

**EFFECT OF BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY ON
AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES AND 2019 GENERAL
ELECTION IN NIGERIA**

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Introduction

Nigeria in recent times has witnessed an unexpected level of insecurity arising from the prominent one called insurgency which is a global phenomenon where no one is safe. Nigeria has been facing problems of insurgency for several years now which has been leading to scores of deaths of innocent civilians, foreigners, Red Cross workers, security personnels, elected officials and many government workers. However, the insecurity challenges has assumed formidable dimensions forcing the country's political and economic manager and indeed, the entire nation to rule the loss of their loved ones, investments and absence of safety of lives and property in most parts of the country. These violent crimes include kidnappings, ritual killings, ethnic and religious killings, armed banditry, suicide bombings, politically motivated killing and violence etc.

This has made national security a threat and a major issue for the government and has prompted huge allocation of the nation's budget to security in order to ameliorate the incidence of these crimes.

Insurgency is a struggle between a non ruling group and authorities, in which the insurgents consciously used political resources to destroy, reformulate or sustain the basis of one or more aspects of politics, O'neil, (1990). Insurgency is an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict (Olateju, 2013). The most dreadful insurgency affecting Nigeria is the Boko-Haram militants operating in the North-Eastern Nigeria and came to prominence in 2009. The insurgent group employed an open confrontation with the Nigeria State started from 2009 (Ifeanyi, 2012). This Boko Haram group is regarded as the second rated terrorist group in the world. An estimate of about twenty two thousand deaths has been attributed to them due to religious extremism and fanaticism belief of the group.

Both Muslims and Christians were killed, mosques, churches, markets, banks, school, institutions were destroyed. Men, women and children were seriously affected by becoming refuge, orphan or widow (Harnischfeger, 2014). However, terrorism is a global phenomenon which has occurred in virtually all parts of the world-a fact which further attests to its global nature and character (Mkpa, 2010). In terms of its frequency of occurrences, terrorism has not only continued to be on the increase but also has continued to gain sophistication and complexity.

Therefore, this paper is an attempt to examine the effects of Boko Haram insurgency on agricultural practices and 2019 general election in Nigeria.

The Conceptual Meaning of Terrorism

The concept of terrorism is a relative term that has different definitions and meanings from different scholars. Mkpa (2010) defined it as the use of violence by subnational group, or clandestine state agency for obtaining political intimidate or otherwise affects the emotions, attitudes and behaviours of a target audience considerably larger than the actual victims. The UN defines it as any act intended to intimidate a population or compel a government or international body to act in a specific way.

Also, Unouba (2011) sees terrorism as the premeditated use of threat or use of violence by an individual or group to cause fear, destruction or death, especially against unarmed targets, property or infrastructure in state intended to compel those in authority to respond to the demands and expectations of individual or group behind such violent. Oche (2001) defined terrorism as the use of violence on the part of non-governmental groups to achieve political ends.

Also, United States Government counter Insurgency Guide (2009) defines it as a process of subverting or displacing the government and completely or partially control the resources and political power of a given territory.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this paper is to critically discuss how Boko Haram insurgency affecting agricultural practices in Nigeria especially in the North-Eastern part of the country and just recently concluded election of 2019. There is no doubt about it that, it is when people are well secured that meaningful development can take place.

Definition of Key Terms

Boko Haram: It refers to “Jammat Ahlul-Sunnah lid-dawa-wal-Jihad”, An Islamic Jihadist Militant and Terrorist organization based in Nigeria, Cameroon and Niger Republic.

Insurgency: This refers to a struggle between a non ruling group and authorities in which the insurgents consciously used political resources and violence to destroy lives and property.

Terrorism: This refers to a calculated use of unlawful violence or threat to put fear intended to coerce or to intimidate governments, societies in the pursuits of goals generally political, religious or ideological.

Agriculture: This refers to the growing of crops and rearing of animals

Election: This refers to the process or arrangement of choosing a leader in the country.

History, Ideology and Activities of Boko Haram

In Hausa language “Boko” means book while “Haram” in Arabic means sin or something forbidden. The loose translation of the name from Hausa means “Western Education is Forbidden”. The group is an Islamic Jihadist militant and terrorist organization based in the North-East of Nigeria, Northern Cameroon and Niger Republic.

Mohammed Yusuf founded the group in 2002 in Maiduguri, Bornu State. It initially started as indigenous but later turned to a Jihadist group in 2009. When the group started in 2002, a religious complex which included a Mosque and an Islamic school was established. Many poor Muslims across Nigeria and other neighbouring countries enrolled their wards at the school. The group was not only interested in education but also wanted to create an Islamic State. The group therefore promotes a version of Islam, which makes it forbidden for Muslims to take part in political or social activity associated with Western society. These include voting during elections, wearing shirts and trousers or receiving a secular education. They also viewed Nigeria as a state governed by unbelievers and made the government their main target even when a Muslim President ruled the country. From 2009 till date, the group members have attacked police stations, military barracks, prisons, churches, mosques, etc. they have killed so many people which include army officers, police officers, civilians, politicians and operatives from other security agencies.

Theoretical Explanations on the Causes of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria

This study will make use of two theoretical propositions to explain the causes of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. The theories are anomie and deprivation.

Anomie Theory: The concept of “anomie” is the feeling of aimlessness or purposelessness provoked by certain social conditions. Theory of anomie is associated with the work of French sociologist Emile

Durkheim (1858 - 1917) and later developed by American sociologists, Robert K. Merton (1910 - 2003). Merton suggests that all social structures have two characteristics namely goals and means. The goals are those things that are worth striving for while the means are the approved methods for achieving the goals (Mkpa, 1994). Society provides a means of attaining the goals but members do not have equal opportunities for attaining the goals. Members of the society with less access to means of attaining the goals will reject the social values and strive for success by any available means. When the goals are rejected or the means for obtaining those goals are rejected, criminal behaviour results (Burke, 2009). Therefore, Boko Haram members are categorised as criminals because they rejected both the goals and the means of the society.

Deprivation Theory

Deprivation theory is of the opinion that feelings of relative deprivation arise when desires become legitimate expectations are blocked by the society. Deprivation is linked to partly poverty and social exclusion (Flynn, 2011).

Martin (2006) argued that deprived groups employ the use of violence as the only means to achieve their motive of being relatively deprived. Conditions of deprivation lead to political violence to address the unjust social order in the society. Deprivation leads to anger and violence will result. According to Mohammed (2006), relative deprivation is viewed as a potential cause of social movement and deviance, leading to extreme situations to political violence such as rioting, terrorism, civil wars, insurgency etc.

Boko Haram insurgents were said to be deprived of some certain rights such as employment, education and other opportunities that exposed them to many social problems as such they employ the use of insurgency to address the problem.

Effects of Boko Haram Insurgency on Agricultural Practices

Agriculture is the economic mainstay of Nigeria before the discovery of oil that sustained economic development of the country by then. The northern part of Nigeria is noted for agricultural practices especially the production of cereal crops. However, since the inception of insurgency especially in the North Eastern part of Nigeria, agricultural practices and rearing of animals is affected in many ways by the activities of Boko Haram. All most of the states affected in the North Eastern Nigeria that formed the major food supply to the country are unable to practice agricultural systems. Crops and animals production that provides food, hides and skin are no longer productive as a result of the insurgent activities that undermine the well being of the people, Ifenyi (2012).

Boko Haram activities is dreadful to individuals, community, organizations and government not only to the economic activities of the people alone.

Impact of Boko Haram Insurgency to 2019 Election in Nigeria

Election is a process of selecting or choosing a leader through the process of balloting boxes. It is a well known fact to note that the activities of Boko Haram insurgency have serious impact on electioneering process in the North Eastern part of Nigeria. There is fear and tension among the citizens or electorates to participate actively to select a right candidate of their choice in 2019 General Election in the country. People fear of killings through bombing, shooting or kidnapping due to the fact that insurgents always targetted the crowded areas (Ode, 2012). Boko Haram insurgency in the North East have affected greatly 2019 General Election in the country and even the previous ones. Many people in the areas affected by the insurgency are denied of their voting rights.

It is a well known fact to note that democracy in Nigeria is nascent in outlook, and the act of insurgency and other criminal activities in the country posed a serious challenges to democratic system not only in Nigeria but in Africa and world at large according to Eze (2012).

Conclusion

Insurgency has becoming an international issue that required international discourse from different scholars due to the fact that the menace affected humanity. For example in Nigeria, Boko Haram activities have affected so many things which include trading activities, businesses, education, farming, electioneering and economic development of the nation. The effects of insurgency resulted to

the displacement of about 2 million people that are in various IDP (Internally Displaced People) centres in the country. The plight of the displaced people is threatening and they have been dislocated from their families.

Recommendations

The following points below are suggested as recommendations to put an end to the problem of insurgency and other criminalities in the country. The recommendations are:-

- Insurgency is a global phenomenon, therefore government of Nigeria should partner with international community in addressing the issue of Boko Haram insurgency completely.
- Nigerians must be continually sensitized to be security conscious, since security is a collective responsibility of everybody by the various agencies of government.
- Army and other related security agencies must be well equipped with modern sophisticated weapons and ammunitions.
- The recruitment into the armed forces must be a continuous exercise in order to get right personnel that will fight these insurgents.
- Government should introduce peace education into Nigerian school systems, this will go a long way in promoting peace in the country.
- Religious, opinion and traditional leaders should be involved actively in the crusade against Boko Haram insurgency through public enlightenment in their various domains to the people.

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