

BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH-EAST, NIGERIA, 2014-2022

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Abstract

The problem of insecurity and terrorism became heightened in 2014 after a series of attacks by Boko Haram on individuals, properties; government installations, etc. especially in North-East Nigeria. The study examines Boko Haram Insurgency and sustainable development in North East Nigeria, using the thematic approach of Insurgency and sustainable development. Qualitative analysis was strictly used based on purposive sampling gathered from four states of the northeastern part of Nigeria; Borno, Yobe, Bauchi, and Gombe. The Sustainable Development Theory was used to analyze the Insurgency's impact on economic, social, and human development, and the climate/environmental challenges. The researcher used both primary and secondary sources to collect information. The research findings indicate that the North East region and its people suffered grievous economic and political damages from the activities of the insurgents, with the catastrophic collapse of economic, social, and political structures, and processes, and a likelihood of the State itself collapsing and breaking into fragments if the insurgency had continued unabated for a more extended period. The study recommended that the provision of immediate and comprehensive mental health diagnosis, treatment, and counselling will play an essential and critical role in helping people exposed to insurgency recover quickly from the emotional pains and trauma that come with such exposure.

Keywords: *Insurgency, Boko Haram, Sustainable Development, North-East, Nigeria.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Armed conflict damages the foundation of development and slows it down globally. Sustainable development is only possible in a country that places a high priority on human

security. This is because attaining sustainable development depends on human security. Attaining human development objectives while protecting natural systems' ability to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services vital to the economy and society is a fundamental tenet of sustainable development. When development meets present needs without endangering the ability of future generations to fulfill their desires, it is deemed sustainable (Emas, 2015). Thus, the growing fear of insecurity in Nigeria prevents international and domestic investment, puts lives and property at risk, and makes it more difficult to achieve sustainable development. According to Shehu & Abba (2020), disasters exacerbate poverty and halt development when people lose their lives and means of support.

For more than ten years, the Boko-Haram insurgency's advent further undermined this delicate ecological and economic balance, unleashing violence throughout the region and beyond. Many people died as a result of the insurgency and counter-insurgency efforts carried out at the national and regional levels, and millions of people were forced to flee their homes and live as internally displaced people (IDPs) in neighboring nations like the Niger Republic, Chad, and Cameroon (Brechenmacher, 2019).

The insurgents largely harm and devastate the rural villages in the area. Regretfully, this significant population group comprises 60% of the region's total population (UNDP, 2016), and the majority of their income (80–90%) comes from agriculture, mostly from the production of crops, fisheries, and animals (FAO, 2016). The Boko Haram militants resisted the joint efforts of the Nigerian military and its neighbors to drive them out of the area in 2015, and as a result, several rural communities were left completely destroyed as a result of the massive scale of their reprisal. This is the reason why the rural parts of the Northeast are in such horrible condition (Thurston, 2016). Schools, hospitals, bridges, and other vital rural infrastructure have all been demolished by the rebels. Maclean (2018) asserts that the military gave safety to urban regions a higher priority than to rural areas due to the regular attacks and suicide bombers, leaving the latter with little defense.

Many studies appear to have focused on the Boko Haram terrorism, which mostly affects the North East (Borno, Adamawa, Gombe, and Yobe States). This raises questions about how the terrorism has impacted rural communities and the variables that govern rural livelihoods. Thus, the main goals of this study were to outline the ways in which the insurgency has impacted the socioeconomic standard of living in the area, as well as the ways in which the actions of the insurgency have impacted sustainable development and to offer

suggestions for how the North East sub-region might grow sustainably. The report examined the effects of the violence on a number of important economic areas, including infrastructure, health, education, and agriculture. This is to highlight a few key concerns that will direct policy in order to accomplish recovery plans and achieve sustainable development in the region. In light of this, the study looked at the relationship between the Boko Haram insurgency and sustainable development in northeastern Nigeria from 2014 to 2022.

Statement of the Problem

The Boko Haram group has been involved in several explosions, destruction of lives and property, and kidnapping of innocent civilians. The economy of the Northeast is severely impacted by the insurgency. The study's issue is Northeastern Nigeria's sustainable development in the context of the Boko Haram insurgency. The socioeconomic nature of the issue facing people in the Northeast has been identified by the study. As of December 2022, Boko Haram had closed practically all of the banks in the Northeast, and there was no chance of the banks being opened. Several productive rural communities have been complexly destroyed. Socio-economic infrastructure has been massively destroyed. The absence of international trade between Borno State and its neighbors is another significant issue. There is also the disruption of social cohesiveness and displacement of persons.

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to interrogate the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on Sustainable Development in Northeastern Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

- 1- Identify the causes and effects of Boko Haram Insurgency on sustainable development in the North East
- 2- Examine the relationship between Boko Haram insurgency and sustainable development in North-East Nigeria.
- 3- Assess the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on the livelihood of the people in the Northeast.
- 4- Find out how the UN humanitarian agencies, NGOs, state and non-state actors, and the Nigerian government responded to the humanitarian crisis caused by the Boko Haram insurgency.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ogbonna and Jiménez (2017), carried up an analysis titled "A critical review of facts and challenges on the inordinate activities of Boko Haram." The report looked into the sect's operations while highlighting the necessity of finding a long-term solution to Nigeria's insurgency and terrorist problems. According to the study, based on secondary sources of data, one of Nigeria's main problems is the insecurity brought by the insurgency of Boko Haram. According to the report, the group's actions in the North caused thousands of deaths, more than a million people to be displaced, hundreds of schools, mosques, churches, and government buildings to be destroyed, and the region's economy to be severely damaged. The study discovered that some of the main drivers of Boko Haram's violent incursion into northern Nigeria are poverty, illiteracy, inequality, economic distress and lack, and corruption.

Ojelade (2018) investigated Nigeria's counterterrorism strategy on Boko Haram between 2009 and 2015. According to the report, since Boko Haram started acting violently in 2010, the Nigerian government has implemented counterterrorism policy measures to confront the group's terrorism. Nonetheless, it pointed out a lack of knowledge regarding the creation and application of these regulations. The study's goal was to investigate and characterize the creation and use of Nigeria's counterterrorism strategy against Boko Haram. The study's theoretical underpinnings were Baumgartner's punctuated equilibrium theory and Scott's institutional theory. The study used a qualitative case study methodology, and data were gathered through interviews with people who were both the policy's beneficiaries and key players in its creation and implementation. These people were chosen using a purposive and criterion sampling strategy. Coding and content analysis were used to analyze the data. The study's main conclusions provide light on the creation, application, and potential for improvement of the policy. The study concluded that effective counterterrorism efforts in northeastern Nigeria require cooperation between key community leaders and security sector players.

Additionally, Shehu and Abba (2020), investigated the viewpoints and preferences of internally displaced people in northeastern Nigeria about sustainable development and humanitarian crises. The goal of the study was to advance the understanding of the connections between sustainable development and humanitarian efforts during times of crisis. It examined information gathered from focus groups and qualitative interviews with internally displaced people (IDPs) who had fled the Boko Haram insurgency in northeastern Nigeria and were camped out. According to the report, most internally displaced people preferred local

integration or resettlement over returning home. Female IDPs were more likely than male IDPs to cite personal experience of violence as a justification for refusing voluntary return home.

The main arguments in favor of local integration or relocation included feelings of vulnerability, personal experience with violence, and the desire for social and economic empowerment. Compared to encampment IDPs, self-settled IDPs are more likely to go back to their original locations. Rebuilding livelihoods and reestablishing social and community networks were the primary considerations that participants linked to their decision to return. The majority of individuals who had no interest in long-term solutions stated beliefs in divine destiny, distrust, and confidence in the government. It is believed that cultural androcentric traditions, which grant men the authority to decide what is best for the family, influence decision-making, even in dire circumstances.

All of the literature reviewed, provided an understanding of the knowledge gap, as only the work of Ewalefoh (2019) considered the impact of the insurgency on sustainable development. Another gap identified from the various studies was that only Tafida, Tukur, Adebayo, Ndaghu, Onu, and Momodu (2023) conducted a quantitative study by collecting primary data from respondents. Although the current study adopted the qualitative method, it however collected primary data through interviews with respondents in the affected States of the Northeast.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework adopted for this work is the sustainability theory put forth by former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, civil servants, environmental experts, and politicians in 1980. The commission was represented by 21 members from different nations of both developed and developing countries. According to the notion of the commission, sustainable development must address current demands without endangering the capacity of future generations to address their own needs. The significance of this statement is that sustainable development in Nigeria guarantees the right to a higher standard of living for future generations, averts resource crises, emphasizes the need for national quality, and raises public awareness of the needs of the people on the social, economic, and environmental fronts (Abbas, 2011). According to this idea, for societies in Northeast Nigeria to be able to attain sustainable development, the social, economic, political, and environmental sustainability components must be stable, viable, and equitable.

4. METHODOLOGY

A case study of the Boko Haram insurgency and sustainable development in northeastern Nigeria served as the research design for this project. The research design takes a qualitative approach in nature. This study's data was gathered from primary and secondary sources. Studies have shown that data can be gathered from primary sources (primary data) or retrieved from secondary sources (secondary data) regarding a scenario, person, issue, or phenomenon. This research project makes extensive use of purposeful sampling. Finding the cases, people, or communities most suited to assist the researcher in addressing the research questions was the primary goal of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a technique used in the study to obtain accurate data on the research being done.

The work is based on literature reviews, and field reports of interviews from the military, and police. Security personnel, traditional rulers, IDPs/IDP camp managers, youth leaders, and some individuals living in the affected areas. Other information was gathered from the review of the internet, books, journals, news, and university libraries. The primary sources of data came from the responses to the research questions built on qualitative interviews conducted from 12th to 22nd December 2022, from the four Northeastern States. However from a targeted 40 respondents for the study, due to its nature, only 20 people were interviewed. These 20 respondents have a direct relationship with the subject matter under study. They also have life experience as victims, policymakers, and peace-builders in the affected areas. They included: 3 military Chiefs of Staff from Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States, 2 Police officers from Adamawa, 3 Traditional rulers from Adamawa, and Borno States, 2 Security officers, from Yobe, and Gombe States, 5 IDP Camp managers from Yobe, Borno, and Adamawa States, 2 IDPs living in camp from Adamawa State, 2 Youth leaders from Borno and Adamawa States and 1 member Presidential Committee on Northeast Initiative (PCNI) from Yobe State..

According to Creswell and Plano (2018), some researchers estimate between 10 and 50 participants as being a sufficient sample size depending on the type of research and research questions.

5. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

This study described the adverse effect of the Boko Haram insurgency on sustainable development in the North East region of Nigeria. The survey questions were used to determine

the nature and depth of economic and political consequences of the Boko Haram insurgency on the study participants as well as efforts being made to restore the region to development path. From the responses of study participants, four themes emerged. The participants' experiences have given a fresh insight into a credible foundation to develop appropriate interventions and policies.

The narratives given by participants can serve as a useful basis for future studies on the effects of Boko Haram insurgency on the people of Nigeria's North East Region where the terror group's destructive activities were rampant.

Objective 1: The causes of Boko Haram Insurgency on sustainable development in North-East Nigeria

According to the majority of the respondents, extrajudicial killings, the "Almajiri system," youth unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, and poor governance were the direct and indirect causes of the Boko Haram insurgency. Participants in the study disclosed that these elements' combined effect created the conditions for the North East insurgency and the continuation of terrorist actions. Thus, the study comes to the conclusion that the Hydra monster terrorist group that threatened sustainable development in the North East was brought about by the issues of illiteracy, poverty, and unemployment as well as the difficulties of religious misinformation and indoctrination and the political aspect of empowering youth for electoral manipulations and ignoring them over time.

Nevertheless, the region has not reached the necessary level of development despite its potential, since it continues to be one of Nigeria's less-developed regions (RPCA, 2016). The percentage of the population living in income poverty is 71.9%, and the incidence of multidimensional poverty is 0.47 (NBS, 2019). Additionally, the region's average Human Development Index (HDI) was 0.38, lower than the average national score of 0.521, in terms of quality of life (UNDP, 2018). Various explanations are offered to account for the region's backward state. Due to the severe effects of environmental deterioration, including deforestation and desertification, the region is among the environmentally most unstable in the world (UNDP, 2018).

Objective 2: The relationship of Boko Haram insurgency and sustainable development in the North-East

According to the study, Boko Haram has a detrimental effect on Northeastern sustainable development. It was discovered that there is a negative association between Boko Haram and sustainable development in terms of hunger, poverty, and education. The objectives of sustainable development are thwarted in the affected areas as identified by the respondents. Regarding poverty, the study discovered that fighting had a significant impact on people's ability to engage in economic activities.

With millions of people living in camps for internally displaced people and countless others killed, people were forced to flee their ancestral homes and were unable to carry out economic activities like farming, fishing, and trading. As a result, the population's level of poverty increased. According to the study, Boko Haram had a significant negative influence on education since fewer individuals, particularly children, were motivated to go to school, educators resigned, and parents stopped their children from going because of the hazards involved. The SDG's educational goal target was impacted as more children in the Northeast of Nigeria were not attending school.

In addition to taking nearly 20,000 lives, the majority of which are in rural regions, the violence has caused severe physical infrastructure destruction, disruption of social services, and disruption of social cohesiveness among the populace (World Bank, 2015). In terms of internal displacement, refugees, and returnees, this unhappy situation resulted in the displacement of almost two million individuals (UNHCR, 2017). These people leave behind the majority of their productive assets, including farms, cattle, and other financial wealth, as they escape their homes. The economy has been severely impacted by the decline of interconnection as people are leaving villages and leaving many alone. Trade has been significantly hindered by the restricted movement of people, goods, and services as a result of continued terrorism, destroyed infrastructure, and closed borders. Important commercial routes became unusable, resulting in a sharp decline in trade volume.

Objective 3: Effects of Boko Haram Insurgency on the livelihood of the people in Northeast, Nigeria

The study's findings on the psychological effects of the Boko Haram insurgency on the populace were another important focus. According to the report, the Boko Haram insurgency's

growth in the northeast has a negative impact on people's mental health, particularly that of youngsters. Living in terror, experiencing trauma, and carrying around the memories of the horrible things they went through were a few of the psychological effects. During the height of the insurgents' activity, the mental health of the people living in the Northeast, especially those in the states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe, was severely impacted. The assaults, maimings, murders, and rapes that the people witnessed firsthand left a significant psychological scar on their brains.

Objective 4: Humanitarian Intervention to the Crisis in the North East

The study concluded by pointing out the importance of humanitarian interventions, particularly those carried out by the United Nations and Sustainable Development Agencies working with the Federal Government of Nigeria. According to study participants, the agencies' actions have not only given people hope again, but they have also set the groundwork for sustainable development. Some of the attendees emphasized outcomes including the availability of water, health outreach, and the reconstruction of essential infrastructure, among others.

6. CONCLUSION

This study's objective was to determine and investigate how the Boko Haram insurgency and sustainable development interact in Northeastern Nigeria between 2014 and 2022. The study aimed to investigate the adequacy and sufficiency of relief services and programs that are accessible to assist Boko Haram insurgency victims in managing the losses and trauma they have experienced as a result of being exposed to the rebellion. The study's conclusions contributed to our understanding of the Boko Haram phenomenon by highlighting the repercussions of insurgency on sustainable development from an economic, social, and political standpoint. The results of the study show that the rebels' actions contrary to the SDGs, caused severe economic and political harm to the Northeast region and its inhabitants, with the possibility that, had the insurgency persisted uninterrupted for a longer amount of time, the State itself would have collapsed and broken into fragments, as well as the catastrophic breakdown of economic, social, and political institutions and processes.

Recommendations

The study's conclusions and findings led to the following recommendations being

made:

It is impossible to overstate how important it is for survivors of terrorist attacks to have a steady stream of assistance in order to help them deal with the trauma of violence. In the absence of such a support structure, victims may have disorientation or a lifelong mental disease. The UN should support the Nigerian government that lacks any clear policies or initiatives to address the psychological and emotional harm inflicted upon victims of insurgency and other violent crimes. People exposed to insurgency will benefit greatly from the prompt and comprehensive development program that includes economic empowerment, education, mental health diagnosis, treatment, and counseling. This will also help them reenergize themselves toward inclusive economic activities for sustainable development and help them quickly recover from the emotional pain and trauma that such exposure brings.

The equipment, care, treatment, research, training, and capacity building for camp officials and caregivers that non-governmental organizations and other organizations can help provide (as some do currently, particularly religious organizations) may facilitate the effective delivery of excellent mental health services to those who need them most - people exposed to the horrors of terrorism and insurgency.

Even as refugees, internally displaced people can contribute to the economy. According to the study participants' comments, the camp inmates want to participate in the attempts to revive the economy in any manner they can, as long as they are given the training and funding to do so, even on a very small scale. Non-governmental organizations and donors have the chance to help eligible and willing camp inmates in this direction by giving them the assistance they need. In order to prevent roving Boko Haram militants from infiltrating the camps or new settlement zones and wreaking havoc among those who have managed to escape past attacks, security in and around the camps must be given top attention.

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