

**THE IMPACT OF BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY ON
EDUCATION IN THE NORTH EAST REGION OF
NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of book haram insurgency on the educational sector in the North east region of Nigeria. The study adopted the human security theory as its theoretical framework. Data was collected from official reports of United Nations agencies and journal articles. The method of data analysis adopted in this study is the qualitative descriptive method. The study found out that the activities of bokoharam insurgents has inflicted severe damage to the educational system in the north east. A timeline of the activities of bokoharam and statistical representation of attacks targeted at school,. teachers and students were provided to back up the claim. The study concludes that the bokoharam insurgency have worsened the state of education in the north east region which has had the highest rate of illiteracy in Nigeria and there is urgent need to step up efforts to restore the confidence of the people in the safety of schools. This study recommends that government should partner with international governmental and non-governmental organizations so as to promote the safer schools initiative.

Keywords: Bokoharam, Insurgency, Education, Security, North East

Introduction

The recent insurgency that surfaced from the northern part of the country popularly known as “Boko Haram” has been a serious challenge to the country, since their inception in 2009, in the far north of Borno State; they have destroyed, killed and displaced millions of people which attracted international or global attention (Ifeoma, Purity and Anagogu, 2015). Originally, Boko Haram was referred to locally as the Nigerian Taliban because of their religious similarities to the Taliban. Boko Haram does not engage in Nigeria's political system out of an adherence to a fundamentalist form of Islam, which forbids participation unless the system is based on Sharia, or Islamic law. They have record havoc since the death of their leader, Yusuf who was reported dead in police custody in the year 2009. Popular among their destructive activities are; detonation of Intelligent Electronic Device (IED) bomb in near military Barack in Bauchi state which left 10 people dead, the attack on UN compound in Abuja in which the car suicide bomb killed 23 and 70 injured, the kidnap approximately 276 teenage girls from a boarding school in Chibok in Borno Which sparked global outrage and a “Bring Back Our Girls” campaign on social media; and so many other bombings and killings which has made foreign investors to flee leaving thousands of people unemployed and poor. They have also succeed in capturing some Barack's and communities as theirs, they have killed ten thousand men, women and children, and have displaced at least 300,000 people who have fled to Niger, Chad and Cameroon, with over \$100,000,000 properties lost(UN Library, 2019).

Government's response to the vicious attacks of Boko Haram has been a diverse mix of hope and trepidation. Hope lies in the fact that a state of emergency has been declared in (Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states) inhabited by the insurgent group. Apart from that each time the Police and other security organizations responsible for internal security seem to be overwhelmed by the insurgents, the army is usually brought in to force them to retreat. Trepidation arises from the ability of the insurgents to regroup and strike even with the imposed state of emergency. The country's vulnerability to incessant attacks from armed insurgents poses a great security challenge. The country spends 27% of its budget on internal security alone. These are resources that could have been used to rehabilitate the country's deplorable infrastructure. The government has done so much in; reinforcing troops, involving the Joint Task Force, making the army take over internal security, imposing several curfews, setting up of road blocks, moving of Army headquarters from Abuja to Maiduguri, and many other measures but to no avail.

The implication of insurgency on the development of all sectors of the North east region of the country has been severe particularly to education sector that is critical to the overall development of the country. It is against this backdrop that this paper intends to focus and critically evaluate the impact of the bokoharam insurgency on education in the North East.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the Human Security (HS) theory as its analytical framework for a systematic explanation and understanding of the issue. The notion of human security (HS) is the result of an attempt to conceptualise new understandings and practices that are alternatives to the realist thought in security studies. As noted "the concept of human security (HS) was proposed and popularised in the first half of the 1990s, when some optimism remained that, in a 'new world order', a peace dividend was possible in which security defined as 'freedom from want' as well as 'freedom from fear' would be enhanced". Human Security first emerged as a policy. The definition of human security can be read from 1994 UNDP Human Development Report which can be accepted as the milestone of human security studies. According to the Report, human security means 'first, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. Also, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in homes, in jobs or in communities. That is to say, human security focuses on 'core individual needs'. Unlike the Realist categorisation of security issues as "high politics" and "low politics", human security regards the issues like environment, health, famine, development, water, ethnic struggles as primarily important problems. This means that the main issues of human security are 'non-military threats, such as environmental problems, disease epidemics, poverty' etc. (Inglehart and Norris, (2012)

In challenging the neorealist orthodoxy, human security argues that for many people in the world – perhaps even most – the greatest threats to "security" come from internal conflicts, disease, hunger, environmental contamination or street crime. And for others, a greater threat may come from their own country itself, rather than from an "external" adversary. Human security thus seeks to challenge attitudes and institutions that privilege so-called "high politics" above disease, hunger or illiteracy. Human security assumes that with the improvement of the wealth of the "people", policy change is possible (Newman, 2010). However, the basic proposition of HS comes from its search for new referential points to the security which considers that states are "inadequate" to provide this type of security for people and from its rejection of the concepts like "national interest" and "national security". Instead, human security asserts that the individual 'should be' the main referent object of security which means 'prioritising the security of people rather than states' (Inglehart and Norris, (2012)

In summary, human security draws together 'freedom from want' and 'freedom from fear'. Human security connects different types of freedoms – freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to take action on one's own behalf. To do this, it offers two general strategies: protection and empowerment. Protection shields people from dangers. It requires concerted effort to develop norms, processes and institutions that systematically address insecurities. Empowerment enables people to

develop their potential and become full participants in decision making. Protection and empowerment are mutually reinforcing, and both are required in most situations.

Applying this to the study, the insurgency has affected the number of people who enroll into schools in the North East because the insurgents have succeeded in instilling fear among the people. This is in line with the denial of the second theme of the human security theory; freedom from fear. People are now scared of allowing their children attend schools that have been the subject of attack in recent times.

Activities of Boko Haram Terrorists

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 Ibietan (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 based 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, Ajah (2011) 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. He argued that the activities of the sect was more intensified because of the emergence of the former 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 the lack employment, income and they have been disdained by politicians after being used by these politicians for their elections victory. 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.

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 worshiping 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.

Impact of Boko Haram Insurgency on Education in North East Nigeria.

According to a survey conducted by the UNDP(2017), the areas with the lowest number of children in school are in the Northern region of Nigeria as they are worst hit by the Boko Haram attack. The level of education could also be regarded as the basis for such groups to emerge. The study shows that only 29 out of every 120 children in Borno state are in school. This low rate of enrollment into schools has been attributed to the wanton attacks perpetrated by the insurgents. Under the influence of radical Islamic ideologies, parents have been reluctant to send their children especially their female children to schools.

Testing parental understanding of education, the survey shows that 80% of parents in Zamfara State cannot read and write in English Language. Niger State 63 percent, Yobe 78 percent and Adamawa with 47 percent of parents that cannot read or write in English. This may account for why such states became breeding grounds for Boko Harams. To further confirm this, a report by the UNDP(2017) placed the literacy level in the North East at 26% making it the region with the lowest literacy level in the country. Fueled by a radical ideology that prohibits western education, Bokoharam has dealt a fatal blow on the enrolment of pupils and students to schools in the Northern Nigeria. Parents and pupils live in perpetual fear of attacks and this may have direct effect on school attendance. Since the group intensified its operations in 2010, the willingness to attend schools in ravaged areas has drastically reduced.

Boko haram attack is not restricted to the urban or rural areas. Their attacks cut across boundaries. However, Ajah (2011) stated that good security measures are always put in place in the urban centres as it house all government parastatals and structures. As soon as there is an attack in the urban centres, the Joint Task Force (JTF) a special military force is often mobilized to ensure adequate security. This to a reasonable extent amount for why there is a significant difference in the urban and rural school attendance. The primary, secondary and tertiary schools may also vary in their rate of school attendance. The primary school child is often guided and directed by the parents. When there is a security problem, parents will definitely protect their children by keeping them indoors, if possible; out of school for that period until adequate security measures are put in place by the government. The secondary school child in the other hand has some little freedom to decide whether to go to school or not, some may risk by going to school at the heat of such attack while some may stay away for a very long time. The tertiary school students are guided by a uniform academic calendar such that the period of the National Youth Service Corps is uniform for all tertiary institutions in Nigeria, so in-respective of the security situation, students risk to go to school although the federal government often beef - up security in campuses so that academic calendar is not disrupted (Oladunjoye and Omemu, 2013).

Table 1 Boko Haram Attack on Schools.

SN	Description
1	During the reporting period, Boko Haram used arson and other means to destroy schools. In 2017, the UN estimated that the conflict between Boko Haram and security forces had destroyed 1,500 schools from January 2014 to December 2016, with at least 1,280 teacher and student casualties. These numbers represented more widespread and systematic occurrences of attacks on schools from 2013 to 2015 than during the 2009 - 2013 period. Attacks on schools decreased in 2015 because the insurgents have fewer institutions to attack.
2	An Amnesty International report stated that up to 50 schools were attacked, burned, or destroyed in Borno state alone in 2013, resulting in the deaths of 70 teachers and dozens of students.
3	On March 11, 2013, unidentified attackers set fire to Gwange Primary School in Maiduguri city, Borno state, burning it down. Unidentified attackers reportedly set fire to Gwange III Primary School in the same city two days later.
4	A local media source reported that on March 23, 2013, persons believed to be members of Boko Haram burned down three private schools in Biu town, Borno state, at night.

5	<p>The UN, international media sources, and the US Department of State reported that on July 6, 2013, members of Boko Haram attacked and burned down a secondary school in Mamudo, Yobe state, during the day, killing at least 29 male students and one teacher. Human rights reported that Bokoharam had previously threatened to kill students found at schools.</p>
6	<p>Human Rights Watch reported that on September 6, 2013, Boko Haram bombed the science laboratory at the Government Secondary School Gajera and the principal's house, before abducting the principal and capturing six students. Boko Haram members forced students to point out the homes of teachers and local education administrators in the village, then killed the teachers they found and destroyed their teaching certificates. They then abducted one of the students and killed the other five.</p>
7	<p>According to media sources, unidentified assailants set fire to a residential building for education personnel at a girls' secondary school in Yana, Bauchi state, on the night of April 20, 2014.</p>
8	<p>News outlets reported that unidentified assailants razed two primary schools in Shedarki and YelwanDarazo villages, Bauchi state, on the night of May 14, 2014.</p>
9	<p>News sources reported that on September 7, 2014, Boko Haram members destroyed a school when they attacked Buratai town, Borno state</p>
10	<p>In November 2014, Boko Haram fighters stormed a school in Chikide, Borno state, and set classrooms on fire, burning eleven children and three teachers to death. They also abducted several women and children in the same attack.</p>
11	<p>On November 10, 2014, a suicide bomber dressed as a student detonated a bomb during a school assembly at the Government Science and Technical College in Potiskum, Yobe state. According to Human Rights Watch, the explosion killed 26 students and inflicted minor to grave injuries on an additional 81 students.</p>
12	<p>Local media reported that on January 12, 2015, Boko Haram members stormed Askira town, Borno state, using explosive and incendiary devices to damage several buildings, including a school.</p>
13	<p>On March 28, 2015, at least three schools being used as polling stations in Enugu, Anambra, and Bauchi states were the targets of explosive devices and arson. Boko Haram committed the attack in Bauchi, but the perpetrators of the other two remained unidentified, according to local news sources.</p>
14	<p>Media sources reported that on June 17, 2013, unidentified gunmen reportedly killed nine students who were taking exams in a school in Maiduguri, Borno state.</p>
15	<p>Also on June 17, 2013, according to local news sources, Boko Haram captured and lynched a National Examination Council education official in Maiduguri, Borno state.</p>
16	<p>The director of a Quranic school in Damaturu, Yobe state reported to Human Rights Watch that government security forces continually harassed him during the year, possibly because they suspected him of being linked to Boko Haram.</p>
17	<p>The UN and Human Rights Watch reported that in 2014, on February 25, Boko Haram killed at least 29 school boys at night in Federal Government College in BuniYadi village, Yobe state.</p>
18	<p>One of the most highly publicized attacks on education occurred on April 14, 2014, when Boko Haram stormed a government-run secondary school for girls in the Chibok local government area in Borno state. They burned down the school and kidnapped 276 female students.</p>
19	<p>On November 24, 2014, Boko Haram kidnapped at least 300 students from ZannaMobarti Primary School in Damasak, Borno state, in the group's largest documented school abduction, according to Human Rights Watch.</p>
20	<p>Between March 13 and March 15, 2015, Boko Haram reportedly fled with the 300 children. Two years later, in March 2017, the children still had not been found.</p>

Source: Compiled by the author.

The data in Table 1 above shows that schools have been heavily attacked by the bokoharam sect. Students and teachers alike are being killed while educational facilities are being destroyed. The attacks are motivated due to the allegation by the sect that schools are institutions that promote this western education that they are all out against.

Table 3: Boko Haram Attacks on Higher Institutions.

S/N	DESCRIPTION
1	Unknown assailants abducted the education director of degree programs in Borno state on January 22, 2013. It was unclear whether the director was targeted because of his profession or for another reason.
2	News sources reported that on February 23, 2013, unknown perpetrators kidnapped a senior lecturer from a federal low-cost estate in Maiduguri, Borno state, shortly after a battle in the area. The outcome of the kidnapping was unknown.
3	In a mass casualty attack on September 29, 2013, armed assailants believed to be members of Boko Haram stormed the College of Agriculture in Gujba, Yobe state, killing 65 students and wounding 18 more, according to the UN and other sources.
4	Scholars at Risk reported that on February 13, 2013, police interrupted an Academic Staff Union of Universities meeting and detained between 10 and 12 lecturers, whom they later released.
5	Scholars at Risk found that on June 12, 2013, at the University of Maiduguri, a student protest against university transport prices turned violent after police used teargas and live bullets against the students, killing one. Police denied this and stated that protesters brought the student's body from off campus.
6	Scholars at Risk and local mediareported that police teargassed student protesters in Adamawa in October 2013.
7	Scholars at Risk and international media reported that on February 28, 2014, the College of Education in Yobe state, closed down after Boko Haram sent a series of threats to students.
8	Human Rights Watch, Scholars at Risk and media sources reported that on June 23, 2014, a suicide bombing occurred on the campus of the Borno State School of Health, killing at least seven prospective students and wounding at least twenty more.
9	Human Rights Watch and Scholars at Risk reported that on July 30, 2014, in the University of Maiduguri, a female suicide bomber dressed as a student detonated a bomb in a crowd of students gathered around a notice board.
10	Scholars at Risk, Human Rights Watch, and other sources documented an attack on September 17, 2014, in which suspected Boko Haram suicide bombers detonated their devices in a full lecture hall in a government-run teacher training college while other assailants threw explosives and shot at those who attempted to escape.
11	In a second attack on a teacher's training college reported in 2014, 27 students and 2 teachers were killed during the attack.
12	International and local media reported that on January 16, 2017, two Boko Haram child suicide attackers detonated their devices at the University of Maiduguri, killing at least four people, including one professor, and injuring 15 more.
13	Local and international media and Scholars at Risk reported another attempted attack on May 20, 2017, when a suicide bomber detonated his vest just outside the University of Maiduguri. There were no casualties in the incident.
14	Attacks on the University of Maiduguri continued. BBC News and Scholars at Risk reported that on June 25, 2017, a suicide attacker detonated his device on campus, killing a female security guard. The university was digging trenches around its facilities at the time in an effort to prevent these attacks from occurring.
15	Despite efforts to prevent attackers from entering campus, Scholars at Risk found that on July 6, unidentified individuals entered the University of Maiduguri and set off explosive devices. There were no reported casualties in the attack.

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 3 above shows that even higher institutions have not been spared in the attacks. Lecturers and students have been victims of series of attacks. In an interview conducted in a study by UNDP (2017), one of the respondent who is a teacher lamented that: "I have been a teacher for 20 years now, but I'm always afraid to attend class," Ahmadau Abba, a teacher at Jajiri Government Day School in Maiduguri explained. "Most of our colleagues have been killed or injured." The respondent in this interview clearly expressed the unwillingness of teachers to attend classes because teachers have been subjected to attacks. As with teachers, so it is with students or prospective students and the parents of these students. Using the words of the respondent: They are afraid to go to class. (UNDP, 2017)

According to a report by UNDP(2017), Girls as young as 11 have been employed as suicide bombers. Teachers have been targeted, resulting in 600 teachers being murdered and 19,000 teachers fleeing in fear. Other teachers have been threatened, injured or even kidnapped. Finding teachers who are willing to teach in the region has become a great struggle because of the dangerous repercussions. Out of a total population of 180 million, about 10 million Nigerian youths are not in school, many of them girls. Instead of reading and learning, they are married off in their teens, while out-of-school boys are recruited into terrorist ranks. By early 2016, an estimated 952,029 school-aged children have fled the violence, with little or no access to education (UNDP, 2017). This shows that teachers have been the subject of attacks by members of the sect who are all out against western education. It also shows that little girls and boys who are supposed to be in school are being indoctrinated and recruited by the terrorist group and used as suicide bombers or fighters respectively. The 952,029 school aged children who were reported to have fled the violence are supposed to be enrolled in different schools in the north east if not for the insurgency.

According to the report by UNICEF (2016) In north-eastern Nigeria, 2.8 million children are in need of education-in-emergencies support in three conflict-affected States (Borno, Yobe, Adamawa). In these States, at least 802 schools remain closed and 497 classrooms are listed as destroyed, with another 1,392 damaged but repairable. This report by UNICEF(2016) shows the severe impact of the insurgency on enrollment into schools. Clearly, the 802 schools that were closed were closed as a result of the insurgency and students who were supposed to enroll in those schools will be unable to do so. The about 497 classrooms that were destroyed is a deterrence to students who learn in these classrooms and of course, to prospective students. No parent will enroll his or her child in a school where classrooms are destroyed.

From the foregoing analysis, we can see how radical ideologies such as the belief by book haram that western education is prohibited and the influence of salafi-jihadism has inspired book haram terrorists to carry out devastating attacks on schools at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. This has led to situation where only 29 out of 120 children can be found in schools. It is also responsible for the closure of schools in 22 out of 27 LGAs in Borno state and has also led to the North East having the second highest rate of illiteracy in Nigeria at 74%. Schools have been attacked and converted to military bases, students have been killed and kidnapped, the same thing applies to teachers. Due to these attacks, as discussed above, about 55.7% of the composition of the internally displaced persons are children. Using logical inference, displaced children cannot enroll into schools as long as they are still displaced. No child will want to attend a school in a place where he or she is not guaranteed of his safety. No child will want to attend a school after seeing or hearing about what has happened to others while they were in school. No responsible parent will enroll his child given the prevailing security conditions. At the tertiary level, students will prefer to enroll into institutions that are situated in relatively safer places.

Conclusion

The Boko haram insurgency have inflicted severe damage on the political, social and economic development of the North East region. Since it is fueled by an ideology that forbids western education, the education sector has been the worst hit. Frequent invasion and attacks on primary, secondary and tertiary schools resulted to the destruction of classrooms and other educational facilities, leaving a large

number of students and teachers dead and forcing others to stay away from school. There is no doubt that the book haram insurgency has worsened the state of education in a region that has the highest illiteracy rate in the country and lags behind economically when compared to other region. Without education, people won't thrive. The activities of the insurgents is a threat to both the rights of the people to survive and to thrive. Thus, government is enjoined to step up efforts so as to guarantee the rights of the people.

Recommendation

The federal government should partner with other stakeholders such as international organizations, non-governmental organizations and local groups so as to effectively implement the safer schools initiative, promote education in the North East and restore the confidence in educational sector in the North East region of Nigeria

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