

THE IMPACT OF BOKO HARAM ON NIGERIAN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Sani Shehu

Faculty of Law, Accountancy and International Relations
Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin

sanishehu46@gmail.com

Abstract

Boko Haram is a militant organization which claimed and named itself as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal Jihad- an Islamic sect known as Boko Haram. It adopted a violent way of kidnapping, slaughtering and killings of innocent people, destructions of lives and properties, bombing of mosque, churches, institutions and other governmental parastatals, mainly in Northern Nigeria all in the name of religion, later it changed to political matter and now it transformed to complicated stage which is difficult to know its vision and mission. This paper examined the emergence of Boko Haram as a religious organization which later transformed to mysterious militant group, the causes of Boko Haram and its impact on Nigerian National Development. The paper adopted qualitative method which is descriptive. The findings are the economic, political and social impacts of Boko Haram on Nigerian national development. In conclusion, one can see how the threat and worst Boko Haram is on Nigerian national development. In recommendation, government supposed to formulate a policy towards the solution.

Keywords: *Emergence of Boko Haram, Causes, Impacts of Boko Haram*

1. Introduction

Nigeria is a rich country in both human and natural resources and it has the vision of being one of the developed nations of the world and a leading nation in Africa by the year 2020. For this purpose, Nigeria devoted in the process of exploiting and improving its resources and attraction of its citizens and foreign nationals to invest within the economy. Nigeria is an Africa's largest country in terms of population of almost 200 million people and the second largest economy after South Africa with GDP of US\$ 415 billion, it is the largest producer of oil in Africa and six in OPEC. Nigeria is rich in terms of petroleum, gas and large number of mineral resources. It has fertile land for agricultural potentials, but still an importer of food to feed its citizens (ADB, 2012). Due to all these resources of human and mineral, Nigeria confronts many problems of poverty, inefficient health care delivery

system, pipe-borne water, unemployment, unqualitative education and other issues that include armed robbery, kidnapping, ethnic crisis, assassination, militancy, terrorism and recently the insurgency of Boko Haram. It is the most problematic issue that threatens economic, political and social development of the country. In reality, whatever Boko Haram did or claimed to do is contrary to Islamic teaching of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him). Many Islamic scholars both nationally and internationally challenged what Boko Haram is doing. Some scholars considered Boko Haram as a militant group which spoils the image of Islam and Muslims, it is being financed and controlled by other foreign personnel.

2. Statement of the Problem

Boko Haram is a terrorist organization which caused the loss of lives and properties in northern Nigeria, while others considered it as insurgent group financed by foreign nationals to spoil the image of Islam and Muslims. There are causes and factors that impacted negatively on Nigerian national development which include economic, political and social affairs. This study tries to answer the questions on Boko Haram that are:

- What is the origin of Boko Haram?
- What factors caused Boko Haram?
- How does Boko Haram impact on Nigerian national development?

3. Objective of the Study

- To study the origin of Boko Haram.
- To explore its causes.
- To discover the impact of Boko Haram on Nigerian national development

4. Theoretical Framework

The paper used systems theory as its guiding principle. The systems theory is defined by Ludwing Von Bertalanffy. "System theory is the interdisciplinary study of systems in general, with the goal of elucidating principles that can be applied to all types of systems at all nesting levels in all fields of research." The theory originated from Bertalanffy's General System Theory (GST), and it was adopted in other fields such as Talcott Parsons' action theory and Niklas Luhmann's social system theory. The word systems referred to self-regulating systems that are self-correcting via feedback. Self-regulating systems are found in nature, which includes the physiological systems of

human body, local and global ecosystems, in climate and in human learning processes (Von Bertalanffy, 1968). Systems theory serves within the area of systems science itself as well as bridge for interdisciplinary dialogue between autonomous areas of study.

The early investigators used systems theory for defining a new way of thinking about science and scientific paradigms due to interdependence of relationships created in organizations. The system composed of regularly interaction or group activities interrelation. The systems theory defines interdependence between groups of activities in the society, whenever there is occurrence of something in one sector of a society; it affects the other sectors of the society. The system viewed that, the social insecurity occurred due to Boko Haram insurgency of attacks, destructions of lives and properties, armed robbery, kidnapping and raping and other social violence which affected social sector of the society.

This has negatively affected economic sector whereby companies and industries were closed, internal and external investments stopped, unemployment increased and other economic activities negatively affected due to the lack of peace and security. This has badly reflected to political sector where it created confusion in government policy formulation and implementation.

5. Methodology

The research is qualitative in nature and has adopted descriptive analysis. The study is heavily relied on secondary data whereby data was collected from journals, seminar papers, articles and so on.

6. Emergence of Boko Haram

Boko Haram emerged as a dreaded Islamic Sect Known as “Jama’atul Ahlil Sunnah Lidda’awati Wal Jihad” meaning that a group of people who committed themselves to the propagation of Jihad and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessing be upon Him) (Meehan and Spaier). Boko Haram means “Western education is forbidden” meaning that anything that comes from West is not allowed and is sinful according to the propagation of its members. Some scholars said that, the origin of Boko Haram can be traced to the ‘Yantatsine violence that took place in 1980s and caused the loss of lives and properties in Northern Nigeria. According to Adesoji: The ‘Yantatsine violence was caused by radical and conservative Islamic group that emerged and gained popularity in northern part. Muhammad Yusuf was among the members he was a school dropout; he

studied in Chad and Niger Republic where he built local religious schools and mosque before coming back to Maiduguri. Muhammad Yusuf later became the local leader of one of such group called Jama'atul Tajdeedil Islam, as a result of a dispute over its tactics and strategy, he left the group. Other scholars stated that, Muhammad Yusuf was influenced by 'Ibn Taymiyyah' who was a fourteen century legal scholar that preached on Islamic fundamentalism. Muhammad Yusuf built religious schools and mosques in Maiduguri in 2002 which attracted many students not only from northern Nigeria, but from Chad, Cameroon and Niger (Farouk, 2012). He influenced the students through his teaching and propagating on Jihad on Nigerian government in particular northern part that must adopt Islamic law, if not he would launch attacks on both humans and institutions. The Boko Haram was founded by Muhammad Yusuf in 2002 in Maiduguri with the vision of establishing of Islamic law (Sharia) under governorship of Ali Modu Sheriff. He built mosque and Islamic schools whereby parents from Nigeria and other neighbouring countries fetched their children especially poor parents, and soon the centre transformed from Islamic school to a jihadists recruiting centre. In 2004, the centre was relocated to his village Kanamma in Yobe state near Niger Republic border. It was reported in a News watch magazine article in 2004 that "many students from technical colleges in Maiduguri and Damaturu had torn up their educational certificates and discarded their studies and joined the Qur'anic lessons and preaching" (Danjibo 3).

This preaching and lectures by Muhammad Yusuf spread not only among students, but even among the local government officials as well as the executive governor of Borno State Ali Modu Sheriff was asked by his former commissioner Alhaji Buji Foi to join the movement. Recently, the Boko Haram exposed conditionality to Federal Government of Nigeria for ceasefire agreement. It includes the resignation of Executive Governor of Borno State Alhaji Kashim Shettima, Senator Ali Modu Sheriff to be on watching trial and imposition of sharia legal system in the 12 Muslim northern states. The Islamic militant group asked for the trial of number of politicians, traditional rulers and security staff who have their hands in the killings of its members in 2009 uprising in Borno state, they should be brought under Islamic law.

7. The Causes of Boko Haram in Nigeria

➤ Insecurity:

There is no any country that can achieve its development without security, security is the back bone of every development, and is it political, economic and social. Nigeria as

a giant of Africa, but it terribly faces a problem of economic, political and social insecurity which restricted its national development since the end of civil war in 1970. Boko Haram is a great threat to the country which destroyed the northern part of the country due to lack of security. This disaster of Boko Haram caused the distorting and collapse of Nigerian national security. According to Eme, Boko Haram brought a widespread of insecurity all over the northern Nigeria (the most populated part of the country), it caused the increase of tensions among the various ethnic group, collapse in development activities, frightening of foreign and national investors, border insecurity of neighbouring countries, daily attacks in Borno, Kano, Yobe and Adamawa states, major attack in Kano which killed over 200 people and other three attacks in Abuja that included the bombing of UN headquarter in August 2012. Attacks on mosques, churches, governmental institutions and parastatals, all these attacks are intended to put pressure and inflame religious tensions on the nation (Eme, et. Al, 2012).

➤ **Youths' Unemployment:**

The vicious cycle of poverty that mainly happened is all due to youths' unemployment which approximately over 64 million youths' are unemployed and 1.6 million are under-employed in Nigeria. Unemployment causes social frustration, dejection, dependency on family and desperation that forced youths to embark on bad social attitudes of violent crimes, assault, burglary, extortion, kidnapping, terrorism, militancy, destruction of lives and recently insurgency of Boko Haram. According to Awogbenle, unemployment became a great problem on Nigerian youths and juxtaposed a terrible risk and fear to the society. The economical and psychological pressure of youth unemployment is disaster to both individual and society (Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, 2010).

➤ **Poverty**

Nigeria is a country with almost 200 million people and approximately 500 ethnic groups speaking different languages and culture with about fifty percent Muslims, forty percent Christians and ten percent others. The country has abundant of human and natural resources and number six in terms of oil wealth global ranking, and an OPEC member. Despite all these endowment of human and natural resources, Nigeria has currently been ranked as 158 out of 177 poor economies by Human Development Index (HDI, 2008). According to International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, 2007), that despite the Nigerian resources of human and natural endowment as well as oil

wealth, the country ranked as one of the poorest countries in the global ranking with over 70 percent of its population as poor and 35 percent in absolute poverty (Kester, 2012). This problem of poverty caused many of Nigerian citizens to engage in social violence. According to Shettima (2009), the Almajiri (child pupil) scattered all over the streets with calabash in their hands for alms begging very dirty, hungry, and thirsty and in traffic hazards. In northern Nigeria, the Almajiris were seriously neglected as the northern of part children that usually cause them willingly to join Boko Haram and engage in violent aggression and other social and criminal activities of Boko Haram of suicide bombing. As reported in Saturday Tribune of 14th July, 2012, a fifteen year suicide-bomber (an Almajiri) attacked the Maiduguri Central Mosque and killed ten innocent Nigerians with the narrow escape of the Emir of Borno State and the Borno State Deputy Speaker (Bwala, 2012).

➤ **Political Instability and Corruption:**

The high number of poverty is caused by high level of corruption within the Nigeria as it was ranked among the most corrupt country in the world in 2001 (the Transparency International Corruption Index, 2001). According to Adetoro 2012, the majority of Nigerian agencies and ministries were found guilty of corruption and the police was ranked as the most corrupt agency among them which gives chance to Boko Haram insurgency to expand its militant activities. Johnson (2011) reported that illegal public executions of Boko Haram sects and hundreds of extra-judicial killings by Nigerian police as depicted on the Al-Jazeera TV were allowed to “go uninvestigated and unpunished” as reported by Amnesty International. Due to high number of police corruption and injustice to Boko Haram, Utebor (2012) stated that the former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo called the National Assembly political office holders as ‘rogues and armed robbers’ due to their oil scandal in Nigeria. This confirms the allegation of the Central Bank of Nigerian Governor against the Nigerian political office holders (that are less than one percent of the population) for sharing more than twenty five percent of the national budgets to themselves (Sanusi, 2010). Because of this high number of corruption among security personnel and political office holders agitated Boko Haram for sharia law in the country.

➤ **Foreign Connection:**

Boko Haram for being movement of Islamic Jihad Propagation in northern Nigeria, but it is being questioned that there is a signal of foreign intervention or influence from other foreign countries or organization that finance it with money and weapons to discharge its insurgency accordingly and continue with its daily violent activities of attacks, kidnapping, raping, assault, burglary, extension, terrorism, militancy and other social violence. According to United Nations reported that, Boko Haram has a connection with Al-Qaeda Islamic Movement (AQIM) in the Maghreb region in order to expand its mission (Nossiter, 2012). Another report from Johnson (2011) stated the link between the Boko Haram, AQIM and Somalia's Al- Shabaab as he considered the similarities of their violent activities of suicide bombing attacks and contacting the outside terrorists with an intention to relate with one another in order to threat United Nations and its allies due to the suicide bombing of UN House in Nigeria in August, 2011 by Boko Haram.

8. The Impact of Boko Haram on Nigerian National Development

➤ Economic Impact:

Boko Haram violent activities of attack has brought a serious paralysis to business, banking sector, markets, tourism, transport system, hospitality, internal and external investment, companies and other economic activities. According to Okereocha (2012), due to attacks on banks, markets, parks and government departments in northern Nigeria, human capital and investors collapsed and became threat against economic development because of attacks on commercial areas which has led to the migration of people to other parts of the country. Boko Haram attacks has caused economic backwardness in Nigeria and necessitated increase in poverty, unemployment, insecurity and failure in sustainable human development that is not only in the northern part, but the entire country as well as neighbouring countries like Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Benin. According to former minister of information, Mr. Labaran Maku said that the Kano which served as the commercial centre of not only the North, but the entire neighbouring countries since before the evolution of Nigeria, Kano has been the commercial centre of Western Sudan for the past of 500 years; it has been destroyed by terrorist attacks. The more you destabilized peace in Kano, the more you destabilized the foundation of economic and social well-being of northern region (Suleiman, 2012).

➤ Political Impact:

The insurgency of Boko Haram has created a serious confusion in Nigerian political system and reduced its performance in the affected areas where its visions and missions reduced and became unrealistic due to the terrible militant activities which jeopardized the whole society and put the nation into trauma as well as the political performance of politicians and other activists. The activities of Boko Haram spoiled the image of Muslims especially from non-Muslims who considered that all Muslims are extremists and fundamentalists particularly the Christians who do not mingle with Muslims. The insurgence of Boko Haram juxtaposed a terrible relationship between Nigeria and other nations of the world due to foreign nationals kidnapping and hostages without demand for ransom which caused the United States of America warned its citizens not to visit northern states affected by Boko Haram attacks. The Boko Haram attack forced foreign nationals to leave the country, and school, universities, ministries, companies and other government protocols and politicians to migrate from the affected areas for their safety. According to Anyandike and Nkechi (2013) noted that, the attacks of Boko Haram do not consider age, sex or nationality, but it affected entire nations and survivors of the attacks are afraid to send their children to schools because of insecurity while the attack by Boko Haram is not limited to urban or rural areas, but it cut across the boundaries which affected the neighbouring countries. According Alozieuwa (2012) as cited by Anyadike (2013) “the challenge juxtaposed by Boko Haram in Nigeria is not only the threat of its terrorist acts of propagation Islamic law in the country, but the confusions of exact causes of the violence in Nigeria such as socioeconomic, political and religious factor.”

➤ **Social Impact:**

The north eastern part of Nigeria is a region which suffered from serious underdevelopment and lagging behind in terms of infrastructure, education, security and other development indices, this vicious cycle of poverty and underdevelopment paved a simple way of embracing Boko Haram mission and activities by youths due to the high tension of daily life stress, the youths became the terrible militant that engaged in sporadic bombings of the major northern cities such as Kano, Kaduna, Maiduguri, Jos, Zaria, Damaturu, Adamawa, Bauchi and others. This caused the killings of both Muslims and Christians in mosques and churches; this proves that the Boko Haram insurgency is totally against the all nation which needs collective effort to fight against Boko Haram. Other concluded that Boko Haram has a connection with foreign terrorist organizations. The constant bomb attacks by Boko Haram have impacted negatively on lives and

properties. The available statistics has indicated as Human Right Watch (2012) reported a total death of 935 persons in 164 attacks, 550 people were killed through suicide bombing, another 550 were killed in 135 attacks in 2011 alone (Amnesty International, 2012). According to Oluwaseun, Boko Haram has wantonly destructed the property with worth of several billions of naira through bombing attacks (Oluwaseun, 2012). The Boko Haram attack has reduced the number of tourists because of fear of attacks which led to the cancellations of much national and international tourism in the country. According to Deemua (2013) the Boko Haram insurgency has led to the cancellation of international football games between Nigeria Super Eagles and Samba Boys of Brazil in 2012, Arsenal 2012 tour proposal to Nigeria, the Nigerian Premier League between Jigawa Golden Star and Ocean Boys, English top-flight club in EPL 2012 and other national and international events were cancelled due to fear of attacks, these events cancellation negatively affected tourisms which contributes to the Nigerian national economic and social development.

9. Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, Boko Haram has spoiled the image of Islam and Muslims in Nigeria due to their propagation which is totally contrary to Islamic teaching, because prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him) lived with non-Muslims (Jews, Christians and Mushriks) during his life time and never forced them to embrace Islam, he administered judgement on them based on their faith and scriptures. Boko Haram jeopardized government policy and damaged government properties which impacted negatively on national development be it economic, political and social affairs. The daily attacks by Boko Haram on public has caused loss of lives and properties of billions of naira which there is no any religion that agreed with that, these acts of militant sect is totally against Islamic teachings.

In recommendation, the Nigerian government has to formulate a policy that will create an employment among the youths within the country. The government security personnel both military and police need to be equipped with new modern sophisticated equipment. The border patrol needs to be well secured. The government has to investigate the internal and external sponsors of Boko Haram and block the financial flow internally and externally so that government will have a control over the insurgency. Lastly, the government will make sure that it improves the quality of life of Nigerians physically and psychologically.

Reference:

African Development Bank, "African Economic Outlook," Tunis (2012).

Awogbenle, A.C. and Iwuamadi, K.C., "Youth Unemployment: Entrepreneurship Development Programme as an Intervention Mechanism," African Journal of Business management, 4(6)(2010) 831-835.

Alozieuwa, S.H.O., "Contending Theories on Nigeria's Security Challenge in the Era of Boko Haram Insurgency." The Peace and Conflict Review. Volume 7, Issue 1-ISSN: (2012): 1659-3995.

Anyadike, I. and Nkechi, O., "Boko Haram and National Security Challenges in Nigeria; Causes and Solutions." Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development (2013): Vol.4, No.5, pp 2222-2855.

Bwala, J., '15- year-old bombs mosque, kills 10'. Saturday Tribune, 14th July, 2012, p-6.

Chothia, F., "Who are Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamists?" Retrieved on April 25th ,2012 from [www.bbc.com/uk/news/world](http://www.bbc.com/uk/news/world-africa-13809501) africa 13809501.

Danjibo, N. D. "Islamic fundamental and sectarian violence: The Maitatsine and Boko Haram crisis in Northern Nigeria". Retrieved March 15, 2012 from <http://www.ifra.nigeria.org>

Deemua, G.A., Ogujiofor, M.A., "Terrorism in Northern Nigeria: Effects on Sports Development." Academic Research International,(2013): Vol.4 (2), pp293-296.

Eme, O. L. and Ibietan, J., "The Cost of Boko Haram Activities in Nigeria." Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (OMAN Chapter (2012):) Vol. 2, No.2. 10-32.

Kester, K.O., "'National Economic Transformation: Issues, Perspective and Challenges'." (Being a lead paper presented at the 10th National Conference of the School of Arts and Social Sciences, Federal College of Education, Osiele, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nageria held between 21st -25th May, 2012.)

Mechan, P and Speier, J., "Boko Haram: Threat to the U.S House of Representative Committee on Home-land Security Sub-committee on Counter Terrorism and Intelligence." (2011).

Nossiter, A., 'Kano under siege'. The New York Times. Retrieved on 25th April, 2012 from www.nytimes.com

Okereke, N.C, "Implementing the Nigeria Defence Policy: Reflections on the Boko Haram Crisis," in Mbachau, O and Sokoto, A.A. (eds), Nigerian Defence and Security: Policies and Strategies. Kaduna: Medusa Academic Publishers Ltd. (2012).

Oluwaseun, B., "Boko Haram Catastrophic Terrorism: An Albatross to National Peace, Security and Sustainable Development in Nigeria." Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa (2012): Vol. 14, No. 1, Pp 32-44.

Sanusi, L., "'Sanusi dares NASS ON 25% expenditure: Says I stand by my statement Nigerian Tribune," 2nd December, 2010, pp.1&4.

Suleiman, T. (2011). "'Living in the shadows of Boko Haram'. Tell magazine, November 21st, 2011, p.45.

Utebor, S., 'Rogues, armed robbers in national assembly-Obasanjo'," The Punch, Wednesday 23rd June, 2012, p.1.

Uzodike, U.O. and Maianguwa, B., "Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria: Causal Factors and Central Problematic." African Renaissance 9(1) (2012).

Von Bertalanffy, L., "General System Theory: Foundations, Development, Applications." New York: George Braziller. (1968).