

BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA: A PUBLIC PERCEPTION APPROACH

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Abstract

This paper investigates the factors responsible for Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. The paper attempts to unravel why insurgency became pervasive in the northeastern region of the country and solutions were proffered on how to stop it. The theoretical thrust of this paper was anchored on Merton's theory of Anomie. In this paper, the researcher adopted the mixed method which involved the quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. Respondents for the quantitative method were selected using the snowball sampling technique. The questionnaire and key informant interviews were the instruments used for data collection. Several findings were made in the paper. It was discovered, among others, that religious, political, ethnic and economic factors coupled with corruption and influences from established terrorist organizations were the major factors responsible for the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. The paper also found that insurgency can be eradicated through the use of military actions, re-orientating the insurgents and job creation. Based on the findings made in this paper, the researcher recommended robust intelligence gathering and multi-agency collaboration, among others, in the fight against the insurgency in Nigeria.

Introduction

This paper examines the views and perceptions of victims of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. The victims considered in this paper are those people who suffered one form of loss or the other as a result of the activities of the insurgents. The activities of Boko Haram insurgents occasioned migration of people living in the affected states to 'safer havens'. The relocation of people from these states was oftentimes hastily done. It created very serious crisis for the affected individuals. Many people lost their lives; some lost their dear ones while others barely escaped with their lives. Very many of the victims were maimed with several degrees of injuries.

It is therefore an understatement to state that the fear of Boko Haram in Nigeria is the beginning of wisdom. This is against the backdrop of the manner in which the sect carry out their nefarious activities almost unchallenged. Several religious groups with extreme ideologies had existed in the Nigerian society for many years. None of these religious groups could be likened to the Boko Haram sect. The reason is not far-fetched. Even the defunct Maitatsine religious groups that came up in the early 80s could not be classified alongside the present terrorist group.

This is because the Maitatsine sect never used suicide bombing in its operations. This could be as a result of the fact that suicide bombing was not common then. One of the most lethal weapons often used by the Boko Haram insurgents which distinguished them from earlier fundamentalists in Nigeria is suicide bombing. Prior to the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, suicide bombing was only heard of in foreign countries and never in the Nigerian geographical terrain. The first reported suicide bomb incident in Nigeria was carried out by a member of the Boko Haram sect on June 16, 2011. According to Salkida (2011), Mohammed Manga, a 35 year old married man with five children was the first suicide bomber in Nigeria. He bombed the Nigeria Police Force headquarters in Abuja on June 16, 2011. Salkida maintained that Manga was a fairly well to do businessman and drove overnight from Maiduguri to Abuja to carry out the attack which left about five people dead, including a police officer and many cars were destroyed in the attack. It was alleged that the bomber left four million naira in his will for his five children – two girls and three boys – before embarking on the fateful journey to the nation's capital (Salkida, 2011). It was also alleged that the bomber was calm and never hesitated or showed any sign of fear before he embarked on the journey. Salkida stressed that other members of the sect on the eve of the attack were envious of the bomber wishing they were the ones to act and gain entry into paradise (Salkida, 2011).

A suicide bomber knows he/she will die in the exercise. This form of criminality is entirely different from the conventional crimes where the criminals are afraid of death or being caught. In the case of Boko Haram insurgency, members of the sect are willing to die owing largely to religious indoctrination that they will be taken to paradise if they die while fighting the jihadist war. It is this religious indoctrination that makes the sect very hard to deal with. Military personnel deployed to fight the insurgents are afraid of dying or sustaining injuries while the people they are fighting are not only willing to fight but also ready to die for the cause they believe in. The sect declared a 'holy war' on the Nigerian nation and has threatened to do more mayhem except their conditions are met. Farouk (2015) stressed that Boko Haram was not only interested in education; rather its political goal was to create an Islamic state, and the school became a recruiting ground for jihadists. This particular goal of the sect is not tenable in the contemporary Nigerian society which is multi ethnic, multi religious and a secular state. This is also against the background that religious intolerance has since become an aberration in the modern world.

Brief History of Boko Haram

It is pertinent to explain further the meaning of Boko Haram. Boko Haram (usually translated as "Western education is a sin"), is a militant Islamist organization based in northeastern Nigeria. The sect was founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002 and seeks to establish Islamic state in Nigeria (Farouk, 2015 and (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boko_Haram)). The group's official name in Arabic is Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad, meaning people committed to the propagation of the tradition and jihad. Boko Haram proposes that interaction with the Western world is forbidden, and also opposes the government of Nigeria. It became militant in 2009 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boko_Haram).

It is therefore saying the obvious that Boko Haram is a terrorist organization. This is in view of the fact that they unleash terror anywhere they go. Terrorism has being defined severally and differently by scholars all over the world. According to Eze (2013) cited in Okoli and Iortyer (2014:40), the United States Department of Defense defines terrorism as "unlawful use of force or violence against individuals or property to coerce and intimidate government to accept

political, religious or ideological objectives”. This definition rightly captures the manner in which the Boko Haram insurgents carry out their operations in Nigeria.

There are many unanswered questions on the mission and vision of Boko Haram in Nigeria. When it was started in the year 2002 under President Obasanjo’s regime, it was non militant. The widespread current then in the core northern states of Nigeria was the implementation of Sharia law. It is necessary to state that the people who introduced Sharia law in northern Nigeria were not responsible for the emergence of Boko haram. It is a mere coincidence. It is necessary to point out that after the Maitatsine riots of the early 80s; Islamic fundamentalism was almost nonexistent or less functional in Nigeria. The introduction of Sharia and emergence of fundamentalism coincided with the establishment of democratic rule in Nigeria. Corruption and pauperization of the Nigerian populace never started with the return to democratic rule in Nigeria. It is a known fact that Nigerian economy was seriously battered during the military regimes due to massive corruption.

Zumve, Ingyoroko and Akuva (2013) examined the interconnections between endemic poverty created by official corruption, state neglect of the needs of the masses and terrorism in contemporary Nigeria and concluded that economic deprivation, frustration and desperation are the underlying causes of terrorism in Nigeria. If terrorism is actually caused by poverty as a result of corruption and state neglect, why have other sections of the country not taken to terrorist act? It is in the opinion of this paper that Boko Haram insurgency has religious, ethnic, political and others factors responsible for its formation. The first suicide bomber, Mohammed Manga was fairly well to do. According to Salkida (2011), Manga was involved in importation of goods from Dubai and was a financier of the sect. It was alleged that he willed four million naira to his family before embarking on the suicide bombing mission. Even Abdulmutallab, the young Nigerian who would have bombed an American bound flight could not be classified as coming from poor parental background. Abdulmutallab is the son of a multi billionaire in Nigeria. It is necessary to state at this juncture that poverty per se is just a necessary condition for the emergence of terrorist group but not a sufficient condition. Poverty existed in the military era and people did not take to suicide bombing. Why was suicide bombing never noticed in Nigeria until June 16, 2011 after the April 2011 general elections? Book Haram insurgents became more daring after the 2011 general election. It is imperative to clarify that the first bomb blast in Nigeria under President Jonathans’ regime was carried out by the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) on October 1, 2010 at Eagle Square in Abuja.

There are more to Boko Haram insurgency than the terrorists are willing to admit. It is possible that the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria has political, religious and ethnic undertones. For instance, after the abduction of over 200 secondary school girls from Chibok, Abubakar Shekau, the leader of Boko Haram on 4th May, 2014 said:

I am going to marry out any woman who is twelve years old, and if she is younger, I will marry her out at the age of nine. You are all in danger. I am the one who captured all those girls and will sell all of them. Slavery is allowed in my religion, and I shall capture people and make them slaves. We are on our way to Abuja and we shall also visit the South. I am going to kill all the Imams and other Islamic clerics in Nigeria because they are not Muslims since they follow democracy and constitution. It is Allah that instructed us, until we soak the ground of Nigeria with Christian blood, and so-called Muslims contradicting Islam. We will kill and wonder what to do with their smelling corpses. This

is a war against Christians and democracy and their constitution (The Nigerian Tribune Newspaper, 14th May, 2014).

With this kind of statement coming from the leader of the sect, one is forced to wonder why these terrorists are committing all these atrocities against their fellow humans. The group has consistently maintained that it is against democracy and Christianity.

It is in view of the foregoing that the following research questions were put forward to guide the researcher.

- i) What are the factors responsible for the formation of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria?
- ii) Why is the Boko Haram insurgency active in the northeastern Nigeria?
- iii) How could the Boko Haram insurgency be stopped in Nigeria?

Factors responsible for emergence of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria

Several factors were responsible for the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. For instance, Samuel (2006), Kegley (2003) and Wardlaw (1982) cited in Boye (2013) argued that terrorism was motivated by religious extremism, perceived oppression, ethnic considerations, absence of central authority, poverty, ignorance, state sponsored terrorism and ideological orientation. Furthermore, Mu'azu (2011) argued that terrorism emerged in Nigeria because of the failure of governance, a complacent security regime and absence of strong culture that enables citizens to make effective demands from their rulers. He maintained that the environment in which Nigerians live and their experiences of governance are likely contributory factors to the emergence of terrorism. However, more instructive factors were adduced for the emergence of Boko Haram groups by Sani (2011) cited in Mu'azu (2011: 18-19). According to him, Boko Haram was caused by several factors which include;

- (i) Repressive attack against the religious group by the government in 2009, (ii) The extra judicial killings of their Leader Muhammad Yusuf and others in 2009, (iii) Exclusion of members of the Group by mainstream Islamic groups, (iv) Failure of Governance in Borno and Bauchi states, (v) Federal government policy of appeasing militancy, (vi) Inspiration from the success of the armed struggle in the Niger Delta, (vii) Abject poverty and high rate of unemployment in the northern states, (viii) Proliferation of arms in the north east, (ix) Chadian civil war and illegal immigration, (x) Disconnect between elected and appointed leaders and the people, (xi) Absence of data and intelligence about individuals and organizational links with foreign groups, (xii) Absence of a rehabilitation program for religious fundamentalists, (xiii) Indolence and negligence of the northern states governors, (xiv) Misuse of security votes by states Governors, (xv) The standoff in Somalia, (xvi) Unresolved Arab Israeli crisis, (xvii) Lack of true federalism, (xviii) Resistance of the political establishment to a national conference, (xix) The collapse of public schools, (xx) Active involvement of traditional leaders in politics and (xxi) Federal government increasing reliance on foreign security agencies.

It has to be stated however, that some of the factors listed above have nothing to do with the formation of Boko Haram terrorist group in Nigeria. For instance, the repressive killing of members of the group in 2009 is not responsible for the emergence of Boko Haram because the group had existed before then. Even the killing of its leader is also not responsible for its

emergence in Nigeria. Furthermore, unresolved conflicts between the Arabs and Israel should never be seen as being responsible for the formation of the sect. Granted that many of the factors listed above could be responsible in one way or the other for the emergence of the groups, some of the factors are nowhere related to the emergence of the group in Nigeria. Mu'azu (2011:20) also contended that, "The conspicuous consumption of the ruling elite, the culture of impunity that reigns across the land and the unconscionable recruitment of the youth into violent gangs serving as political thugs, with the active backing of those in power, contribute to the security challenges Nigeria is going through."

Root causes of terrorism as enumerated by Bloom (2007) cited in Chinwokwu (2013:269) include "lack of rule of law, failed or weak states that provide havens for terrorists, corrupt government, depression, discrimination and social injustice". Chinwokwu (2013:269) on his part argued that terrorism was caused by "unemployment, absolute poverty, underemployment, rise of indigenous neo elites, executive lawlessness, marginalization, relative deprivation, oppression, neo-imperialist class, do or die politics and government insincerity and insensitivity". This is consistent with Asemah (2013) who identified several factors as being responsible for terrorism in Nigeria. According to him, terrorism in Nigeria was influenced by poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, religious intolerance and many others. In a study conducted by Taspinar (2013) cited in Asemah (2013:156), it was found that "breeding grounds for radicalism and terrorist recruitment emerge not necessarily under conditions of abject poverty and deprivation, but rather when negative religious, social, economic and political trends converge". The author further maintained that terrorism was not necessarily caused by socioeconomic problems, but by correlation between deprivation and radicalism. This paper is wont to adopt the above argument that terrorism in Nigeria was not entirely economically motivated. It could be argued that so many factors were responsible for the emergence of terrorism in Nigeria. It is possible that a conglomeration of these factors has actually made the insurgency in Nigeria more prominent.

Why is Boko Haram insurgency more active in the northeast of Nigeria?

Boko Haram insurgency is concentrated in the northeastern part of the country. One is then forced to ask why Boko Haram has persisted in the region more than in any other region of the country. Many factors could be attributed to why insurgency is more widespread in the northeastern region than in any other part of the country. According to the Statistician General of the Federation in a Press Conference in Abuja, the Northwest and Northeast geo-political zones recorded the highest poverty rate in Nigeria with 77.7% and 76.3% respectively (Nigerian Tribune, Tuesday 14th February, 2012, pp1-2) cited in Abimbola and Adesote (2012). It appears that poverty could account for the prominence of insurgency in the region than in others. This is not absolutely correct. This is against the background that the Northwest geo-political zone has a higher poverty rate and still has minimal or less cases of insurgency in the region. This implies that poverty as a factor is not sufficient enough to account for the incessant cases of terrorist acts in the region.

Another factor which may be adduced to why insurgency is common in the northeastern region of the country could be the multiplicity of borders in the region. The region has borders with Chad, Cameroun and Niger. It is likely that the porous borders enabled the poverty stricken individuals in the region to take to arms which could easily be brought in through the numerous borders. Sani (2011) cited in Mu'azu (2011) argued that the proliferation of arms in the north east, Chadian civil war and illegal immigration are part of the reasons for the emergence of Boko Haram. Series of political unrests have been recorded in Chad and Niger for some time. It is

possible that arms were smuggled into the northeastern regions easily as a result of the crises in these countries. This could explain to some extent why insurgency is more pronounced in the northeastern region than in any other region in the country. It therefore follows that the northeast geo-political zone which is the only zone in the country which has boundaries with three other countries is seriously threatened by illegal immigration and proliferation of arms from these countries. This may however account for why the region is noted for insurgency more than in any other region in the country.

How could the Boko Haram insurgency be stopped in Nigeria?

Having observed that very many factors were responsible for the emergence of terrorism in Nigeria, it becomes imperative to address these factors holistically. The very first problem to be addressed is the problem of poverty. Several policies were introduced to checkmate poverty in the country. Most of these policies failed to deliver the needed goals. The national poverty eradication programme should be revamped and implemented to the later. Creation of skill acquisition centers and job opportunities must be emphasized. This is why Boye (2013) stated that government should be more concern about the nation and the citizen by providing affordable western and religious education to all citizens. He also stressed that economic empowerment of the citizenry, young and old, should be the corner stone of government's policy. The security apparatus in the country should be strengthened to be able to confront any challenges to the state right from the entry point into the country from the neighboring countries. This implies proper manning of the borders to stop the influx of small arms used in the various activities of the insurgents (Boye, 2013). Effective information management is crucial in the fight against insurgency. Harmonization of intelligence operations which involves gathering, dissemination, direction and control of information should be integrated in a central operating unit (Chinwokwu, 2013).

Communities should be given the power to monitor their own security and develop a strong liaison with the security services. Inter-security cooperation and intelligence sharing will be very necessary in the fight against terrorism (Mu'azu, 2011). Good governance must be entrenched. This is because it is very important in stemming the tide of insurgency in the country. According to Chinwokwu (2013), good governance is built on the rule of law; equality and fairness. He noted emphatically that terrorism thrives in areas where people are mostly oppressed, suppressed and exploited. These are the fuel needed to fan the embers of terrorism in any given society. The rule by democratic principles and standard which ensures peaceful co-existence must be ensured (Chinwokwu, 2013).

Anti-terrorism laws are to be strengthened and enforced whereas the sponsors of terrorist acts must be brought to book irrespective of who they are. The personnel involved in the fight against insurgency should be properly trained on how to fight the insurgents effectively. These and many other measures must be taken to maintain law and order and also to ensure the peaceful co-existence of Nigeria is a sovereign and virile nation.

Theoretical Anchorage

This paper is anchored on Merton's Anomie theory. Merton (1968; first published 1938), cited in Haralambos and Holborn (2004:333) argued that "deviance resulted from the culture and structure of society itself. According to Merton, people feel strain when they are exposed to

cultural goals that they are unable to obtain because they do not have access to culturally approved means of achieving those goals. The goals may be material possessions and money; the approved means may include education and jobs. When denied legitimate access to these goals, some people seek access through deviant means (Kendall et al., 2004).

Merton begins with the understanding that all societies have a cultural system; this embodies the socially approved goals, and the acceptable norms or the institutionalized means for achieving these goals. According to him, in a balanced society an equal emphasis is placed upon both cultural goals and institutionalized means, and members are satisfied with both. Unfortunately, the prescribed goals and means do not permit members to pursue only the success in appropriate ways. The institutional means are not overtly available to all members of the society, and both the goals and means therefore, exert pressure on some segments of the society in non-conforming behaviour, while they struggle to achieve these success goals and values.

In Merton's word, 'the social and cultural structure generates pressure for socially deviant behaviour upon people variously located in that structure' (Haralambos and Holborn, 2004:333). When there is discrepancy between the cultural goals and the institutionalized means of achieving these goals anomie or normlessness ensues and hence criminal behaviour.

Merton outlined five possible ways people respond to the structural stress since not all the people are deviants.

i) Conformity: The individual accepts the culturally defined goals and adhere to the institutionalized means to achieving them, irrespective of his or her success or failure.

ii) Innovation: This is probably the most common form of adaptation to the structural stress by which the illegal means to success is adopted to achieve the conventionally held goals.

iii) Ritualists: This consists of people who abide by the rules (means) but lack the commitments to the goals. For examples, lower level civil servants and teachers (low-grade bureaucrats) fall into this category. Ritualists are deviant because they have rejected the success goals held by most members of the society.

iv) Retreatists: They are the dropouts. This group of people rejected both the cultural goals as well as the institutionalised means. This applies to psychotics, autists, chronic drunkards, pariahs, outcasts, vagrants, vagabonds, tramps and drug addicts.

v) Rebellion: These people reject the goals and means of the society and substitute them with new sets of values and norms for the discarded ones. For example, political revolutionaries and religious fundamentalists fall into this category. Terrorists could also be included in this category. In Nigeria, the Boko Haram terrorists fall into this category. This theory could be adopted in explaining insurgency in Nigeria. Boko Haram insurgents rejected societal goals and means of attaining them and replaced them with their fundamentalist ideology. They rejected western education and democracy; and insisted on imposing Islamic rule on everybody irrespective of your religion or ethnic affiliation.

Critics however, attacked Merton's work for neglecting the power relationships in society as a whole, within which deviance and conformity occur. Taylor (1971) cited in Haralambos and Holborn, (2004:334) criticized Merton for not carrying his analysis far enough: for failing to consider who makes the laws and who benefits from the laws. Merton was also criticized for

assuming that there is a value consensus in human society and that people deviate as a result of structural strain.

Methodology

The study adopted the cross sectional survey design. The questionnaire and key informant interviews are the major instruments used for data collection. A sample size of 500 respondents was selected using the snowball sampling technique for collection of quantitative data. This is in view of the fact that the respondents to this study are known victims of Boko Haram insurgency who relocated from the north to the southeast of Nigeria. 10 participants were chosen for the key informant interview. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages while the qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed using the narrative method of data analysis.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

| What is your age as at last birthday? | Sex | | |
|--|------------|------------|------------|
| | Male | Female | Total |
| 20 – 27 | 39 | 48 | 87 |
| 28 – 35 | 48 | 70 | 118 |
| 36 – 43 | 40 | 47 | 87 |
| 44 – 51 | 40 | 55 | 95 |
| 52 – 59 | 27 | 29 | 56 |
| 60 – 67 | 11 | 7 | 18 |
| 68 and above | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Total | 207 | 257 | 464 |
| What is your level of educational attainment? | | | |
| No formal education | 7 | 11 | 18 |
| Primary education | 77 | 105 | 182 |
| Secondary education | 99 | 102 | 201 |
| Tertiary education | 24 | 39 | 63 |
| Total | 207 | 257 | 464 |
| What is your occupation? | | | |
| Self employed | 115 | 168 | 283 |
| Civil servant | 65 | 62 | 127 |
| Unemployed/student | 27 | 27 | 54 |
| Total | 207 | 257 | 464 |
| What is your annual income? | | | |
| N0-N200,000.00 | 47 | 80 | 127 |
| N200,001.00-N400,000.00 | 48 | 58 | 106 |
| N400,001.00-N600,000.00 | 32 | 43 | 75 |
| N600,001.00-N800,000.00 | 32 | 44 | 76 |
| N800,001.00-N1,000,000.00 | 25 | 22 | 47 |
| N1,000,001.00 and above | 23 | 10 | 33 |
| Total | 207 | 257 | 464 |
| What is your marital status? | | | |

| | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|
| Single | 48 | 57 | 105 |
| Married | 123 | 156 | 279 |
| Divorced | 25 | 23 | 48 |
| Widowed | 6 | 14 | 20 |
| Separated | 5 | 7 | 12 |
| Total | 207 | 257 | 464 |
| What is your level of educational attainment? | | | |
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| Total | 207 | 257 | 464 |

Source: Field survey, 2014

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The age distribution of respondents has a mean age of 39.21 years, a standard error of mean of .547 and a median age of 39 years. Furthermore, the distribution has a modal age of 45 years and a standard deviation of 11.8 years. Other details are as shown in the table.

Table 2: Respondent's perception of Boko Haram activities

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid They are very destructive | 306 | 65.9 | 65.9 | 65.9 |
| They are fighting a just cause | 42 | 9.1 | 9.1 | 75.0 |
| They are fighting the government of the day | 55 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 86.9 |

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-------|-------|-------|
| They are fanatics with extreme views of life | 61 | 13.1 | 13.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 464 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field survey, 2014

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents (65.9%) see Boko Haram as being destructive, (9.1%) of them perceive the sect as people fighting a just cause, (11.9%) of the respondents see them as people who are fighting the government of the day while (13.1%) of them are of the view that the insurgents are fanatics with extreme views of life. A 54 year old male participant in the key informant interview from Enugu whose properties were burnt to ashes in Maiduguri in one of the expeditions of the sect stated that:

These people are very heartless, wicked and terrible. I narrowly escaped from them. They came to our shops and started slaughtering people like animals. Many of them were carrying AK 47 riffles and were shooting sporadically. I was just coming back from where I went to deliver a message to a friend who was supposed to travel that afternoon when I saw them and I fled for my dear life. Many people in that our business area were killed that day. Some of them were shot while others were slaughtered and set ablaze.

Table 3: Respondents' views on factors responsible for the formation of Boko Haram

| Response | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Religious factor | 82 | 17.7 | 17.7 | 17.7 |
| Political factor | 64 | 13.8 | 13.8 | 31.5 |
| Ethnicity | 74 | 15.9 | 15.9 | 47.4 |
| Economic factor | 84 | 18.1 | 18.1 | 65.5 |
| Corruption in the public sector | 73 | 15.7 | 15.7 | 81.2 |
| Influences from established terrorist organizations | 87 | 18.8 | 18.8 | 100.0 |
| Total | 464 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field survey, 2014

Table 3 indicates that religion, political factors, ethnicity, economic factors, corruption and influences from established terrorist organization were the major factors responsible for the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency. A 60 year old male participant in the key informant interview from Umuahia, who was a victim of bomb explosion in Maiduguri argued that:

Boko Haram was motivated by the extreme form of religious belief at the early stage of their formation. However, they later became political and started fighting government and security officials when their members were killed. After sometimes they started killing non-Muslims especially people from the southern part of the country. At present they kill anybody who is a threat to their goals. They started as religious group. They were later high jacked by politicians for political killings. It appears that they are now killing anybody who they feel is not supporting their activities.

Further inquiry was made to ascertain why the activities of the sect were more visible in the northeastern region of the country and the responses are shown in table 3.

Table 4: Respondents' views on why Boko Haram insurgency is more in the northeast of Nigeria

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Because of the level of poverty in the region | 132 | 28.4 | 28.4 | 28.4 |
| Due to illiteracy | 116 | 25.0 | 25.0 | 53.4 |
| Because of its closeness to Cameroon, Chad and Niger | 54 | 11.6 | 11.6 | 65.1 |
| Because many youths are idle in the region | 162 | 34.9 | 34.9 | 100.0 |
| Total | 464 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field survey, 2014

Respondents indicated in table 4 that insurgency in the northeastern region of Nigeria is influenced by level of poverty in the region (28.4%), illiteracy (25%), closeness to border (11.6%) and idle youths (34.9%). Most of the participants in the key informant interview were of the views that the presence of youths called the Almajiri who have limited or non-western education gave impetus to why there are more insurgents in the region than elsewhere in the country. However, a 48 year old woman from Owerri whose son died in bomb explosion in Maiduguri said:

The major reason why there are more insurgents in the region than in other parts of the country is because of the geographical location of the region. The region has boundary with Cameroon, Chad and Niger and this made it possible for militants from these countries to easily join their counterparts in the region to unleash mayhem on the people. There is also the problem of poverty because many of the youths are not having means of livelihood in the region.

Table 5: Respondents' views on whether or not insurgency could be eradicated

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|--------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid Yes | 354 | 76.3 | 76.3 | 76.3 |
| No | 70 | 15.1 | 15.1 | 91.4 |
| I don't know | 40 | 8.6 | 8.6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 464 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field survey, 2014

Table 5 shows that over three quarter of the respondent (76.3%) are of the view that insurgency could be eradicated, (15.1%) of them did not agree that it could be stopped while (8.6%) of them stated they do not know whether or not insurgency could be eradicated from the country.

Most of the participants in the key informant interview were of the view that insurgency could be eradicated from the country. Some of them even said that if access to funding is denied the sect they will natural come to a halt. However, one of the participants, a 42 year old woman from Awka emphasize that "if the government becomes very serious with the terrorists, they will

be flushed out of the country”. However, another respondent to the key informant interview, a 60 year old man from Enugu stated that “it will be difficult to stop the group. It is not impossible to stop them. It will take time and very serious intelligence gathering from the law enforcement agencies to stop them”.

Table 6: Respondents’ views on ways of stopping the activities of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| By implementing amnesty programmes for the insurgents | 18 | 3.9 | 3.9 | 3.9 |
| By using military actions against them | 230 | 49.6 | 49.6 | 53.4 |
| By negotiating with the insurgents | 21 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 58.0 |
| By creating employment opportunities in the region | 39 | 8.4 | 8.4 | 66.4 |
| By re-orientating the insurgents | 54 | 11.6 | 11.6 | 78.0 |
| By policing the borders effectively | 102 | 22.0 | 22.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 464 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field survey, 2014

The table shows that almost half of the respondents (49.6%) believed that military action should be used against the insurgents, (22%) of them advocated for effective policing of the borders while (11.6%) of them maintained that re-orientating the insurgents is what is needed to curb the activities of the insurgents. Furthermore, (8.4%) of the respondents are of the view that government should create employment for the people of the region, (4.5%) of them wanted the government to negotiate with the insurgents while (3.9%) of them wanted government to implement amnesty programme for the insurgents. Most of the participants for the key informant interview believed that military action is necessary to halt the activities of the insurgents in the country. However, a 63 year old male participant for the key informant interview from Awka whose vehicles were destroyed in Kano maintained that:

Intelligence gathering by the different security agencies especially counter insurgency joint task force must be taken very serious with a view to ascertaining the sources of their funds and their modus operandi. Military actions must be intensified and the borders should be properly manned. This will go a long way to weakening the activities of the insurgents. There is need for international collaboration between Nigeria and its neighbouring countries in the fight against terrorism.

Furthermore, a 49 year old female participant in the key informant interview from Umuahia who is suffering serious psychological trauma from what she experienced in the hands of the sect when her three sons were slaughtered in her presence stated that:

Politicians should stop using political thugs during campaigns. These thugs are often times well armed and abandoned when the elections are over. Some people who are occupying top positions in government, military and in the society are the ones giving the necessary assistance to the Boko Haram groups. These people will always tell them what the government intends to do and give them information on how to be ahead of the military each time they are being targeted. Apprehending those who collaborate with Boko Haram will help government to finally stop the sect from functioning.

Discussion of findings

This study found that most people see Boko Haram activities as being destructive. This is expected because Boko Haram is a terrorist group which is known for destruction. They kill, maim, destroy and displace people who hitherto were living peacefully. It was found that religion, political factors, ethnicity, economic factors, corruption and influences from established terrorist organization were the major factors responsible for the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency. Religious factor played a very serious role in the emergence of insurgency in Nigeria. It is in this sense that Marx and Weber will be appreciated for seeing religion as a formidable tool in human society. Karl Marx cited in Haralambos, Holborn and Heald (2004) see religion as a distortion of the reality which provides many of the deceptions that forms the basis of ruling-class ideology and false class consciousness. In Marx's words, 'Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world and the soul of the soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people' (Haralambos et al. (2004:409). People tend to find solace in religion and base their conducts on religious teachings. This explains why the terrorists are willing to die while fighting jihadist war so that they will enter paradise.

In the same manner Max Weber in his famous book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, was able to associate the emergence of capitalism in Western Europe to the activities of the Calvinists who lived austere life and accumulated much wealth by spending very little. The sect believed that one is expected to work hard and spend very little. They lived in austere condition. By imbibing this teaching, the Calvinists accumulated enough wealth which was the catalyst needed in the formation of capitalism in the Western Europe. It therefore follows that religion is a very potent weapon for social change in human history. Boko Haram insurgents are of the view that they are carrying out a "holy war" (Jihad) against people who do not hold the same belief system like them. Religion therefore became the initial catalyst which motivated them to come together.

Granted that religion was the initial basis for their formation in Nigeria, the sect later became political and took ethnic colorations in some occasions. The activities of Boko Haram insurgency became political when they used their actions to portray the ruling government as being weak and unable to guarantee safety of lives and properties. This could be seen in the series of attack on military and police formations in the north. The terrorists abducted over 200 secondary school girls from Chibok. The abduction of these girls is a calculated effort to discredit the government and weaken people's confidence in the government of the day. It could be argued therefore that many factors were responsible for the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency. Granted that the region where it originated from is noted for extreme poverty and has

one of the highest percent of people living in extreme poverty in the country, poverty alone is not enough to explain the emergence of the sect in the region. There are myriads of other variables like willingness to become radicalize by the fundamentalist, philosophical bent of the individuals, religious affiliation, level of education and value system of the people involved and so on. The above argument is consistent with Boye (2013) who argued that Boko Haram insurgency is created and nurtured by religious extremism, perceived oppression, nationalist/separatist/ethnic consideration, poverty and ignorance. It also agrees with Isyaku (2013) who stated that unemployment and poverty may have a less impact as a cause of terrorism. He argued that religious and cultural ideological and extremist views against the western world are some of the factors which led to the formation of Boko Haram in Nigeria.

Further revelations from this study shows that insurgency in the northeastern region of Nigeria is influenced by high level of poverty in the region, illiteracy, closeness to border with Cameroon, Chad and Niger and teeming youths who are not meaningfully engaged. It has been argued that the northeast region of Nigeria has very high rate of impoverished people. This is obviously a ready-made army for any form of criminality. This finding is supported by Merton's theory of Anomie where he posited that when there is a dysfunction between culturally approved goals and the means of attaining them, people will react in five major ways. One of such ways which is rebellion could be seen as the one taken by Boko Haram insurgents. They rejected society's means of attaining cultural goals and replaced them with their own means of doing so.

Furthermore, this finding agrees with the statistician general of the federation cited in Abimbola and Adesote (2012) who stated that the northwest and northeast geo political zones recorded the highest poverty rate in Nigeria with 77.7% and 76.3% respectively. Though the level of poverty in the northwestern region is higher than in the northeastern region, the former has less to do with terrorism than the later. Furthermore, Akinfala, Akinbode and Kemmer (2014) stated that Nigeria economic report issued by The World Bank in May 2013 showed that the most impoverished state in the country is Jigawa with a poverty rate of 77.5%. It is worthy of note that Jigawa state is one of the few states in the north which has not recorded any serious terrorist attack. This goes to prove that poverty alone is not a sufficient condition for embarking on crime especially crime of terrorism.

Majority of the respondents believe that Boko Haram insurgency can be eradicated. It was also found that the insurgency can be eradicated through the use of military action against the insurgents, effective policing of the borders and re-orientating of the insurgents. Furthermore, the study found that insurgency could be stopped if government should create employment for the people of the region; negotiate with the insurgents and implementing amnesty programme for the insurgents. In line with the stick and carrot approach, government may decide when necessary to dialogue/negotiate with the insurgents and possibly implement amnesty programmes for them just as it happened in the Niger Delta region. The study also found that intelligence gathering needs to be intensified with a view to ascertaining the sources of funding for the sect. Collaborators with the insurgent groups whether in government or among the security outfits should be identified. This will help the government to deal decisively with the sect. The issue of identifying the people who collude with the terrorist to fight against government must be taken seriously. This is against the background that the presidency has once stated that his government has been infiltrated by Boko Haram apologists. This led the one time National Security Adviser to the president to state that the ruling People's Democratic Party is responsible for the activities of Boko Haram insurgency in the country. It is therefore necessary

to identify the people who are assisting the insurgents in any way and deal with them appropriately.

Conclusion

Boko Haram is a terrorist group which started with people who maintained extreme religious inclination. When the sect was formed, it was not non militant in nature. It became militant when some members of the sect were killed by law enforcement agents. That incident infuriated them and galvanized them into taking deadly actions against the nation. They have been using different tactics in the fight against the government and the Nigerian society in general. However, on 16th June, 2011, they started using suicide bombing in their operations. These days, there is increase in the use of children and teenagers especially the female ones for suicide bombing. They have defiled government efforts aimed at curbing their excesses. This has been possible owing largely to the alleged latent support they receive from some top security personnel and politicians in the country. This paper is of the opinion that Boko Haram insurgency has more to do with political, economic, ethnic and religious inclinations. It is necessary to stop them from operating in Nigeria. All hands must be on desk to achieve this.

Recommendations

Based on the findings made in this paper, the researcher recommends robust intelligence gathering and multi-agency collaboration in fighting against the sect. Re-orientating the radicalize members of the sect is very necessary. This could be done by using reputable Islamic scholars who have distinguished themselves in the teachings of Islamic religion over the years. Poverty in the region should be reduced by creating jobs and youth empowerment schemes. The non-literate members of the sect should be given opportunities to acquire basic education. Finally political office holders and party leaderships in the country should always play the games according laid down rules and regulation so that nobody or section of the country should feel shortchanged. Politicians should stop using political thugs during political campaigns. This is in view of the fact that these thugs are often times armed with dangerous weapons are these weapons are not often retrieved from them after the elections. Some of these people use the weapons and connections they have got from the politicians to unleash mayhem on the society. Good governance must be imbibed in the country. This entails being transparent and responsible to the people. The anti terrorism laws should be enforced and the law enforcement agencies fully equipped and trained on how to combat terrorism according to international best practices.

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