

BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY AND IT'S IMPLICATION ON NIGERIA'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

Boko Haram insurgency in northern Nigeria has posed a multifaceted threat to the nation since 2009. Successive governments have tried all possible measures to curtail it with no significant success recorded. The academia has also not been passive; hence the phenomenon has been approached from religious and political viewpoints. However, adequate attention has not been paid to its socioeconomic implications. Therefore, the paper examined the Boko Haram insurgency and the challenges it poses to social and economic and national development of Nigeria and the implications of such for communities free from its activities. The work adopted historical method, which involved archival search, use of other academic materials such as journal articles, books and newspapers. Oral interviews were conducted with victims of Boko Haram who have relocated from affected places to southern part of the country. It was established that Boko Haram insurgency has wreaked much havoc on social and economic activities, culminating in retardation of growth and development in the country. The paper is anchor on cognitive dissonance Festinger (1951) and asset liability theoriesCunningham, Jr. (2003). The paper recommended the need for serious commitment on the part of the government in providing loans as settlement handouts, equipping the security agents and fighting corruption in the security system. More importantly, prosecution of identified Boko Haram sponsors must be done without fear or favour.

Keywords

Boko-Haram, insurgency, Northern Nigeria, Social effects, Economic effect, national development

Introduction

The emergence of Boko Haram crises in July 2009 changed the familiar phase and pattern of religious violence, riots and disturbances in Nigeria. However, aside the daily loss of lives and properties, the fear and animosities among the Nigerian populace particularly the threat posed to the security, economy, democracy and integration of the corporate society are alarming. This situation has made it difficult for the citizens and residents in some parts of northern Nigeria such as Borno and Yobe states to carry out their legitimate businesses. Various scholars have attributed Boko Haram crises to

bad governance in Nigeria. According to them, Nigerians have been denied good governance for long and the youths that are mostly engaged in acts of violence, are the first victim of bad governance and acute corruption.(Bamidele 2012) 32-42.

The Islamic sect Book-Haram has been a security challenge to Nigeria since 2009, but the group in 2011 expanded its terrorist attacks to include international target. The Nigerian radical religious sect claimed responsibility for several attacks, including the **July 2009 incidents** which claimed hundreds of lives in Maiduguri, in north-eastern Borno state, when members set several churches, a police station and a prison on fire, the bombing of the United Nation's headquarters in Abuja on 26th August, 2011 which claimed 24 lives, their first attack on an international institution. In the same year **December**, there were multiple bomb attacks on Christmas Day (Dec. 25) which killed dozens, including 35 people at St Theresa's church in Madalla, near the capital, another explosion shortly afterwards hit a church in the central city of Jos, where a police officer was killed by gunfire.

Similarly, three attacks in northern Yobe state killed four people. Two further attacks hit the town of Damaturu, and a third strike at Gadaka. Also, the group in **June 2012** bomb offices of "This Day" newspaper. Later in that same month, more than 100 people died in attacks on three churches in Kaduna, a city on the border of the Muslim north and the predominantly Christian south. In 2014 Boko Haram extremists snatched 276 Chibok girls from a boarding school in northeast Nigeria and On February 19, 2018, one hundred and ten (110) schoolgirls aged 11–19 years old were kidnapped by the Boko Haram terrorist group from the Government Girls Science and Technical College (GGSTC), Dapchi, located in Bulabulin, Yunusari Local Government area of Yobe State, in the northeast part of Nigeria, though the federal government had secured the release of 105 the remaining victims are still in the terrorist custody.

These nefarious activities of the Boko Haram have affected the foundation of Nigerian's corporate existence and national development which the founding fathers' of the country fought for. The era of suspicion, allegation and counter allegation; religious leaders advise to members to pick up arms and defend their religion, and the unfriendly relationship between the norths and south are all back in the country. The implication of this is the mass exodus of Christians and southerners from the war zone to their homestead for peace and shelter; this indeed runs antithetical to the principles of nation building and development. Whereas the economic impact of terrorism ranges from minimal to moderate, the same is not necessarily the case with the social impact of terrorism. The social effects of terrorism can be pronounced and far-reaching, influencing many different aspects of a society. The starting point for the impact of terrorism on a society is the affect that terrorist attacks have upon people's beliefs and attitudes. Major events influence people's beliefs and attitudes.

Shavrit et al (2015), explain that: "terror attacks are negative, threatening events. Considerable evidence from psychological studies has shown that negative information tends to be more closely attended, better remembered, and have a stronger impact on evaluations and judgments than positive information."

Thus, since terrorist attacks are events of a highly negative nature, they can lead to changes in people's beliefs and attitudes. One such belief concerns how people view other societies, especially the society which the terrorists belong to. In a situation of inter-group conflict, terrorist attacks increase negative beliefs about and hostile attitudes toward the opposing group the terrorists claim to represent. A sense of victimhood is common to a society experiencing terrorism. Civilians are not expected to be victims of political violence (whereas military casualties are expected); hence, a public feels victimized when it is the target of political violence (i.e. when it experiences terrorist attacks). The more the civilian population is targeted, the more this sense of victimhood increases. This sense of victimization in turn leads to a de-legitimization of the terrorists and the people they claim to represent. Consequently, the targeted society becomes unwilling or unable to consider the other side's grievances and objectives. No longer is the opposing group believed to have rational objectives and/or justifiable grievances; instead, the worst views become 'common sense,' especially those concerning its propensity towards violence. By implication, the current terrorist activities in the north might have affected the operation national development in the country, especially the regions and particularly in Borno state where the deadly terrorist manifested.

However, It should be noted that poverty and corruption in Nigeria are not limited to northern Nigeria alone but nationwide. This work, therefore, goes beyond poverty and corruption as the remote causes of Boko Haram crises in Nigeria. It contends that the current wave of religious fundamentalism became recurrent through religious manipulation and politicisation in the post-colonial era. The work concludes that unless the country's policies, cultural norms, law and value are enforced to redirect behavioural attitude toward governance in Nigeria, religious fundamentalism would thrive on. In this piece, the paper shall discuss the problem by focusing on how Boko Haram insurgency has affected Nigeria in the area of politics, economy and corporate existence in this order. Boko Haram insurgency has confronted Nigeria with massive assaults, which undoubtedly have led to the death of many Nigerians and valuable properties destroyed. The sect has been described as the world deadliest and destructive terrorist, both in terms of brutality, mindless savagery and flagrant disobedience to the principles of peace and stability (Punch Newspaper 2015: 8). The sect unleashes terror, tension and fear in the mind of every Nigerian and the international community does not feel unaffected. Boko Haram insurgency has affected Nigeria in the areas of politics, economy and corporate existence.

Theoretical Framework

Acts of terrorism are manifestations of unresolved conflicts and the inability of the government to overcome the challenges are reflections that the root cause(s) of the conflicts are not identified and therefore the correct mechanism could not be adopted to manage or resolve it. Scholars have propounded so many theoretical models to explain the prevalence of terrorism but for the purpose of this study, a combination of cognitive dissonance, frustration aggression and asset to liability theories are adopted. Adekanye (2007) enumerates set of factors that largely explain the processes that metamorphose into conflict

situation that can as well lead to terrorism and these are the structural background conditions, precipitating and triggers factors.

Festinger (1951) developed a theory about communication's social influences, referred to as cognitive dissonance which is one of the most important psychological concepts that shed light on terrorist behaviour. Cunningham, Jr. (2003) observes that: Men prefer a situation of stability in respect of values, behaviour and their environmental conditions. When people experience a difference between what they perceive and what they desire (cognitive dissonance), they seek to reduce this dissonance by reducing this gap through actions, filtering information or altering perceptions. Cognitive dissonance is therefore experienced whenever there is a discrepancy between preferred value and actual value states. Such a situation has the tendency to produce hatred, anxiety, fear and the desire to hurt or eliminate the source. The discrepancies could manifest within economic, social, cultural political and religious spheres as these issues form the micro level of analysis that could be regarded as the structural background conditions operating at individual level. Cunningham Jr. (2003) discusses asset to liability shift theory which serves as a root of terrorist strategy.

The theory assumes governments view states and local government areas within its jurisdiction as assets that must be defended against internal or external aggression. It goes further to state that acts of insurgency will cost the government valuable lives and money in defending these assets against a sustained terrorist campaign as experienced with the Boko-Haram. The theory assumes that after the government suffers significant losses, the asset will become instead, a liability and the government will decide to forfeit the asset and cut their losses. Hence, the goal of the terrorist in this instance is to destabilize the country and make it 'ungovernable' as this could lead to a situation of break-up of the country or imposition of Islamic ways of life. This is anchored on the assumption that during antiterrorist campaigns government will overreact and become oppressive in order to combat the insurgents as this will expose the weakness of the government to the populace as highlighted by the extrajudicial killing of Mohammed Yusuf the founder of the Boko-Haram sect.

This in turn will make the members of the public withdraw their support for the government and develop sympathy for the sect. Though the theory had been criticized but it reflects significantly the philosophy behind Boko-Haram sect and to a large extent while the governments have been unable to overcome the challenges posed by the sect.

This study will utilize both the Cognitive dissonance and Asset to liability theories as the basis for the research analysis. This is because they tend to picture the mindset of the insurgence in starting the fight, tactics and projected outcome of their activities.

Literature Review

i. Causes of Boko Haram Insurgency.

Studies on Boko Haram Insurgency have largely emphasized economic poverty, religious ideology and the historical North-South identity fractionalization as plausible causal

factors for its origins. Some others studies have situate its roots causes at the critical nexus of Nigeria's rash politics as the causes of the insurgency resulting from nefarious activities of corrupt politicians who have caused economic poverty and inequality across Northern Nigeria. Political Elites have also mobilized and given political relevance to the Boko Haram group now trooped up as counterpoises to the defacto government.

ii. The Effect of Boko- Haram on Economic Development

Nigeria is a country endowed with natural and material resources, all competed favourably with one another in securing a big chunk of foreign exchange earnings for the country in the early 60s, the discovery of oil and the unprecedented wealth accrued from it in the 70s soon emerged Nigeria as a major foreign exchange earner. In spite of the natural and mineral resources with which the country is endowed coupled with numerous governmental policies and programs to foster peaceful co-existence among the multi ethno-religious entities which make up Nigeria, the country has virtually become a battle field where incessant ethno-religious and political crises are staged. The implication of the crisis on economic development is that the instrument which is supposed to be used for sustainable development is conversely being used for destruction and vandalization purposes. Chukurah, Eme and Ogbeje (2015) in their work titled "*Implication of Boko Haram Terrorism on Northern Nigeria*" pointed that Boko Haram terrorist insurgency invigorates as a result of pronouncement of Goodluck Jonathan as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The fact that, the study took the hoslistc implications of Boko Haram in northern Nigeria, unlike this study, that is narrowed down to specifically look at the implications of Boko Hara on small scale and Medium Enterprises in Borno State.

In essence, it gulped the Nigerian government millions of naira to put in place numerous amenities which were destroyed during crises. Resources which could have been used to Improve these amenities and embark on other developmental project would have to be used on restructuring and replacing what had been damaged during the crisis. In most cases, government compensated victims of these crises and this gulped millions of naira which could have been used to develop the economy. Apart from the fact that many virile men of the nation are seriously affected in the crises which consequently led to their death. The country's source of revenue is equally affected by crises. The Niger Delta for example, had shaken the country's economy to her root. Since no economic development could take place in an atmosphere of fear, anarchy and insecurity. It therefore implies that Boko Haram menaces are bane to economic development.

iii. The Effect of Boko-Haram on Social Development

During the colonial era, Nigerians lived in peace with one another; this is because the colonial masters merged under the hegemonies suzerainty of colonial masters. The social background of Nigerians then can be surely said to be peaceful until the exit of the colonial masters when things started falling apart. The people of Nigeria faced one another with serious enormity, hatred and they did not want to see one another again (Aborisade, 1999). The social background of Nigeria turned from peaceful to chaos which finally gave birth to a cankerworm that ate deep into the very fabric of Nigerians social system. The implication here is that to attain social development in Nigeria became impossible because the people living in the northern parts are no longer in unity. Imam (2004) revealed that education is very vital in attaining social development.

It is an undeniable fact that a nation that witnesses crisis almost on an annual basis could not be said to be politically stable. The Boko Haram crisis which dichotomized the country's Police Forces was said to have been responsible for the outbreak of the Abuja Police Headquarter bombing leaving six (6) people dead including Police Officers and civilians. In essence, Boko Haram crisis breeds unstable government which is very crucial to sustainable political development (The Nation News, 2018). Consequently, the Federal Government now spends more time seeking how to deal with the menace of Boko Haram. Because of the sensitive, dangerous, and very deadly nature of Boko Haram activities, attention is now focused on them. Boko Haram has seriously threatened the adequate, efficient and effective implementation of the change agenda. Indeed, the change agendum has been Boko Haram by the violent group. This is seriously a wrenching development (Leadership Newspaper, 2018).

Amadi 2013; and OkpanachiNafiu et al 2015 in their titled "*Impact of Terrorism on Small and Medium Scale Enterprises Mortality Rates and Standard of Living in the Northern Region of Nigeria*" centered on the rate of SMEs mortality in the region thereby neglecting the role of the SMEs in reviving the region. The study reveals that insurgency leads to high rate of SMEs mortality. The study was narrowed to the rate of mortality of SMEs and completely avoided how to empower the entrepreneurs and the entire zone, this would have been the point of concern and knowing how and when to empower the entrepreneurs and the entire zone, this would have been the point of concern and knowing how and when to do so.

Findings

The findings show that Boko-Haram activities has negatively affected socio-economic activities mostly in the north and national development at large. It simply implies that in spite of the natural and mineral resources with which the country is endowed coupled with numerous governmental policies and programs to foster peaceful co-existence among the multi ethno-religious entities which make up Nigeria, the country has virtually become a battle field where incessant ethno-religious and political crises are staged. As Mohammed, (2002) rightly put, the implication of the crisis on economic development is that the instrument which is supposed to be used for sustainable development is conversely being used for destruction and vandalization purposes. Looking at it internationally, Boko Haram crisis has added to the fear of foreign investors that are in Nigeria. The cases of kidnapping of expatriates in Nigeria are no more news. One wonders how foreign investors could decide to establish in the War Zone. Apart from the fact that the image of Nigeria has been dented globally as a country which breeds social miscreant and criminals, these crises have also made investors to flee the nation's troubled spots particularly in the northern states.

Conclusion

Boko Haram insurgency has heightened fears among Nigerians, especially those living in the northern part of the country. The activities of these sect have led to the death of many Nigerians and property worth millions of naira destroyed. Business ventures, shops and schools have been affected as a result of Boko Haram attacks on the populace. Recent

occurrences such as killing and destruction of property in northern Nigeria clearly show that the state of insecurity in the north has assumed a frightening dimension.

While it may be posited that insecurity is a global phenomenon, what is strange in the

country is the seeming inability of the government to find lasting solution to the problem.

The issue of religion has always posed a serious challenge to the socio-economic development of the country because no administration in Nigeria has ever enjoyed absolute support of both Islam and Christianity.

In conclusion, the researcher wishes to state emphatically that the persistence of corruption, collapse of public morality, injustice and unemployment could simply be attributed to the menacing activities of Boko Haram insurgency. In this wise, if our recommendations are properly implemented, the menacing activities of the sect will be curtailed.

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