

LOGICAL SLEDGE OF BOKO-HARAM INSURGENCY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: A NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE.

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to draw a logical inverse proportionality in the relationship between Boko-Haram insurgency and economic development in Nigeria. Hence this paper claims that the more the tales of Boko-Haram insurgency is on the increase, our economic status must logically remain tepid. This paper applies the philosophical methods of hermeneutics and Turabian documentation in the attempt to make a sharp interpretation of facts regarding the inverse relationship between Boko-Haram insurgency and the economic status of Nigeria. The paper studies Boko-Haram insurgency in Nigeria and by critical analysis, states the degree of harm caused to the economic status of Nigeria. Our findings reveal that Boko-Haram insurgency has claimed so many lives and destroyed properties worth billions of naira in Nigeria leading to economic downturn, mutual mistrust, psychological trauma, internal displacement, widened ethnocentrism, dehumanization, criminality such as rape, abduction, robbery, e.t.c. The studies reveal the *laissez-faire* attitude of the government in matters of Boko-Haram insurgency because some political stakeholders use these insurgents as political tools to widen their political powers and influence hence making Boko-Haram uncontrollable. The implication of this paper is a distress call on all and sundry especially the government to sit up for necessary actions minding the impact of Boko-Haram in Nigerian economy. The actions include; stopping the rampage of Boko-Haram, punishing the culprits legally minding justice and equity, better equipment of the internally displaced persons' camps, adequate feeding, empowerment schemes, medical and psychological assistance (trauma centers), e.t.c. Similarly, Non-Governmental Organizations and Religious Bodies are called upon to join the crusade in order to redeem the devastation of Boko-Haram in Nigeria. The logic is that when these conditions are well employed and Boko-Haram insurgency is eschewed, Nigeria would have become so fertile enough to boost economic development.

Key Words: Boko-Haram, Insurgency, Nigeria, Economy, development, e.t.c.

Understanding Boko-Haram Insurgency in Nigeria.

Simply put, insurgency can be understood as an attack on an unprotected member(s) of the public resulting into wounds or injuries, loss of lives and properties, internal displacement of persons or groups of persons from their living environment, e.t.c. Also, insurgency is the state of insurrection, rebellion or sedition to a constituted authority or government¹. In the same vein, insurgency refers to violence organized by individual or group to fight or oppose the implementation of law or government.² Therefore, insurgency is characterized by two main features of crime and inhuman treatment or violation of human rights.³ It is therefore obvious that insurgency imposes a great threat to the general security of a nation and frustrates economic developmental strides.

Today in Nigeria, no doubt, the most unbearable and notorious insurgency group is the Boko-Haram sect or the Jama'atu Ahlus-Sunnah Lidda'Awati WalJihad. Boko-Haram is a terrorist group in Nigeria that opposes government, western education and civilization⁴. This is an extremist and Islamic fanatical group which began like a small Sunni Islamic sect supporting a firm understanding and execution of Islamic law for Nigerians. Its derivation as Boko-Haram in Hausa language means, "western language is sinful"⁵. This sect not only rejects western culture but government, modern sciences and civilization. Boko-Haram began their activities 2002 though with little influence until 2009.

Boko-Haram can be said to have officially been founded by Mallam Mohammed Yusuf in 2002 in Maiduguri with the aim of establishing Sharia government in Borno and neighboring states⁶. It is on record that this sect was already in existence as at 1995 as Shabaab Muslim Youth Organization and Mallam Lawal was their leader. At the takeover of leadership by Mallam Mohammed Yusuf, Boko-Haram gained political influence and popularity. It was not a violent group until the death of Yusuf, his father in-law and Ustaz Buji Foi (major financial donor), and other members in police custody. In the same vein, the death of its initial leadership and Abubakar Shekau a Kanuri native who once boasted saying; "I enjoy killing any one that Allah commands me to kill-the

way I enjoy killing chickens and rams”⁷, increased the terrorism of the sect especially in the Northern and gradually to the Southern and Western Nigeria. Yusuf was shot dead while trying to escape from police custody⁸. Hence they turned to the use of lethal weapons such as: rocket propelled grenades (RPGs), anti-tank missiles, Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), missiles, A-K 47 rifles, as well as machetes and daggers, and other very dangerous weapons⁹.

According to Gilbert, in 2010, Boko-Haram became a full-blown terrorist group with attacks on police stations and military barracks, jailbreaks to free members, release of detained colleagues, restoration of its destroyed mosque and compensation for members killed by troops¹⁰. All these were in their attempt to avenge the supposed murder of their comrades¹¹ and the brutal attack on them which led to the death of over 800 members in 2009. Unfortunately, Gilbert explained further that Boko-Haram in the early stage was a mobilization of women and children, school dropouts and unemployed university and polytechnic graduates and most of whom were encouraged to tear their certificates¹². This attempt led to severe mental decolonization of members, strict interpretation and adherence to the Quran. They claimed that unemployment, western education and poverty/underdevelopment are results of bad government.

Boko-Haram can be said to be the most injurious insurgent group in Nigeria. They have killed thousands of people especially in the North Eastern states of Nigeria¹³ and these days they are spreading down other parts of Nigeria like wide fire under different guise such as Fulani Herdsmen, e.t.c. They target central areas with greater concentration of persons to unleash mayhem to such places as Churches¹⁴, Mosque, Motor Parks, Schools, Police Stations¹⁵, Big offices, Very Important Persons in the society especially those in authority, e.t.c¹⁶. Similarly, Boko-Haram insurgency has led to the destruction of properties worth billions of naira¹⁷.

Boko-Haram Insurgency and Economic Development in Nigeria.

No doubt, security of state is the priority of government. It is the greatest concern of every nation to mind the security of her integrity, lives and properties. Hence the state of security has a logical effect on the provision of food, health, environmental needs, economy, politics, social or physiological life of the state, e.t.c. As earlier stated, the aim of this paper is to draw a logical inverse proportionality in the relationship between Boko-Haram insurgency and economic development in Nigeria. This logic shows that the more the tales of Boko-Haram insurgency is on the increase, Nigerian economic status must logically remain tepid. Therefore, a sincere attempt to quell Boko-Haram is a conscious effort to boost Nigerian economy and meaningful existence.

Unfortunately, the findings of this research reveal that Boko-Haram insurgency has claimed so many lives and destroyed properties worth billions of naira in Nigeria leading to economic downturn, psychological trauma, internal displacement, widened ethnocentrism, dehumanization, criminality such as rape, abduction, robbery, torture, e.t.c. Little wonder Adamu, bemoaned the security state of Nigeria when he alarmed that Nigeria has witnessed unimaginable loss of lives and properties that has attracted the attention of the international community such that besides the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970, Nigeria has never had it so bloody than the time of Boko-Haram minding the number of Nigerians killed¹⁸.

It is appalling that the socio-economic and political resources that ought to be pulled together for the development of the entire country are being wasted on various efforts towards controlling insurgency in Nigeria. It is no news that that much of Nigerian budget goes into security, control of insurgency and care of the internally displaced. It is saddening enough that in 2012, the budget of N921.91 billion was set to combat terrorism in Nigeria whereas such amount would have been of immense support to developmental programmes. Also, Boko-Haram insurgency has crippled individual business of some well known businessmen leading to closure or abandonment of peoples' business

activities for safety and forced migration to other parts of Nigeria considered safer. The report of 2011 World Investment Report of the United Nations Conference on Trade Development stated that Nigeria lost about N1.3 trillion because of Boko Haram insurgency especially in Kano and Kaduna regions¹⁹.

Hence forced migration of Nigerians from the North to other parts led to population overflow in cities like Abuja, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Enugu, Owerri, Aba, e.t.c. Such migration has its attending challenges such as increase in house rent, scarcity of food and increase in prices of goods and services. Logically this situation led to mutual mistrust and low patronage to goods²⁰ and services from the Northern Nigeria such as agricultural produce and domestic security for which they have been employed in the southern region of Nigerian. No doubt the activities of Boko-Haram insurgents have constituted a major reason for economic underdevelopment in Nigeria²¹.

The activities of insurgents have led to the closure or significant reduction in the business activities of very many companies such as industries, Hotels, banks, e.t.c. One of the most disheartening is the Kano Kanti-Kwari textile Market which is the oldest and biggest textile markets in the Sub-Sahara Africa²². Also, disheartening is to note that Kano alone has a record of about 126 industries that are already closed down following insurgency and instability. This situation has biased the mind of the whole world that Nigeria is unsafe for business activities or habitation²³.

Regrettably, the activities of Boko-Haram did not only encourage internal migration in Nigeria but discouraged foreign investors. Boko Haram insurgency has really discouraged Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Nigeria. The situation is so bad that other countries feel so unsafe investing in Nigeria minding the threat of Boko-Haram and the corresponding security threat to their investment. Others relocated their business activities to other parts of Nigeria such as the Lebanese and Indian expatriates who established businesses in Kano very many decades ago have relocated to Abuja, Lagos and the south and other left the country completely²⁴.

Conclusion

This paper has chronologically presented a listicle of the treacherous and perilous impact of Boko-Haram insurgency in Nigeria economy. This paper understands insurgency as attack on an unprotected member of the public resulting into wounds or injuries, loss of lives and properties, internal displacement of persons or groups of persons from their living environment, e.t.c. Insurgency has been identified as the state of insurrection, rebellion or sedition to a constituted authority or government²⁵. Thus this paper understands Boko-Haram as the injurious insurgent group in Nigeria. Boko-Haram group began in the Northern Nigerian states such as Borno, Adamawa, Gomber, Kano, Yobe and Abuja. Unfortunately, they are gradually spreading beyond these states of their origin. They target places where people gather to unleash mayhem such places as Churches, Mosque, Motor Parks, Schools, Police Stations, Big offices, Very Important Persons in the society especially those in authority, e.t.c.

Unquestionably, this paper has doggedly, established that Boko-Haram insurgency constitutes a threat to live and properties, hinders business activities, server ethnic relationships in Nigeria, discourages local and foreign investments, makes socio-economic development tepid and nonviable. Boko-Haram insurgency has caused a lot of tension in the country since 2009 especially in most states of Northern Nigeria having the worst hit in Adamawa, Bauchi, Bornu, FCT (Abuja), Kaduna, Kano, Plateau and Yobe²⁶ and this situation has really tortured Nigeria economy²⁷. It is very obvious that Boko-Haram insurgency is negatively co-relational to economic development. It uproots every developmental requirement and stifles every tendency of economic growth. It is obvious that Nigerian economy has experienced a great nosedive since the inception of Boko-Haram insurgency in Nigeria.

Therefore, the logic of book-Haram insurgency and economy is that of inverse relationship. Hence for any meaningful and sustainable economic development in Nigeria, the activities of Boko-Haram insurgents must be quelled least we labour in vain. It is most timely for the government to undertake the elimination of these threats as their

number one goal since the nation cannot achieve any significant economic development amidst insurgency. Most importantly, the government should be much more sincere in the fight against Boko-Haram insurgency in Nigeria minding that our finding shows that some political leaders are highly insincere in the fight against Boko-Haram. Unfortunately, some politicians trade the security of lives and properties of Nigerians for their selfish political interests. Hence the Government must be proactive, just and sincere in dealing with insurgency matters in Nigeria. It is a clarion call on the federal government to formulate and effectively implement policies and programmes capable of discouraging insurgency in Nigeria by fighting factors such as; poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, poor infrastructure, uneven development of natural resources, political marginalization, religious and cultural bigotry, e.t.c.

In the same vein, the Government is admonished to address matters of human empowerment not just by giving micro-credit loans but by encouraging education especially courses on Peace Studies, interreligious dialogue, intercultural studies and Security Management are very essential even in colleges and tertiary institutions. They should ensure adequate training and proper equipment of security agencies that fight the insurgents and legally prosecute political office holders who sponsor this hazardous group in Nigeria. This will go a long way towards character formation of the youth and encouraging them to shun vices like insurgency. Similarly, Non-Governmental Organizations and Religious Bodies are called upon to redeem the devastation of Boko-Haram by providing support to the displaced, medical care, psychological rehabilitation, and orientation by humanitarian works and education in values.

It is when these proactive measures are taken and well implemented with sincerity of purpose that the land becomes highly fertile enough for economic bounce back in Nigeria, security of lives and properties assured. No doubt that Nigerian economy will be on the rise when these factors are sincerely considered.

End Notes

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