore it is only through the cooperation of the government of the five states that would fully address these challenges and bring them to a halt. Even when one or two of the governor made attempts to cooperate, he was disappointed by his counterpart who refuse to comply in the joint execution of a road project that was suppose to link the two states together as evidenced in some comments of Dr Chris Ngige, a former governor of Anambra State as cited in (Okoye, 2017), where he noted that during his time as the Governor of the state, he built federal roads that passed through Anambra state because the roads were bad starting from the Head Bridge. He further noted that he discussed with

his fellow governors from the Southeast about the need to have Southeast regional road integration in view of the fact that the Igbo people are mostly traders who move around all the time. He also noted that he did a road from Igbo Ukwu to Isuochi and then asked the then governor of Abia to complete the road to Umuahia, but unfortunately it was not done. Ngige said other governors in the zone never bought into the idea, but that he insisted on getting the work done in Anambra State axis. We have not seen nor heard where the government of the region met and discuss on how to harmonise their economic policies and implement them together especially as it concerns the provision of critical infrastructure within the region.

5.3 Security Challenges in the Southeast

Security is central in enhancing conducive environment and promoting viable economic activities has been recognized by passed governments in Ghana (Nwokwu & Ogayi, 2021). The corporate existence of Nigeria has been threatened by many security challenges which appears to defy solutions. Another major security challenge with damaging effect on the socio-economic activities in Nigeria is kidnapping. Criminals within the Southeast have embraced it with open hands as they see it as a means of making fast money. Also, the incidents of herders-farmers clashes have led to the loss of many lives and properties and this has become a serious threat to food security as farmers are afraid of going to their farms due to the AK47 wielding herdsmen who have taken over their farms. There have been many cases of these clashes between the herders and farmers with horrifying casualties (Nwokwu & Ogayi, 2021).

The conflict within the region is remarkably different from others that appear to engulfed the whole country. The constant herdsmen attacks on farmers and the rising incidents of kidnapping in the Southeast lead to the creation of the Eastern Security Network (ESN) by Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). The leader of the IPOB group Mazi Nnamdi Kanu noted that the ESN is an answer to what he called “insecurity and Fulani terrorism” within the region. The ESN is a Vigilante groups whose functions include; protecting farmlands, and forests from kidnappers, criminals and other possible threats within the region.

Multiple attacks on the Nigerian security personnel and infrastructure, by faceless gangs known as “unknown gunmen” have been recorded within the Southeast and South-South regions since December of 2020. The Nigerian police Force (NPF) have been the hardest hit. The Nigerian government have accused and indicted IPOB for these attacks and even paraded some suspects as members of the IPOB behind these targeted assaults, an accusation which IPOB have vehemently denied its involvement therefore creating a perplexed situation with these attacks continuing.

Federal government responses to the security situation in the Southeast include heavy-handed deployment of security personnel to the region who have been acting with impunity. Some of the actions taken by these personnel include excessive police checkpoints where harassment and extortions are directed against Igbo people and business, and excessive harassment of Igbo business by Custom personnel especially on containers which have been cleared at the various ports. Most of these harassments and extortions occur especially during festive periods when the Igbos visit their families or loved ones within the Southeast and this has called to question the government avowed fight against corruption (Okolie, 2017; Nsoedo, 2019).

The failure of the governors of the Southeast states to put a halt to the rising level of insecurity provided a window of opportunity for IPOB, a non-state actor, to form the ESN. The governors of the Southeastern states as a counter to the formation of the ESN formed the Southeast Security Network codenamed

“Ebube Aguu.” This state-owned security outfit was headquartered in Enugu and was charged with tasks of checkmating rising level of security threats and restiveness, and coordinating the activities of community policing within the Southeast region.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Governance and security is very essential to human rights protection and a basic necessity to the livelihood of the people. This is a core government responsibility which is very necessary for a holistic development of any region and country. This paper has looked at the importance of governance and security in the effort of the government of the Southeastern states to create an economic cooperation which will in turn enhance governance and security within the region. The South East, needs to look more inwards, at itself, to galvanize and marshal the competitive spirit of the Igbo and channel it towards initiatives to deal with the social, cultural and institutional constraints to service excellence and tourism asset discovery, development and marketing.

The, failure of the political class within the southeast to form united block and pursue economic integration and development of the Southeast region has seriously affected negatively the development of the region; The high level of security threats in the region is an indication of the failure of the Governors of the five Southeastern states and the political elites to provide good governance and address the challenges of development within the region. Urgent action by the leaders of the zone is highly needed as they have a major role to play. We equally suggest that there is need for the leadership of the Southeast to form a united front through integration of their economic and governance policies that are geared toward the development of the region. Also there is need for a united stand and common voice by the leadership against the rising levels of insecurity, as this will engender peace and development in the region.

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