



The Achievers Journal

Volume 5, Issue 1

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 January-March, 2019

Religious Fundamentalism and Resistance: A Study of Boko Haram Movement in Nigeria

Mohammed Lawan Bashayi

Masters Student, Department of Sociology

**School of Arts and Social Sciences, Lovely Professional University,
Phagwara, Punjab (India), Mobile No. +91 8544932719**

Abstract

This paper examines the political insurgency resulted from Islamic terrorism in the Borno State of Nigeria and its implication to the Socio- economic development. Available studies have discussed intensively on insurgency in Nigeria which reveals an increase of the activities over time. The happening constitutes serious threat to lives and properties, hindering smooth business activities and discourages local and foreign investors. This rising wave of insurgency has not only aborted but also assumed a dangerous dimension which is threatening the corporate existence of the country as a geographical entity.

Keywords: insurgency; terrorism; socio- economy; boko haram; militancy; jihad

Introduction

The emergence of Islamic terrorism is associated with the history of Oil invention in the West Asia and African countries. It can be considered as a result of geopolitical interest of superpowers and their strategic alliances. The emergence of Islamic terrorism is also linked with the growing debates of Clashes of Civilizations as referred by Samuel Huntington. It is also viewed from Islamic Jihadism, which has religiously instructed war against social sins. Whatever may be the



The Achievers Journal

Volume 5, Issue 1

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 January-March, 2019

right perspective to denote terrorism and its legitimacy of religious, political and economic motive, it results in civil wars, insecurity of life and property. It has already taken many precious lives and caused for disturbance across the world. Islamic Jihadism is basically attached to the holy war which is fought against the power of evil and sources of sin. In Islam Jihad is related to fight against the desires of one's body, which is considered as the highest form of Jihad.

Political insurgency is directly related to fundamental religious movements in Nigeria. Radical Islamic organizations in the country have given birth to Islamic revivalism and it eventually paved way for Islamic Jihadism, like BOKO HARAM movement. Initially, it was *salafi* movements, which propagated the textual Islamic faith and practices to form a puritanical religion. Syncretic Islamic faith were challenged by puritan movements and they stood for revival of religion with a textual and 'pure' manner. This radical Islamic group restricted the day to day life practices of Muslims and declared many practices as Un-Islamic. Radical groups started to believe that only their faith is true and others are wrong. Such schools also propagated that since their idea of Islam is right; it is their duty to convince others, forcefully also. Radical Islamic groups misinterpret *Quranic* verses, which were only applicable at the time of wars. However, the violence by the radical Islamic group makes political insurgency in the country destabilizing the rule of law and the institution of state.

Political insurgencies in Nigeria create a serious problem of security threat, and it also weakens the socio-economic conditions of common citizens (Illufoye 54). The security threat has various



The Achievers Journal

Volume 5, Issue 1

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 January-March, 2019

dimensions as social, economic, political, and environmental. Each of these dimensions has greatly affected development resulting in poverty and socio-economic and environmental crises (Illufoye 54). Insurgency has become a major problem in the Borno state of Nigeria (any year available) Life threat, vandalism on private and government institutions, kidnappings, and destruction of properties are widely reported from the province. Violence and death tolls have deeply affected the development process, and the government has been compelled to shift their material and strategic attention to curb an ongoing civil war (Zau 160). One of the major problems of security threat at the local level is that it displaces its population to adjacent areas and to the State capital and in some cases neighboring Countries like Chad, Cameroon and Niger Republic. This situation has made it impossible for people to carry out their legitimate business and other socio-economic activities. The problem of displacement also forced the students to flee from their schools and in most cases the government officials reluctant to send their children to the affected areas especially in the Northern part of Borno State. The security threat paused the foreign investment in the country and hence melted down the business and job ventures. (Cambell 51). After nearly nine years of violent insurgencies, Nigerian government still does not have effective strategies to dismantle the group. Therefore, the present study, aimed to understand the nature of political insurgency created by BOKO HARAM and its resultant effect on the economy of Nigeria.

Methodology



The Achievers Journal

Volume 5, Issue 1

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 January-March, 2019

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. Content analysis was used to achieve the specific objective of the paper. For the purpose of the study, Bama local government of Borno State, Nigeria has been selected as the area of the study.

Views on political aspects

Most of the studies on Islamic Jihadism in Nigeria focused mainly on the nature of political insurgencies. For Instance, Eme and Onyishi argued that Nigeria has a long history of political based violence since the collapse of the First Republic in 1966 and the incursion of military into Government. Since then Nigerian politics have been characterized by violence and assassinations for capturing the political power by various ethnic groups. Some scholars also outlined that ethnic discrimination and racism are also the reasons for armed conflict in many of the African nations. Woods noted that the origin of the armed conflict in Cote d'Ivoire are identified with problems related to government services, political bias, ethnic discrimination and racism. Woods also found similar responses from Nigerian society as well. The inability of Nigerian government to provide a secure and safe environment for lives, properties and the conduct of business and economic activities has led to resentment and dissatisfaction among ethnic groups. This has resulted in religious violence in different parts of the northern Nigeria.

Views on Social Security

Most of scholars identified that one of the most serious effect of Jihadism in Nigeria is the growing security threat in the country. The major reason for security threat is identified with a number of



The Achievers Journal

Volume 5, Issue 1

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 January-March, 2019

factors which include inadequate funding of the police and other security agencies, lack of modern equipment both weapons and training; poor welfare of security personnel's and inadequate personnel (Achamba et-al 68). The implication of this is that Nigeria is grossly under police and this partly explains the inability of the Nigerian police force to effectively combat crime and criminality in the country. Terrorism activities have been on the uprising in Nigeria, the country that has suffered attack from suicide bombers, masquerading, as Islamic adherent daily. Boko Haram attacks in the country reached threatening dimension with adoption of suicide bombing by the group. Boko Haram is said to have carried out over 50 attacks in various part of the North (Umejie 17).

Views on economic aspects

A major part of the study reveals that the reason for the political insurgency and violence in Nigeria is the result of poverty and economic backwardness. For instance, Vierum outlined that unbalanced societal development lead to inequality, exclusion, and poverty, which turned to violent conflict. Unemployment / poverty – according to Adagba et al unemployment and poverty among Nigerians especially the youth is a major cause of insecurity and violent crime in Nigeria. In particular, youth unemployment has contributed to rising cases of violence in Nigeria. At the same time, the insurgency and elements of Jihadism further accelerated economic depletion of the country. On the one hand, there is destruction of property and on the other, the country is suffered without receiving any investment neither from the local nor from the foreign investors. In the wake of the,



The Achievers Journal

Volume 5, Issue 1

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 January-March, 2019

the infrastructure in particular suffered a heavy damage. The affected infrastructure is the bridge, the telecommunication, hydro power plant, the village development committee building some very historical monument. In Borno state as many as 1,000 private, health centers, Telecommunication Towers, police post, School building, Government offices and Electricity Related center were destroyed, (Red Cross Society of Nigeria, P. 5). Displacement of economically productive workers, reduction of foreign workers investment, closing down of industries had serious negative impact on the national economy. During the insurgency period, many industries were shut down and tourism industry which contributed to almost 10% in GDP almost drowned. (Woods 9) argued that there is no investor whether local or foreign that will be motivated to invest in an unsafe and unsecured environment of Nigeria. Thus, the alarming level of insurgency inborn and Nigeria at large has made the economy unattractive to foreign investors and this has impacted negatively on the socio- economic growth and development.

To conclude, though there are many studies on the economic effect of jihadism in Nigeria, most of these studies focus mainly on macroeconomic aspects of investment, industrial destruction etc., and largely ignore the micro level of individual property destruction, wage loss, the stringent situation of poverty etc.

Discussion

The evolution and ideology of Boko Haram



The Achievers Journal

Volume 5, Issue 1

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 January-March, 2019

Historically, the development of Boko Haram insurgents' group in North Eastern region of Nigeria can be divided into two phases.

Goal One: It was a peaceful movement when the group mainly organized lectures and charity to the needy which covered a period of 2002 to 2009. During this period, the group was known as the Taliban Islamic group which engaged in the above mentioned subject matter.

Goal Two: This is a violent movement which began in the year 2009 under the then political administration of Senator Ali Modu Sheriff to date. Boko Haram got so much influence as youth were blindly joining the organization as they wrongly perceived the ideology of the organization movement. In 2012 there was a clash of interest between the leadership of the sect which later led to gradual division of the group between Salafi' conservative faction that was led by Abu Usmatul -al Ansari, and the more dominant violent faction group led by Abubakar Shekau.

Etymologically, the word "Boko Haram" means 'Forbidden Books'. The term is an amalgamation of Hausa 'boko meaning "book" and the Arabic word 'haram' which means forbidden, or unlawful or sinful. Literally, it stands "book is sinful". Ideally, it means western education or culture is not good to bring alternative narration, i.e. 'Islamic' and traditional approaches substituting rational for the Muslims ummah. The movement condemned western culture and education and rational thinking or modern science. Alternatively, it embraced and advocated the propagation of and strict adherence to Islam by all and sundry regardless of any one's personal wishes. In line with his objectives, the sects sought to impose sharia across all Nigerian state. (Bumah and Adelakun 40).



The Achievers Journal

Volume 5, Issue 1

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 January-March, 2019

Western education, science and technologies are rejected by Boko Haram. However, their leaders like Yusuf and Sheikh Abubakar did not go against usage of by-products of modern science like using cars and communication technology. Madunagu, Shobiye, and Chiedozié opined that, “in addition to his desires to fully prepared for his jihad encouraged his sending people abroad for medical training, a development that alienated some of his members” (2).

Factors responsible for escalation of Boko Haram activities in Nigerian

What is going on in Nigeria is horrible; I mean it is complete madness yet is not a priority. The United States unilaterally could do almost anything it needs to do to root out Boko Haram, it will be a long-term effort, but it can be done. The United States has the capability, all the elements of power, we have those complete but is not a priority, that’s the problem. We are committed elsewhere in the world. ‘Black’ West Africa is not a priority. Very stark, very hard to say, but that’s the case right now. It is a regional issue, if we were to see Boko Haram appear in some other regions of the world, white Africa, which is North Africa, or in the Middle East in some way, we would be alarmed but it is a regional issue [...] (CNN News 17).

Low morale in the military means that many soldiers are likely to be more willing to accept bribes. It is highly likely that this is a factor in the army’s frequent failure to respond to Boko Haram attacks in rural areas. Civilians have frequently complained that the military have failed to protect them, despite having prior knowledge that attacks were imminent.



The Achievers Journal

Volume 5, Issue 1

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 January-March, 2019

Interviews, and focus groups discussion conducted by the US institutes of peace commission, a study from the Cleen Foundation in Nigeria 2013, revealed that poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and family structures contribute to making the youth vulnerable to radicalization. Preachers capitalized on the preaching of an extreme version of the religious teachings and conveying a narrative of the government as weak and corrupts. Armed groups such as Boko Haram can then recruits and train youth for activities ranging from errand running to suicide bombing. (Onuona 29).

Destruction caused by Boko Haram:

The activities of the Boko Haram organization have caused very much to the life and property of the people in the study area. Bama which is best known for its agricultural and commercial activities have become a history due to Boko Haram's frequent attacks. People of Bama have evacuated to neighboring state and the capital city of Borno due to the fact that their houses, shops and commercial activities have come to a standstill. Education which is the back-bone of any meaningful development have also been demoralized and no-where to be found in the area. The current state of Boko Haram is declining because of the effort put forward by the present administration on wiping away the sect organization. Youth that are engaging in the act are no longer interested because of the active participation and awareness campaign by NGO's in educating the youth by engaging them with jobs in the sector of the organization and government jobs.



The Achievers Journal

Volume 5, Issue 1

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 January-March, 2019

Conclusion

Without peace there will be no meaningful development in any state. The presence of insurgency in any environment constitute threats in lives and properties and hinders business activities and discourage local and foreign investors all of which retards socio-economic development of a country. Government must be proactive in dealing with insurgency and security problems and threats through the use of modern technology and intelligence gathering, training, motivation in managing insurgency challenges.

Works Cited

- Adebayo, A. "Implication of Boko Haram Terrorism on National Development in Nigeria" *Mediterranean journal of social science*. Vol.5, no 16,,2014, P. 16.
- Adenrele, A. "Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria as a symptom of poverty and political alienation". *Journal of Humanities and social science*, (5) P 3,
- AS-Salafi, A. "The principle of Salafiyya; A brief introduction to the Salafi Dawah". *Published by the Salaf Publication*. (26) P. 16
- Bartolotta, C. "Terrorism in Nigeria; The rise of Boko Haram". *The whitehead journal of Diplomacy and international Relations*.2011, P.38



The Achievers Journal

Volume 5, Issue 1

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 January-March, 2019

Burns, A. Burns, A. "History of Nigeria" *CTC Sentinel*, 4 (9), 2011/9. p. 3-5, 1972

Creswell, J, "Research design: qualitative and quantitative and mixed approaches", *Thousand Oaks: Sage*. (26) 2009, P. 19