Sectarianism and the Messiah Complex: Boko Haram Insurgence and Nigeria's Response to Islamic Fundamentalism

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Abstract

From a stick-wielding, rabble rousing disgruntled youths, Boko Haram has transformed into a sophisticated, well-armed insurgency with Armoured Personnel Carriers and international affiliates. The terrorist organization, engaged in brazen confrontation and warfare which had put the credibility of Nigerian government and her military to question. This paper examines the role of religion and politics in the evolution of Boko Haram. The paper adopts the historical and analytical method. The work is anchored on Relative Deprivation and Frustration-Aggression theories. Findings reveal that economic deprivation, governance deficit, political incompetence, security failure, religious extremism and intolerance gave room to sectarianism, messiah tendencies and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Nigeria. The paper concludes that Nigeria is currently bedevilled by a new challenge of insecurity, hitherto unknown in her history and is struggling to checkmate this menace. Rather than the quick-fix approach in putting an end to Islamic terrorism, Nigeria needs to evolve a new strategy and tactics that will go beyond a military-only solution.

Keywords: Boko Haram, Fundamentalism, Ideology, Insurgence, Religion and Sectarianism.

Introduction

Nigeria is a nation of huge potentials, blessed with human and natural resources. She is however, a nation of baffling contradictions: she has a huge reserve of petroleum, and exports crude oil but regrettably imports all its energy needs. It is a nation with one of the most viable and accomplished professionals, including medical doctors, space scientists, engineers, businessmen, musicians, artists, university professors, sportsmen and women in the diaspora (de Haas, 2006). Back at home, nothing works, except corruption and nepotism. Governments over the years and in spite of lofty promises have failed to deliver good governance. In spite of the huge money made from the sale of petroleum crude, the infrastructure is poor or not in existence. Poor governance has sustained systemic corruption and injustice, so much so that many political and social elites appear to be above the law of the land. The Nigerian nation has gone through political, social and religious upheavals which in turn have led to insecurity, ethno-religious upheavals, communal clashes, armed robbery, kidnappings and the rise of militant terror groups, including Boko Haram.

Good governance has been elusive in Nigeria and had been attributed to the many interventions by the military coup d'états since 1966. There is a high rate of poverty among the citizens which coupled with the ease with which they are mobilized as 'political thugs' in the election cycles, have increasingly made criminality and brigandage attractive to the teeming youths. The resources of the 'Commonwealth' have been appropriated by the privileged few and this in turn leads to poor infrastructures and services. Allocations meant for local governments, the states and Federal

Government eventually found their way into private pockets thus further increasing poverty, illiteracy, frustration and hopelessness among the people (Nnonyelu, 2014).

The disparities in educational opportunities between the peoples of northern Nigeria and their southern Nigerian counterparts have also heightened the tensions. Many in northern Nigeria subscribed to an Islamic-only type of education which in olden days had worked for the society, the economy and the political order (Adeoti, 1997). However, with colonialism, independence and modernization, Western-style education seemed to have tipped the advantages towards the south. This paper examines the role of religion and politics in the evolution of Boko Haram and is divided into five sections. Section one traces the different sects with contending ideologies in northern Nigeria, which coalesced into Islamic fundamentalism, the basis upon which El-Zakzaky, Yusuf, Shekau, among others emerged; and created the fertile ground for the rise of Boko Haram insurgency. Section two traces the rise of Boko Haram leader, Mohammed Yusuf and the impact of the group on the society. Section three is an historical analysis of the Radicalization of Boko Haram and its leaders such as Shekau, the successor of Yusuf. Section four articulates the impact of Boko Haram on the Nigerian nation. The final section dwells on Nigeria's response to Boko Haram terrorism, while the Conclusion and Recommendations proffer solutions to the Boko Haram menace.

Theoretical Framework

Successive governments in Nigeria have failed to address increasing poverty, unemployment, corruption, provision of infrastructure and social services. Despite the huge money made from oil, the Nigerian citizens were left on their own and as a survival instinct, resorted to self-help. The failure of governance is attributable to the ruling class who embezzled money meant for development, thus creating poverty, illiteracy, frustration and hopelessness among the teeming masses of Nigerian youths. The disenchantment has grown into frustration leading to aggression. Academics, including Sociologists, Psychologists and Social scientists have argued that when people are frustrated, it becomes a fertile ground for violent and aggressive behavior which in turn leads to violence such as Boko Haram (Bekowitz, 1962 cited in Vaaseh & Adekunle, 2018). It is given that when the needs of the people are not met, it ultimately leads to violence, such as Boko Haram (Shittu, 2018; Nonyelu, 2014). Relative deprivation theory suggestss that people who feel they are being deprived of something considered essential in their society (e.g. money, rights, political voice, status) will organize or join social movements dedicated to obtaining the things of which they feel deprived (Longley, 2020).

Boko Haram emerged as a result of the gap existing between preferred value and actual value. (Shittu, 2018). Nigeria's leadership is synonymous with bad governance and characterized by corruption (Vaaseh & Adekunle, 2018). However, the provision of infrastructure and good governance, transparency and accountability in government will bring about equality in society thus minimizing social stratification.

Terrorism is described as a distinctive form of modern political agency, intended to threaten the ability of a state to ensure the security of its members. It is the readiness to attack random targets, indiscriminate bombing and a refusal to accept as binding the prevailing moral distinctions – between combatants and noncombatants, legitimate and illegitimate targets (Townshend, 2002). This perfectly fits the modus operandi of Boko Haram in Nigeria. Within the context of these theories: Frustration-Aggression theory, Relative Deprivation theory and Terrorism, Boko Haram has found a niche by engendering fear and hatred, the desire to hurt and kill people

indiscriminately, upstaging democracy and democratic institutions with the ultimate goal of an Islamic state. Today in northern Nigeria, different sects of Islam are to be found: (Mustapha, 2017; Walker, 2016; Adeleye, 1971). Sufis of the Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya, reformist Salafists who reject all Sufi ideas, Shi'ites inspired by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the 'heretical' sects like the Maitatsine and Boko Haram.

Different types of Sects and Ideologies in northern Nigeria

Different sects, ideologies and schools of thought have emerged in northern Nigeria. The pluralism of expression and challenges arising from competing doctrinal claims of different Muslim groups had led to violent ideologies which furthermore accentuated the inequalities between the sects and the rest of the country (Mustapha, 2017). The Qadiriyya Order, the oldest of the Sufi orders in northern Nigeria claimed an unchallenged direct connection to the past through the Sokoto Caliphate. Tijaniyya is possibly the largest Sufi Order in Nigeria, with strict religious rituals but more radical in their political orientation compared to Qadiriyya which is regarded as more relaxed in ritual matters (Mustapha, 2017). There is the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) that attacked the core principles of the two Sufi orders (Mustapha, 2017; Gumi & Tsiga, 1992). Izala or Society for the Eradication of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition is violently opposed to Sufism (Thurston, 2018), appealed to the poor, the youth and women. It attracted academics, traders and government officials at a time when economic opportunities were dwindling (Faluyi, Khan & Akinola, 2019; Thurston 2018). Shia, the Islamic Movement of Nigeria, also called Muslim Brothers and led by Shaikh Ibrahim El-Zakzaky challenged the corruption and authoritarianism of various military regimes. It condemned the Nigerian State as Satanic bent on leading the people astray from God (Mustapha, 2017; Dikki, 2017; Walker, 2016).

The Mahdiyya, followers of Muhammad Ahmad b. Sayyid of Sudan was synonymous with rebellion and challenged the authority of governments. (Mustapha, 2017) NASFAT. *Nasrul-Lahi Fathi* Society of Nigeria, a Yoruba Muslim organization responded to threats to Yoruba Muslim identity, advocating modernist and reformist views, and emphasized the 'equality of all Muslims,' contrary to the hierarchy of the Sufis or the sectarianism of the Salafists (Mustapha, 2017). The Ahmadiyya are most noted for their missionary zeal in spreading access to Western education and health services though the founder is alleged to have claimed to be a prophet, contrary to basic Islamic precepts (Mustapha, 2017).

Maitatsine sect was heretical, violent and preached hatred (MacEachern, 2018). The Maitatsine leader, Marwa denied the Sunna of the Prophet (Faluyi, Khan & Akinola, 2019) preferring instead to rely solely on his interpretation of the Quran (Mustapha, 2017). The rise of Maitatsine had been linked to the socio-economic problem caused by the collapse of peasant agriculture in the north, the ecological and demographic shifts in the countryside, declining revenues, high unemployment rates, political corruption and rivalries, government mismanagement, rampant materialism and erosion of moral and religious values. Marwa drew on *almajarai* system which swelled his rank (Falola, 1998). Miatatsine by 1979 brought his radical *jama'a* to settle in a run-down ward of Birnin Kano and twenty five years later, Muhammad Yusuf settled his Yusufiyya in a ward in Maiduguri (Thurston, 2018; Mustapha, 2017).

Origins and factors leading to the Rise of Boko Haram

Book Haram, or *Jama'atu Ahlul Sunna li Da'awati wal Jihad* started in Maiduguri. Its doctrinal genealogy derives from two sources: the long-standing negative attitudes towards Western education among the Muslims of northern Nigeria and the further development of Salafi-Wahhabi

doctrine associated with Shaikh Abubakar Gumi and Izala (Malachy, 2013). Others contend that Boko Haram arose as a result of schism within the ranks of the Salafiyya tendency within Izala (Mustapha, 2017). Mohammed Yusuf noted that modern Western education and employment in the Government of Nigeria were religiously forbidden (Mustapha, 2017; Malachy, 2013). Much as socio-political and economic factors are touted as causes of Boko Haram, it is equally argued that theology and theological interpretation or indoctrination is the root cause (Dikki, 2017). The contention is that religious conflicts and emergence of Boko Haram are as a result of theological ideology and essentially the fundamentalist ideology of Maududi and Salafist tendency dating as far back as the 1980s.

The Rise of Mohammed Yusuf, the Boko Haram Leader

Islam in northern Nigeria was the basis of the society, economy and polity until the arrival of the British colonialism. The introduction of Western-style education created a wedge that ultimately made Islamic education and knowledge systems irrelevant in governance, economy and politics of northern Nigeria. Many parents clung to the almajirai system which costs almost nothing when compared with the Western-type education system in southern Nigeria (Thurston, 2018).

Government was seen as corrupt and the elites were described as selfish and nepotistic. There was no infrastructure in place and no social services. Funds earmarked for hospitals, schools, potable water, road, electricity and other amenities were misappropriated. This background gave rise to sects and radical Islamic leaders like Yusuf, who offered social welfare to the millions of the homeless almajirai and a religious anchor, with a promise of making it to paradise (Mustapha, 2017). It was a system that took care of youths in northern Nigeria (Walker, 2016). Yusuf started as a fiery preacher and polemical leader who many followers looked up to. He provided money in welfare schemes for thousands of his followers, and exhorted them to challenge the government which is seen as a symbol of all that Islam abjured (Sani, 2011). The almajirai system became a ready recruitment pool, while the unique sanctimonious sermons of Yusuf radicalized his Yusufiyya followers.

Impact of Boko Haram on the Society

Because a preponderant number of people in northern Nigeria are not educated either in Islamic or Western-style school, they are ready fodder in the cyclical waves of religious violence. They are readily radicalized and because they have been 'socialized' into poverty, are easily induced into violence. Yusuf, who synthesized the Wahabbi and other Islamic ideologies, took advantage of hundreds of thousands of northern Nigerian youths to become violent, thus challenging the authority of the state (Thurston, 2018). He disparaged the security apparatus of the Nigerian state, asserting that these state institutions drew their powers, not from the Quran but from a secular constitution. He criticized the Shi'ites as not Muslims and condemned the Sufi Brotherhoods as un-Islamic, describing most northern Nigerian Muslims as fake Muslims (Mustapha, 2017). He advocated a singular interpretation of true Islam, demanded that Muslims choose between Islam and a set of anti-Islamic practices (Thurston, 2018). He refused to recognize the Nigerian constitution which betrayed the scale of his ambitions (Mustapha, 2017; David, Asuelime & Onapajo, 2015). Boko Haram is a jihadist and Salafist group, wedded to the use of violence against opposing Muslims, Christians and State institutions (David, Asuelime & Onapajo, 2015). The northern elite neglected the poor, undermined their religious credentials and destroyed their 'social contract' with society. This expanded the opportunity for religious sectarianism thus legitimizing an alternative vision of society. This is the context for the emergence of hordes of angry young

men fascinated by the ideology of Boko Haram (Mustapha, 2017). Thus, Yusuf took advantage of the irresponsible leadership at all levels of government as unemployment, poverty, corruption and insecurity became the order of the day (Mustapha, 2017).

The Radicalization of Boko Haram

To interrogate the concept of terrorism and sectarianism as mutually inclusive, we are compelled to situate Boko Haram terrorism as a corollary of Islamic fundamentalism. This will be through emphasizing leadership of the numerous sects, evolution into radical Islamic groups and the role of economic deprivation and political opportunism which gave birth to this phenomenon. Boko Haram challenged the state's inability to meet the basic needs of its people. Such factors as poverty, population explosion, social inequality and exclusion, dispossession and political grievance, oppression and human rights abuse are thus the incubators of Boko Haram insurgency (David, Asuelime & Onapajo, 2015).

Applied to Islam, Boko Haram insisted, even violently for a return to the fundamentals of the faith or belief system (Anugwom, 2019; Falola, 1998). This basically explains the Boko Haram phenomenon. Fundamentalism is an enclave culture, selective in retrieval and fortification of religious traditions, the fervent upholding and idealization of perceived 'sacred' past and a belief that the scripture cannot be wrong (Anugwom, 2019). There are three distinctions of Fundamentalism, all advocated by Boko Haram: Mass-based organizations that operate at state levels through taking of political action like Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt; Utopian schemes like the Indo-Pakistani Maududi and Egyptian Sayyid Qutb; and clandestine groups that turn to spectacular violence to overthrow local governments and eliminate Western influences (Anugwom, 2019).

Adherents of Islam may be broadly categorized into four groups: the violence endorsing Islamists, liberal Islam, secular Islam and those in the middle. Violent Islamists are in the mode of the Taliban, al Qaeda, al-Shabab and Boko Haram that espouses the notion of revolutionary Islam. Their interpretation and peculiar understanding of the Quran and the Hadiths justify violent actions or attacks against the West and symbols of the West in order to achieve the aim of establishing a true Islamic state (Anugwom, 2019). Thus, the Boko Haram attack on the United Nation's building in Abuja in 2011 buttresses this assertion.

Book Haram's main goal is the creation of a pure Islamic society and the establishment of a new caliphate through the strict observance of Sharia (Malachy, 2013) and the use of jihad to wipe out the unacceptable social system (Voll, 2015). In the case of Boko Haram, pervasive poverty, social dislocation and marginalization which face the ordinary citizen may generate conditions in which the goals and means established by the Nigerian state are seen as no longer reflective of the aspirations of the people (Anugwom, 2019).

It must be asserted that Jihad to the first *umma* meant striving in the path of Allah. On this, there is the jihad of the heart, the purification of the soul from evil desires and thoughts; the jihad of the tongue which obliged people to command others to do what is right; the jihad of the hand that enforces obedience to the law; and the jihad of the sword using force to convert "pagans" thus defending the faith and bringing about reforms (Falola, 1998). Apparently, Boko Haram is bent on enforcing all of these, but especially the jihad of the sword.

Book Haram Insurgency

By 2009, Boko Haram was involved in a series of violent confrontations with the Nigerian state through shootings, decapitations, killing community leaders and security forces (Smith, 2015). By 2010, it had launched an insurgency that killed thousands of Christians and Muslims across Northern Nigeria (Smith, 2015; Solomon, 2015). Between 2011 and 2012, a splinter group called *Ansaru* emerged which claimed to be fighting an armed jihad to create an Islamic Caliphate covering Niger Republic, Cameroon and Northern Nigeria. Ansaru rejected the post-2009 leader of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau by describing him as 'too reckless,' distanced itself when Boko Haram attacked the city and killed about 150 Muslim civilians (Mustapha, 2017). Shekau was charged with expropriating money from Muslim civilians and declared others to be apostates. They complained that Shekau insisted on all members deferring to his authority (Thurston, 2018).

One obvious point is that there is no singular "Muslim" identity in Northern Nigeria. However, there are important minority Christian communities. There are divergent interpretations of Islamic doctrine, different attitudes towards the need for reform with opposing conceptions of ritual practices. This has led to tensions and fissures within the Muslim community (Mustapha, 2017; Malachy, 2013).

Understanding Boko Haram, an Analysis

Between 2003 and 2014, Boko Haram had evolved from a group of angry Islamist young men wielding sticks on the streets of Maiduguri to a vicious insurgency using Armored Personnel Carriers (APC) and machine guns and engaged in bombings. Yusuf used the support of Shaikh Ja'afar, the Salafi scholar to build a following, and he had his base at the Indimi Mosque in Maiduguri. He formed the Yusufiyya movement that became Boko Haram. They established an Islamic community around Kanama in Yobe, and between 2005 and 2009 preached doctrinal extremism, recruited and radicalized its members. Yusuf criticized corruption and bad leadership under Governor Ali Modu Sheriff of Borno State (2003 – 2011). Though arrested several times and taken to Abuja, he returned unscathed to Maiduguri (Mustapha, 2017).

The armed insurrection started in June 2009 when members of the group refused to wear protective helmets on motorcycles. Fourteen members were shot and wounded in the fracas. Hundreds of houses and over 25 churches were burnt. The military arrested Boko Haram members, including Yusuf who was handed over to the police for interrogation. However, he was summarily executed on 30 July 2009. Also executed were Alhaji Buji Foi, the former Commissioner of Religious Affairs in Bornu State and a financier of Boko Haram; and Alhaji Baba Fugu Mohammed, the 72-year old father-in-law of Mohammed Yusuf (Mustapha, 2017).

Book Haram Under Shekau Leadership

Under Shekau, the sect became more ruthless, violent and destructive, slaughtering people and beheading many as a ritual trademark (Mustapha, 2017). This was an inhuman tactic copied from Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the thuggish leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq who made videos of himself cutting off the heads of American hostages (Warrick, 2011).

Book Haram used targeted assassinations with improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and vehicle-borne IEDs to spread death and destruction across northern Nigeria. They killed individuals they disagreed with, burnt down schools, churches and mosques, kidnapped for ransom, attacked the police, the military, traditional authorities, political leaders, sacked villages and prominent targets like the Police Headquarters in Abuja, bombed in June 2011 and the UN Building bombed in

August 2011. St. Theresa's Catholic Church was bombed on 25 December 2011 in Madalla near Abuja killing 43 church-goers (Mustapha, 2017; Smith, 2015).

In June 2011, the Nigerian government set up a Joint Task Force (JTF) called 'Operation Restore Order' in Borno State and revamped the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF), set up in 1998 by governments of Niger, Chad and Nigeria while Cameroon came aboard later (Mustapha, 2017).

Shekau contended that the Nigerian state systematically victimized Muslims, so he intensified his deadly campaigns, (Smith, 2015; Thurston, 2018). He depicted Boko Haram as a group that did what Islam required, rather than as a group that had brought a new doctrine, something that Islam forbids (Thurston, 2018). Shekau did not care that many of those targets, combatants and non-combatants alike, were Muslims; he believed they had abandoned Islam (Thurston, 2018).

The kidnapping of 276 school girls of Government Secondary School in Chibok, Borno South, majority of whom are Christians, abducted from their hostels on the night of 14 April 2014 was part of a broader pattern at reinforcing the false narrative of a monolithic Muslim north (Mustapha, 2017). Chibok in history remains a progressive Christian enclave community, dating back to the colonial era thus discrediting Boko Haram claims as a legitimate Islamic organization trying to preserve a monolithic Caliphate of northern Nigeria.

The Boko Haram sect is in constant evolution in different, even contradictory guises, thus one cannot pin its evolution on one point: poverty and marginalization, religious extremism or ethno-regional power politics. But there are five inter-related factors in understanding Boko Haram's violence: Religious doctrines; poverty and inequality; the political context of post-1999 electoral competition; the youths directly involved in Boko Haram; and the geographical and international context of the insurgency (Mustapha, 2017).

Two quasi-religious ideas came up after its transformation into an insurgency movement in 2009: death and vengeance. They believe that when they kill, they obtain rewards from Allah which translates to houses in paradise. When they are killed, they become martyrs (Mustapha, 2017). Vengeance, fuelled by a sense of victimhood at the hands of unjust powers, runs deep in Boko Haram thinking and is connected to the Islamic concept of retaliation, one of the four pillars in Islamic criminal jurisprudence. These doctrinal drivers of Boko Haram since 2009 explain the ready recourse to suicide bombing, the reckless killing of people, the ritualistic slaughter of their victims as if in these were sacrifices to Allah (Mustapha, 2017).

Wole Soyinka consider Boko Haram violence as the 'physical actualization' of a malignant fanaticism within the northern Islam (Mustapha) and this concurs with the submission of Abu bakr al-Baghdadi, a popular Islamic jihadist, that "Islam was never a religion of peace. Islam is the religion of fighting…It is the war of Muslims against infidels" (Newsweek).

Impact of Boko Haram Insurgency on Nigeria's Development

The Boko Haram impact on Northern Nigeria is negative because it has brought social dislocations and insecurity, poverty, economic ruins, unemployment, among others. The zero sum nature of competing doctrinal claims often created the basis for violent conflict between the sects; or is directed at the state or at others such as Christians or members of non-northern ethnicities. Religious revivalism by both Muslims and Christians led to growing competition between the two, with shrinking state resources, growing poverty and inequality (Mustapha, 2017).

In northern Nigeria, poverty is an important factor in radicalization. Radical groups offer an escape route out of poverty which engenders resentment in the context of high levels of ethnic and regional

inequalities and competition which has characterized Nigeria since the 1950s (Mustapha, 2017). Radicalization is a result of fragmentation, grievances and family and peer influence. Others opportunistic reasons are criminal activities like armed robbery and rape, relevance and power, appeal of an ideology that aims to improve the welfare of the group (Faluyi, Khan & Akinola, 2019).

Boko Haram violence has greatly disrupted the society and economy of north east Nigeria. It has led to the abandonment of the farms and fishing communities, destroyed the churches, mosques, hospitals, police stations, schools, military outposts, government offices, among others. Many villages have been abandoned and the increase in internally displaced Nigerians has led to the establishment of Internally Displaced Peoples,' IDP camps (Shittu, 2018). It has created food insecurity and also scared away investors in the region; and has led to other forms of criminality such as cattle rustling. Boko Haram insurgency has led to insecurity as many are afraid to travel by road in the north eastern part of Nigeria. Their fear emanates from the frequent violence and kidnappings. It has also undermined the ability of the Nigerian military to protect Nigerians and Nigerian territorial integrity. Schools remained shut and the hospitals and other government infrastructure attacked and destroyed (Shittu, 2018).

Nigeria's response to Boko Haram terrorism

Boko Haram terrorism has dislocated the economic activities of the people of northeast Nigeria despite the military presence. In Nigeria alone, over two million people are displaced with thousands in Internally Displaced Camps, (IDP). The Nigerian government has a history of adopting ad hoc approaches to resolve violent conflicts. Until recently, there is no policy framework or strategy to respond to armed insurrections (Faluyi, Khan & Akinola, 2019). The security response from the state has been sloppy despite the declaration of state of emergency in some local government areas and military presence in the north-east of Nigeria since 2013; and the creation of the office of counter terrorism Adviser to the President, closure of some parts of the border, the enactment of an anti-terrorism bill that criminalized acts of terrorism and prosecuted terrorists (Vaaseh & Adekunle, 2018). The organized attacks on the police, the military and strategic installations threatened the security of the Nigerian nation. This led to the occupation of some Nigerian territories by the Boko Haram. Government was careless in the way it responded to the abduction of 276 Chibok school girls in April 2014. There was inadequate military-political management of the insurgency (Mustapha, 2017) which was in total contrast to Nigeria's role in Liberia and Sierra Leone where the military showed exceptional capacity when she led the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (Faluyi, Khan & Akinola, 2019).

However, government has embarked on new economic stimulus strategy with the establishment of the North East Commission that will fast track infrastructural development, by providing emergency stabilization projects – in education, agriculture, health, among others. There is increased spending on defence with the acquisition of modern war equipment. The Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Tukur Buratai has relocated the command centre to the theatre of war in Bornu, in contrast to the old ways of operating from Abuja. Thus, he has taken the war to the terrorists. His leadership style of leading from the front and frequent interactions with the troops has indeed boosted the morale of the combatants who have reclaimed a lot of contested Nigerian territories. (Shittu, 2018). The international Joint Task Force made up of Chad, Niger Republic, Cameroon and Nigeria has been re-invigorated and has dislodged the Boko Haram insurgents in the Lake Chad basin. This is denying the insurgents bases, recruits and support (Freedman, 2013) while also improving the counterinsurgency to create efficient security and improve the social conditions of

the people of north eastern Nigeria. (Echevarria, 2017). Finally, the government is addressing through the rapid development program the issues of poverty, poor infrastructure, and illiteracy in the region (Mustapha, 2017).

Conclusion

Nigeria is currently ragged by new challenges of insecurity hitherto unknown in its history. The nation is gripped in terror triggered by state failure, poor governance, military incompetence, sabotage, economic deprivations, illiteracy, religious intolerance and extremism, leading to destruction of lives and property, stagnation of democracy and underdevelopment of Nigeria. The activities of this dangerous sect have greatly had negative impact on the socio-economic and political lives of the nation. To checkmate the menace of this terrorist group, the Nigerian state has deployed military counter insurgency measures and injected funds to improve the standard of living and welfare of the people and value orientation.

This paper has proved that Boko Haram had coerced through intimidation, dislocated and punished communities; had taken hostages, claimed territories and hoisted their flags – all with the intent of achieving an Islamic state. Boko Haram tried to attract public support but ended up alienating the people. Boko Haram, like Al-Qaeda has adapted to the forces of globalization, using networks and transnational capabilities, indiscriminate bombing and decapitation, among others as a psychological weapon to terrorize Nigerians.

The study submits that unless a radical intervention is embarked upon to re-invent the system of education in northern Nigeria, insurgencies such as Boko Haram will continue to come up in periodic cycles in Nigeria. It is equally suggested that unless a new transparent and accountable system of governance is invented, where government is open and not the preserve of the privileged elites or their children, where the elites in power are responsive to the needs of the people and avenues for personal enrichment are greatly curtailed, violence, banditry and insurgencies will still be with the Nigerian nation. Response to Boko Haram needs to be integrated into a comprehensive political, economic, and security strategy that offers some promise of real improvement to northern populations and communities.

No nation on earth has ever won against insurgents through military-only approach, and Nigeria, much as it has intensified the war against Boko Haram insurgency will need a more sustainable approach: both in terms of strategy and tactics, pro-activeness and good governance, a Marshall-type of intervention plan to rapidly develop the north east of Nigeria, through quality education that factors in the seminal role of Islamic education into its calculations, provision of quality entrepreneurial programs that will make the preponderant youths employable in the labor market.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

i. The Study recommends that the military can adopt leadership targeting which is a strategy of targeted killing of like Shekau who so far has remained elusive. Boko Haram has become a just war of last resort with a reasonable chance of success and an aim which must be proportional to the means used.

ii. Equally too, a "guns-for-cash" program for insurgents to trade their weapons for money and amnesty, while their leaders are targeted with violent means should be done.

iii.   It is also recommended that a strategic policy, a war plan with the appointment of a military commander with the knowledge and level of competence needed to develop and implement the desired strategy should be put in place.

iv.   There must be strategic focus on security through improved intelligence gathering and military capability, seeking political solution through working with local governments and communities, an economic stimulus strategy through various empowerment and job creation programs, with a North East Commission to put up emergency assistance stabilization projects in education, health, infrastructure, agriculture, among others.

v.   A successful counterinsurgency must ensure the people felt protected so they could cooperate without fear of retribution. Counterinsurgency theory suggests that the role of military action was to create sufficient security to introduce programs to improve the social conditions of the people, thereby winning over their "hearts and minds" and denying the insurgents bases, recruits and support. The military could use coercive warfare and wars of attrition to wear down the enemy, thereby sowing confusion into their mind.

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