

The Socio-Economic Implications of Boko Haram Insurgency in the North-East of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: The continued bombings, killings, kidnappings and the destruction of property by Boko Haram have become of great concern to the Nigerian government and the international community. The activities of Boko Haram have effects on the economy and the people. This paper examines the implications of the operations of the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast of Nigeria. Findings from the study indicates that the atrocities of Boko Haram have severe implications on the economy and social lives of the people of the northeast where the activities of the sect is concentrated. The paper recommends for the insurgency to come to an end, the government needs to provide employment to the teeming youths, dialogue with the sect if the need arises and equip the military with sophisticated gadgets in order to confront Boko Haram foot soldier.

KEYWORDS: Boko Haram, Insurgency, Northeast, Poverty, Socioeconomic.

1 INTRODUCTION

Democratic government was installed in Nigeria in 1999 after more than 16 years of military dictatorship. The aspiration of the populace was that with the coming of civilian government the dividends of democracy will spread to all nooks and crannies of Nigeria. However, their hopes have been dashed by the recent events in Nigeria. Fifteen years after civilian rule, the country's security situation is pathetic that nobody in the country is safe from the attacks of terrorists, kidnappers, armed gangs and militants. Electoral and communal violence has also compounded the security situation that has made Nigeria unsafe for residence. The activities of the dreaded Islamic terrorist group Boko Haram have been a great concern to the Nigerian government and the international community, as in up to date, Boko Haram has killed more than 10,000 citizens despite the security measure taken by the federal government of Nigeria to checkmate the heinous crime of the sect against humanity. It was in the light of the failure of the government counter terrorism drive that made youths in the North- East part of the country to form a youth anti-terrorism movement called "Civilian JTF" to complement the effort of the government counter terrorism strategy.

According to Alozieuwa (2012) as cited by Anyadike (2013) "the challenge posed by Boko Haram in Nigeria is not only about the viciousness of either its terror campaigns or the sect's avowed mission to impose Islamic law on the country, but about the confusion regarding the exact cause(s) of the violence". A lot of factors have been attributed to the cause of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria such as socioeconomic, political and religious factors. However, Awojobi (2014) and Onuoha (2014) posit that the high-rate of poverty in Nigeria has made the youths enlisted in the ranks of Boko Haram foot soldiers which has elongate the conflict since 2009. Most of the activities of the sect are concentrated in the North-East of Nigeria. Despite the state of emergency that was declared by the Federal government, the killings, bombings and kidnappings of Boko Haram continue unabated. The activities of Boko Haram sect have led to economic, social and psychological implications in the North-East Nigeria where the sect has a strong presence. The purpose of this study is to unravel the implications of Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East Nigeria.

1.1 STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

Since 2009 when Boko Haram initially started its insurgency and the aftermath of the killing of Mohammed Yusuf the leader of the sect, the activities of the sect have continued unabated despite the effort of the government to curtail the heinous crime of the sect, over 10,000 people have been killed by Boko Haram. Most of the operations of the sect are concentrated in the North-East of Nigeria. The sect has used kidnapping and raping of women as a weapon of war. The poor are the most victims of the sect atrocities and the implications of the sect insurgency fall on the ordinary Nigerians. The purpose of this study is to examine the implications of the sect in the North-East of Nigeria where the sect operations are predominant.

1.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To examine the implications of Boko Haram insurgency
- To evaluate its operations in the North-East Nigeria
- To make recommendations for the way out of the sect insurgency

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will be vital to the government, security apparatus and the general public. It will also contribute to knowledge of the implications of Boko Haram insurgency. Furthermore, the study will generate theory regarding the implications of Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East Nigeria.

2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Boko Haram has intensified its operation in the North-East of Nigeria despite the state of emergency that was declared by the federal government in the three states in the northern region where Boko Haram activities are concentrated. The activities of the sect have been of concern to scholars who have written various academic papers on the modus operandi of Boko Haram. Eme and Ibieta (2012) analyze the origin and ideology of the sect, from their analysis they posit that Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad better known as Boko Haram is an Islamic terrorist group that has a strong operational base in the northeast of Nigeria. The ideology of the sect according to them is to bring to an end the secular system of government and introduce sharia law in Nigeria. However, Lister (2012) did not subscribe to the notion that the Boko Haram aim is to Islamize Nigeria through the introduction of sharia law. According to him, the foot soldiers of the sect are disgruntled youths who have been paid by unscrupulous Northern politicians to cause mayhem in the country because of their selfish ambitions. This is the assumption from the southern part of Nigeria, where the incumbent president comes from that the activities of the sect were more intensified because of the emergence of the current president who is a southerner. The high rate of poverty, unemployment and political corruption have been blamed on the elongation of the conflict. Most of the foot soldiers of Boko Haram are youths that are frustrated because of the lack of employment, income and they have been disdained by politicians after being used by these politicians for their election victory. Cook (2013); Awojobi (2014); Onuoha (2014) all assert that the youths enlisted into Boko Haram because of the prevalence of poverty in the North. The poverty profile of Nigeria that was released in 2011 by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) indicated that the northern region has more poor people than people in the south. Aside the killings, kidnapping and bombing of the sect, their activities constitute a hindrance to the socioeconomic development of the northeast where their operation is focused and Nigeria as a whole. Eme and Ibieta (2012); Ogochukwu (2013); Odita and Akan (2014); Ovaga (n.d.) agree with their study on the Boko Haram insurgency that the sect's heinous crimes hinder socioeconomic development in Nigeria. For the major attacks and modus operandi of the sect see (Eme and Ibieta 2012; Ovaga, n.d.; Odita and Akan 2014) for details.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study will use the poverty breeds conflict hypothesis for the theoretical framework. Academic debates continue on the correlation between poverty and insecurity. Some scholars have argued that most of the conflicts in developing countries are caused by the prevalence of poverty. There is causality from high poverty rate to conflict Kanbur (2007). Ted Gurr's deprivation theory subscribed to this assumption. The theory explains why the youths are always taking to violence. According to the deprivation theory, "aggression is always a consequence of frustration" and "frustration always leads to aggression" (Leeds 1978). "The poor are led to violence owing to their relative deprivation and needs" (Odumosu 1999 cited in Awojobi 2014). Frustration, lack of income, unemployment have prompted the youths in the northern Nigeria to become

foot soldiers of Boko Haram (Awojobi 2014). Insecurity, terrorism, conflicts and violence are caused by the high poverty rate in most societies (Gurr 1970 and Burton 1997). Sarmiento and Bacerra (1998) and Sarmiento (1999) are the leading scholars on the poverty breeds conflict hypothesis. However, the likes of Gaitan (1995); Rubio (2000); Sanchez and Nunez (2001) and Sanchez, Solimano and Formisano (2005) objected to this hypothesis. Empirical evidence from the works of Collier and Hoeffler (2002); Bellows and Miguel (2006); Ford (2007) indicated that poverty was the major cause of conflict in Africa. For instance, Collier and Hoeffler (2002) examine conflicts in Africa, from their findings, they notice the interface between income and conflict. Rice et al. (2006); Collier and Hoeffler (2002); Fearon (2004); Walter (2004) subscribed to the notion that poverty helps to extend conflicts once it started. Evidence has shown that when income drops there is a tendency for conflict to surface or reignited. A study by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler from the Oxford University, James Fearson and David Laitin both from the Stanford University, and Professor Nicholas Sambanis from the Yale University gave credence to this hypothesis (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). The table 1 below illustrates their findings.

Table 1: Key findings of Per Capita Income and Conflict

Source	Finding
Collier/Hoeffler (2004)	Countries at different income levels have the following risk experiencing civil conflict at \$ 250 GDP per capital, a 15% risk of war within 5 years; at \$600 GDP per capita, a 7.5% risk of war within 5 years; and at \$5,000 GDP per capita, less than 1% risk of war within 5 years (Humphreys 2003)
Fearon/ Laitin (2003)	Countries at different income levels have the following risk of experiencing civil conflict: at \$579 GDP per capita, a 17.7% risk of war within 1 year; at \$2,043 GDP per capita, a 10.7% risk of war within 1 year; and at \$9,466 GDP per capita, less than 1% risk of war within 1 year.
Sambanis (2003)	Average GDP per capita for countries that experienced war within 5 years is \$2,176. Average GDP per capita for countries that did not experience war within 5 years \$5,173
Collier/Hoeffler/ Rohner (2006)	Average GDP per capita for countries that experienced war within 5 years is \$1,100. Average GDP per capita for countries that did not experience war within 5 years \$5,764.

Source: Rice et al. 2006

The Boko Haram insurgency has been blamed on the high rate of poverty in Nigeria. However, some security experts have debunked this assumption. But in the words of Kastina (n.d.) who posits that whatever argument surrounding the cause of Boko Haram insurgency the “salient facts which cannot be demised always easily. The most important of this is that we have to admit that even if the group has its antecedents in theology, its swelling rank is as a result of a huge reservoir of unemployed urban youths from many parts of the country. These youths who have completely become disenfranchised are readily to provide the group with foot soldiers who commit all manners of atrocities, including assassination and suicide bombings in the name of religion.” Onuoha (2013) empirical study on why do youth join Boko Haram, the findings of the study indicated that poverty played a major role in luring the youth in joining Boko Haram.

4 BOKO HARAM ATTACKS AND FATALITIES

Since the first attack of Boko Haram in 2009 in one of the police barracks in Bauchi state that killed scores of people, including police officers and members of their family, and the subsequent killing of the leader of the sect, Yusuf Mohammed, the coordinated attacks by Boko Haram have intensified. The extrajudicial killing of the sect leader made the group intensified its attacks on government departments, the church, markets, homes, police and military formations (Ajah, 2011). It is erroneous to believe that the sect attacks churches without doing same to the muslim worshipping centers. Boko Haram has attacked mosques in the northeast and even killed some Islamic clerics that are opposed to their ideology. It is estimated that over 10, 000 Nigerians have been killed and maimed by the sect since 2009. Abubakar Shekau who was the deputy of Mohammed Yusuf took over the mantle of leadership of the sect after Yusuf’s death. The year 2014 has been the worst period of the group attacks, according to Human Right Watch. Over 700 people have been killed in attacks on 40 villages in the northeast states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. Most of the attacks are concentrated in these three states. However, the nation’s capital Abuja, Jos, Kano and some part of the north have experienced attacks from Boko Haram. Figure 1 illustrates Boko Haram attacks and fatalities.

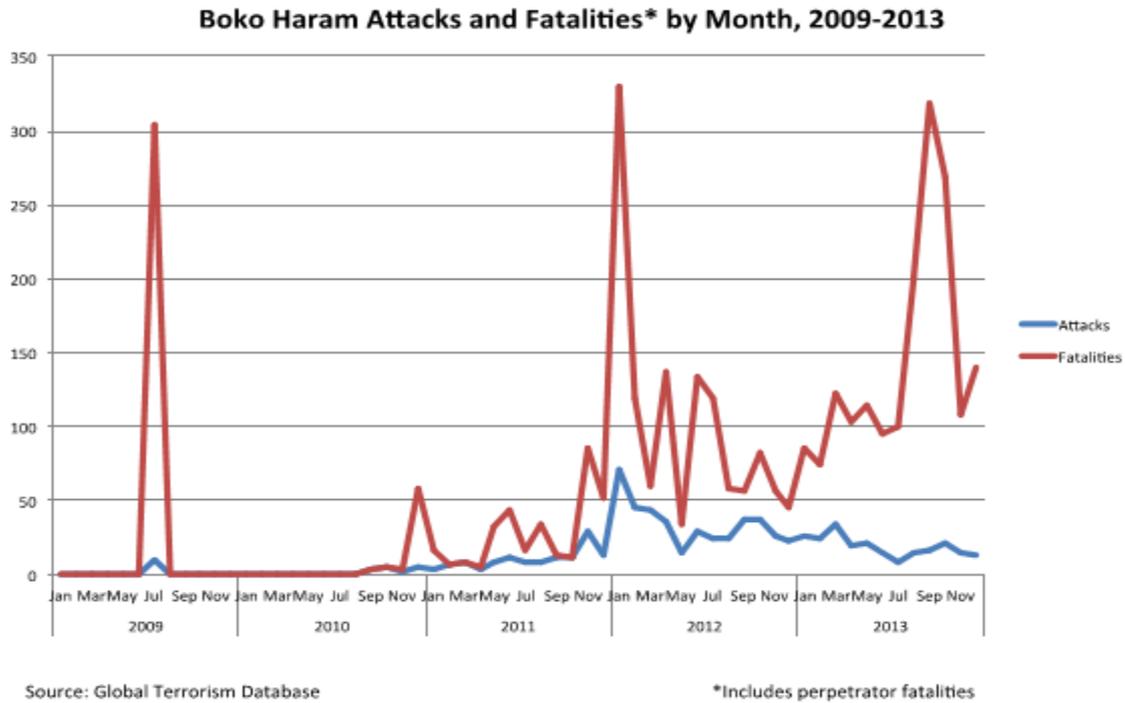


Figure 1

The sect attacks churches, mosque, schools, markets, motor parks and houses. The attacks of Boko Haram have led to the displacement of thousand of people in the northeast. In order to curtail the heinous crime of the sect against humanity the federal government in 2013 declared a state of emergency in the three states that the sect activities are predominate. The state of emergency did not stop the sect from the continuation of bombings, killings, kidnappings and the destruction of property. In a nutshell, the attacks of the sect in the period of state of emergency surpassed when there was no state of emergency. The question on the lips of Nigerians what is the purpose of the state of emergency when Boko Haram has intensified its attacks on innocent Nigerians? Professor Clionadh Raleigh of the University of Sussex created a data that demonstrates the attacks of Boko Haram before and after the declared state of emergency.

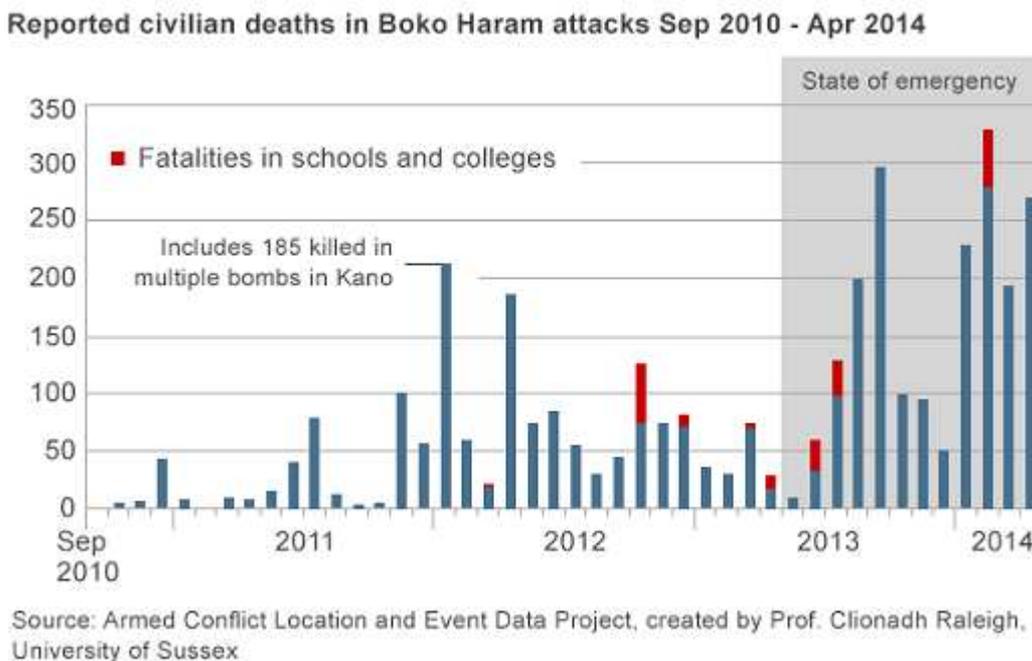


Figure 2

From the data, it is known that the attacks of the sect were intensified during the period of state of emergency.

4.1 RAPE AND KIDNAPPING AS WEAPONS OF WAR

Rape and Kidnapping form parts of Boko Haram strategies (modus operandi). The sect uses both methods as weapons of war. On April 15, 2014, Boko Haram attacked a government girls' school in Chibok, Borno state and kidnapped over 250 female students. The effort to secure the release of the girls has remained elusive despite the involvement of the international community in seeking the releasing of these girls. Boko Haram as used these kidnapped school girls as a human shield in order for the military not to attack their location in the Sambia forest. The special assistant to the president on media, Dr. Doyin Okupe while he interviewed on the Cable Network Television (CNN) in New York confirmed that the Nigerian government knew where these girls are being held but the Nigerian Military cannot go after them because any military assault to free these girls will put their lives in danger. This statement was also corroborated that of the Chief of Defence Staff, Air Marshal Alex Badeh who was the first government officials to confirm the location of the abducted girls. If the government has located the kidnapped school girls why are they not being rescued? According to security analysts, Boko Haram sect is using these girls as a human shield to prevent the military onslaught on their camps. The sect is on kidnapping rampage, they continue to kidnap and most of their victims are women. Aside kidnapping, some of the women they kidnap are sexually abused and in some scenarios, foot soldiers of Boko Haram forcefully married some of these women to satisfy their sexual orgy. The raping of women around the surrounding villages close to Sambia forest has made some of the women to flee their homes to neighboring Chad republic. Horwood (2004) in his study *Perpetrators and Motivation: Understanding Rape and Sexual Violence in War* sees sexual violence and rape as an instrument in a war in order to punish, intimidate, destabilize and to drive people away from their land. This is the case in the northeast of Nigeria where Boko Haram insurgency is concentrated. According to Jennifer Leaning and Tara Gingerich (2005) on their elaboration of the strategy on rape as a weapon of war, they list some factors to be considered as tools for rape to be the aim of combatants:

- Rape instills fear in women and dissuade them from moving around during war
- It dehumanized women and make them to flee conflict
- It is a strategy of aggression

5 THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN THE NORTHEAST OF NIGERIA

Aside the human cost in the Boko Haram insurgency, the atrocities of the sect have socioeconomic implications, especially in the northeast where Boko Haram has dominance. The economic, social and psychological costs of the insurgency cannot be quantified. Commercial activities in the northeast have been reduced because of the unprecedented attacks by the sect. Banks, markets and shops do not open regularly due to the fear of the coordinated attacks from Boko Haram. According to Okereocha (2012) human capital and investors drain is hampering economic development in the northeast this is due to the attacks on banks, markets, parks and government departments. The attacks on these commercial areas have led to the migration of people to other parts of the country. Shiklam (2012) posits that:

"The Maiduguri Monday Market said to be the biggest market in the city is reported to have been seriously affected as hundreds of shop owners, especially Southerners are said to have closed their businesses and left the troubled city. About half of the 10,000 shops and stalls in the market were said to have been abandoned by traders who have fled the city."

Aside the migration of people who have business in the northeast to other parts of Nigeria, foreign nationals of Chad, Cameroun and Niger are being repatriated to their home countries for what the government of Nigeria said they constitute the members of Boko Haram. Evidence has shown that not all the repatriated nationals of the above countries are members of Boko Haram. Definitely, those who have business in cities like Maiduguri, Damaturu and Yola will form part of those that are sent homes which will actually affect the economic activities in these cities. Ovaga (n.d) asserts that under this situation, the economy of the northeast will seriously be affected if foreign citizens who contribute large quota to the development of the northeast vis a vis their economic activities are sent back to their countries of origin. The never-ending attacks by Boko Haram in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states have a severe impact on the economic lives of people living in these areas. A case in point is that the working duration of most commercial banks in the affected areas hit by Boko Haram bombings has been reduced from eight hours to three hours (Mohammed, 2012). "In Maiduguri, Borno state, where the sect originated, the frequent bombings and clashes between Boko Haram and the security agents have weighed down seriously on the commercial and businesses activities in the city as many business have reportedly crumbled while many people have fled the state" (Shiklam, 2012). There is already a dichotomy in the north and south development in Nigeria. The poverty profile released by the National Bureau of Statistics illustrates that there is the prevalence of poverty in the north as compared to

the south. It is in this data that the *Businessday* newspaper predicted if the insecurity situation continues development in the northern part will remain static and the gap between the north and south will broaden further (BDN, 2012). "The region needs peace and stability more than any region in the country, particularly because the region clearly lagging behind in term of infrastructure, education and other development indices" (Minster of Information, Labara Maku cited in Ogochukwu, 2013). Prominent Nigerians who have bemoaned the economic impact of Boko Haram insurgency in northeast Nigeria including the President Goodluck Jonathan and Northern Governors forum According to Obaremi (2014) "Economic affairs in the north is already depleting due to a massive departure of people and financial institutions from the northern region. But if the government delays in the implementing comprehensive plans to tackle insecurity from its roots, then not only will the northern region be economic desolation, the country as a whole risk losing billion of dollars in foreign direct investment" The business activities of telecom operators have not been left out from the attacks of Boko Haram. For instance, some telecom masts belong to some major mobile telephone operators were destroyed by Boko Haram and the banning of telephone services by the military affected the income generation of some of the mobile phone operators.

Just as the economic implications of Boko Haram atrocities cannot be quantified, the social costs are enormous. The church, school, market, clinic and mosque are potential targets of Boko Haram. For example, in April 2014, a federal government girls' college was attacked which subsequently led to the abduction of over 250 female students. Attacks on these social places have prevented people from going to these places. Some students have stopped going to school, others have been transferred to the southern part of the country to continue their education. Christians are afraid to go and worship in the church on Sundays due to the fear of being attacked by the sect. Same for the muslim faithfuls who abandon their worshipping centers because of Boko Haram attacks. The markets have become deserted. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) that was created by the government after the end of Nigerian civil war to foster unity among Nigeria is under threat due to Boko Haram attacks. The NYSC directorate posted 4171 corps members to Adamawa state, 1041 of the corps members have to abandon their national duty due to the precarious security situation (Ovaga (n.d.)). Some parents from the south of the country have protested vehemently against the posting of their children to the northeast. Aside the socioeconomic implications, the human cost is more worrisome, more than 10.000 have been killed, a lot of people have been maimed and women have been kidnapped and raped These have left the family of the dead, the injured, the raped and the kidnapped in agony. In a nutshell, most of the family members of Boko Haram victims are going through a traumatized period. Many have left their homes and over 650 thousand Nigerians have been displaced according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCH).

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Nigerian government needs to initiate policy that will generate employment for the army of unemployed youths in the country.
- Boko Haram has sponsors, the government should go after those financing the operations of the sect.
- The government should open a dialogue channel in order to know what are the grievances of the sect.
- Reports from the battlefield indicate that security personnel are not being provided with modern fighting equipment. The government should endeavor to supply the army with sophisticated military equipment.

7 CONCLUSION

It can be said that the activities of Boko Haram constitute a serious threat to the development of Nigeria. Aside the socioeconomic implications, the human cost is of great concern to everybody in Nigeria. Thousand of people have been displaced due to the persisted attacks from the dreaded Islamic sect called Boko Haram. The government should wake up from its slumber and end the insurgency for one. The nation cannot continue to lose its citizens on a daily basis from Boko Haram coordinated bombings. It is time to put an end to terrorism in Nigeria and every Nigerian should have the freedom to live in any part of the country without the fear of being attacked by anybody. Finally, this study was based on qualitative research on the impact of Boko Haram insurgency on the socioeconomic situations in the northeast of Nigeria. A quantitative research is needed for further study to investigate the effect of Boko Haram activities on the economy of Nigeria as a whole.

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