

Insecurity and Sustainable Development: The Boko Haram Debacle in Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper examines insecurity and sustainable development in Nigeria with special emphasis on the Boko Haram insurgency. One of the most vicious onslaughts on the Nigerian state is the terror unleashed by Jamaata Ahlis-Sunna Liddaawati -an Islamic sect popularly known as Boko Haram This sectarian group have adopted several approaches including bombing strategic places; that were hitherto not vulnerable to security threats, waging murderous campaigns against individuals and institutions leading to wanton destruction of lives and property. Using the Frustration-Aggression theoretical framework, the paper argues rather succinctly that terrorism is caused by frustrated expectations and a state of hopelessness and sustained mainly by bad governance, corruption and a pervasively weak institutional framework. With the upsurge of Boko Haram insurgency and the inability of the security agencies to guarantee security, economic life is ground to a halt with dire consequences for the society. This atmosphere of insecurity impedes the attainment of sustainable development. In order to create an enabling environment for sustainable development, the paper suggests, among others, that the Nigerian state should put in place good governance, viable anti-terrorism measures and build strong legitimate institutions that can adequately curb the menace of corruption and at the same time respond proactively to the challenge of terrorism in Nigeria.

Key Words: Nigeria, Frustration-Aggression, Boko Haram, Insecurity, Corruption, Sustainable Development.

Introduction

Nigeria has all it takes to be great in terms of human and natural resources and wants to be one of the developed economies of the world and a leading nation in Africa by the year 2020. In order to actualize its dream, it sets the process, for exploitation of resources and the attraction of indigenous and foreign investors. In spite of this laudable goal and arrangement put in place, Nigeria has nothing substantially to show to that effect. At present, most of its citizenry wallow in poverty and do not have access to modern health care delivery system, pipe-borne water, quality education and job opportunity and cannot afford three square meals daily. These unpleasant development indicators have led to it being rated as one of the poorest nations in the world.

The poor development status of Nigeria no doubt breeds atmosphere of frustrated expectations and foster widespread indignation on the part of those that are trapped in the vortex circle of abject poverty. The condition of hopelessness is further aggravated by impotent poverty eradication programmes and conspiratorial neglect by the Nigerian state. In the face of this predicament, individuals and groups respond differently depending on situational factor and capacity. These responses are crystallized and find expression in various shades of anti-social behaviours including armed robbery, kidnapping, insurgency among others.

In the midst of all these, Nigeria is confronted with daunting security challenges which include armed robbery, ethnic crisis, assassination, militancy, kidnapping and terrorism. The current and most disturbing insecurity problem in Nigeria is the terror unleashed by Jama'atul Alhul Sunnah Lidda' Wat, Wal Jihad - a dreaded militant Islamic sect popularly known as Boko Haram. The mass media present to the public a multivaried image of dramatic acts of bombings with impunity and horrific portrayal of people burnt to ashes, maimed and property wantonly destroyed by Boko Haram. Thus, everybody, especially in the hotbed of terrorism, lives in constant fear.

At this juncture, one begins to wonder how the people who live in these regions go about their socio-economic activities. This no doubt portends grave implications for the economic sector and by extension development, as all activities will inevitably grind to a halt. Against this backdrop, this paper is focused on the Boko Haram debacle and its repercussion on sustainable development in Nigeria.

In order to achieve this, the paper attempts a conceptual clarification of insecurity and sustainable development, a historical overview of Boko Haram violent attacks, a theoretical reflection on Boko Haram and the impact of Boko Haram insurgency on sustainable development in Nigeria.

Conceptual Considerations

(a) Insecurity

Insecurity is the extreme opposite of security. The import of this is that it is pertinent to conceptualize security before insecurity. Buzan (1991) sees security as political, economic, social and environmental threat that affect the individual as well as the state at national and international levels. To other scholars, security is the absence of threat to acquire values or tendencies that would undermine national cohesion and peace as criteria for the determination of the meaning of security. Security is the condition or feeling of safety from harm or danger, the defence, protection and absence of threat to acquire values (Wolfers 1962, Oladeji and Folorunso 2007). Security is aptly conceptualized by Professor Imobighe thus:

Security is the freedom from danger or threat to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interest.... And enhance the well-being of its people. Thus, security is the freedom from or the absence of those tendencies which could undermine internal cohesion and the corporate existence of a nation and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values... as well as freedom from danger to life and property (Oche 2001:76).

Security is simply the existence of conditions within which individuals in a society can go about their normal daily activities without any form of threat to lives and property (Igbuzor 2004, Akin 2008). Anything devoid of this constitutes a challenge to security.

Insecurity as an antithesis of security refers to a condition that exists due to lack of effective measures put in place to protect individuals, information and property against hostile persons, influences and actions. Insecurity is simply a situation in which individuals in a given society cannot go about their daily activities as a result of threat to and harmful disruption of their lives and property. According to Belard (2005) insecurity entails lack of protection from crime (being unsafe) and lack of freedom from psychological harm (unprotected from emotional stress resulting from paucity of assurance that an individual is accepted, has opportunity and choices to fulfill his or her own potentials including freedom from fear.

(b) Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a multidimensional concept that is conceptualized in many ways. However, the widely used one that is consensually stressed by the Bruntland Commission (1987) and the United Nations World Committee on Environment and Development 1992. Both defined sustainable Development as development that meets the needs of present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is a two-way relationship between development and environment.

Another conceptualized consideration that has contextual relevance to this paper is the one of Chinsman (1994) which added "human" to sustainable development. According to him, sustainable human development is centred on the variables and elements of human development. Sustainable human development is nothing but a dynamic framework that meaningfully provides people with job options, eliminates poverty and ensures equitable distribution of wealth in a society. It is the relationship between insecurity and sustainable human development that constitute the main thrust of this paper.

Boko Haram: Origin and the Spate of Terrorism in Nigeria

Boko Haram is a dreaded Islamic sect known as Jama'atul Alhul Sunnah Lidda' Wat, Wal Jihad meaning a group committed to the propagation of Prophet Muhammed's teachings and Jihad (Meehan and Spaier, 2011). The origin and founder of Boko Haram is shrouded in uncertainty. Some scholars trace the origin of the sect to 1995 with Lawan Abubakar as its founder. It was when Abubakar left for further studies in Saudi Arabia that the sect then known as Sahaba that Muhammed Yusuf who is also regarded as the leader, took over the affairs of the sect. Others trace the sect founder to Shehu Sanni, a civil right activity in Northern Nigeria. Apart from the above, numerous expositions on the origin and founder of Boko Haram abound (Danjijibo 2009, Bumah and Abimbola 2009, Langmang 2011, Adike 2012, Uzodike and Maingwa 2012).

It was under the leadership of the slain Mallam Muhammed Yusuf that Boko Haram became radicalized and enjoyed foreign collaboration especially with the Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (Abimbola and Adosote 2012). Since 2009, Boko Haram has constituted a serious security threat in the Northern part of Nigeria. Its terror campaign assumed an alarming dimension from 2010 till date. However, until June 16, 2011, the onslaught was restricted to the North East geo-political zone. The first attack outside the zone was the bombing of the Nigeria Police Headquarters in Abuja. That attack was triggered off by the utterances of Hafiz Ringim-the then Inspector General of Police who threatened to smoke Boko Haram out in a press statement on his duty tour to Maiduguri where the sect launched an attack. The attack on the Police Headquarters was followed up with the bombing of the United Nation House also in Abuja on August 26, 2011 (Aloejewu 2012). Find below a list of its catastrophic terror in strategic locations in Northern Nigeria.

Table 1: Major Incidents of Boko Haram Attacks since 2009 up till date

| DATE | CASUALTIES |
|-------------------|---|
| July 26, 2009 | Boko Haram launches mass uprising with attack on a police station in Bauchi, starting a five-day uprising that spread to Maiduguri and elsewhere. |
| September 7, 2010 | Boko Haram attacked a prison in Bauchi, killed about five guards and freed over 700 inmates, including former sect members. |
| October 11, 2010 | Bombing/gun attack on a police station in Maiduguri with destroyed the station and injured three by the group |
| December 24, 2010 | The group carried out a bomb attack in Jos, killing 8 people. |
| December 28, 2010 | Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the Christmas Eve bombing in Jos that killed 38 people |
| December 31, 2010 | The group attacked a Mammy market at Army Mogadishu Barracks, Abuja, 11 people died |
| April 1, 2011 | The group attacked a police station in Bauchi |
| April 9, 2011 | The group attacked a polling center in Maiduguri and bombed it |
| April 20, 2011 | A bomb in Maiduguri killed a policeman. |
| April 22, 2011 | The group attacked a prison in Yola and freed 14 prisoners |
| April 24, 2011 | Four bombs exploded in Maiduguri, killing at least three. |
| May 31, 2011 | Gunmen assassinate Abba Anas Ibn Umar Garbai, brother of the Shehu of Borno, in Maiduguri. |
| June 1, 2011 | The group killed Shehu of Borno's brother, Abba El-kanemi |
| June 7, 2011 | A team of gunmen launched parallel attacks with guns and bombs on a church and police stations in Maiduguri, killing 5 people. |
| June 16, 2011 | Bombing of police headquarters in Abuja, claimed by Boko Haram. Casualty reports vary. |
| June 26, 2011 | Gunmen shot and bombed a bar in Maiduguri, killing about 25 people |
| August 16, 2011 | The Bombing of United Nations Office in Abuja, killing over 34 people by the Group |
| December 25, 2011 | Bombing of St. Theresa's Catholic Church, Madalla, killing over 46 people |
| January 6, 2012 | The Sect attacked some southerners in Mubi, killing about 13 Igbo |
| January 21, 2012 | Multiple bomb blasts rocked Kano city, claiming over 185 people |
| January 29, 2012 | Bombing of Kano Police Station at Naibawa Area of Yakatabo |
| February 8, 2012 | Bomb blast rocked Army Headquarters in Kaduna |
| February 15, 2012 | Koton Karife Prison, Kogi State, was attacked by the sect and about 119 prisoners were released and a warden was killed. |
| February 19, 2012 | Bomb blast rocked Suleja Niger State near Christ Embassy Church, leaving 5 people seriously injured |
| February 26, 2012 | Bombing of Church of Christ in Nigeria, Jos, leading to the death of about 2 worshippers & about 38 people sustained serious injuries. |
| March 8 2012 | An Italian, Franco Lamolinara and a Briton, Christopher McManus, who were Expatriate Staff of "Stabilim Visioni Construction Firm" were abducted in 2011 by a |

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| | splinter group of Boko Haram and were later killed. |
| March 11, 2012 | Bombing of St. Finbarr's Catholic Church, Rayfield, Jos, resulting in the killing of 11 people and several others wounded. |
| April 26 2012 | Bombing of three media houses (This day Newspaper) in Abuja killing 3 & 2 security Officers & injured 13 people; This day, the Sun & The Moments newspapers in Kaduna, killing 3 persons & injuring many Others |
| April,29,2012 | Attack on Bayero University, Kano, killing 13 Christian Worshippers, a senior non academic staff & two Professors |
| April 30, 2012 | Bomb explosion in Jalingo, claiming 11 persons and several others wounded. |
| 8 March 2012 | During a British hostage rescue attempt to free Italian engineer Franco Lamolinara and Briton Christopher McManus, abducted in 2011 by a splinter group Boko Haram, both hostages were killed. |
| 31 May 2012 | During a Joint Task Force raid on a Boko Haram den, it was reported that 5 sect members and a German hostage were killed. |
| 3 June 2012 | 15 church-goers were killed and several injured in a church bombing in Bauchi state. Boko Haram claimed responsibility through spokesperson Abu Qaqa. |
| 17 June 2012 | Suicide bombers struck three churches in Kaduna State. At least 50 people were killed. |
| 17 June 2012 | 130 bodies were found in Plateau State. It is presumed they were killed by Boko Haram members. |
| 3 October 2012 | Around 25–46 people were massacred in the town of Mubi in Nigeria during a night-time raid. |
| January 20, 2013 | A group of gunmen attacked the convoy of Alhaji Ado Bayero, the Emir of Kano, killing 4 and injuring 14 others, including two of his sons. In addition, militants from the Boko Haram breakaway group Ansaru ambushed a Nigerian Army convoy in Kogi State, killing 2 officers and injuring 8 others. The troops were heading to Mali to assist in the ECOWAS mission as part of the conflict against Jihadist groups. |
| January 21, 2013 | Suspected Boko Haram militants murdered 31 people over the course of 3 days, including 18 hunters selling bushmeat, who were shot at market in Damboa on January 21. Five people were shot in Kano on the next day as they were playing board games. At least 8 civilians were killed in Maiduguri on January 23, as gunfire was reported from parts of the city. |
| February 18, 2013 | A suicide bomber attacked a bus station in a predominantly Christian area of Kano, killing 41 passengers and injuring dozens more. |
| March 5, 2013 | Unidentified gunmen attacked at least 13 locations in Ganye, a city in Nigeria's northeastern Adamawa State, including the local police HQ, a bank and several local bars. At least 25 people were killed in the two-hour assault, including the deputy chief of the local prison, where 127 inmates were freed. |
| March 18, 2013 | A suicide bomber attacked a bus station in a predominantly Christian area of Kano, killing 41 passengers and injuring dozens more. |
| April 18, 2013 | Militants ambushed a police patrol boat in Nigeria's southern delta region, killing all 12 occupants. The MEND group claimed responsibility, saying it was in response to jail sentence given to their leader Henry Okah |
| May 7, 2013 | At least 55 killed and 105 inmates freed in coordinated attacks on army barracks, a prison and police post in Bama town. |
| June 16, 2013 | A team of suspected Islamist militants attacked a school in Damaturu, killing 13 people, including students and teachers. Three days later a similar attack in the city of Maiduguri left nine students dead |

Source: Compiled from Nigerian Newspapers

The Spate of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria: A Theoretical Discourse

The Boko Haram insurgency is ravaging the north in quite alarming and unprecedented manner. A plethora of theories could be used to explain the violent attacks of Boko Haram. Some of the theories are the relational vengeance theory, the Islamic theory and the frustration aggression theory (Alojewu 2012).

Each of these theories provides a persuasive explanation on the Boko Haram insurgency, from different view points. Out of all these, the paper adopts the aggression frustration theory as the most appropriate theoretical framework to explain the actions of Boko Haram.

The frustration-aggression model is a theoretical framework developed by John Dollard and his associates in 1939 but was expanded and modified by Yate 1962 and Berkowitz (1963), drawing mainly from the psychological basis of motivation and behavior. The theoretical framework provides explanation for violent behavioral disposition resulting from the inability of a people to fulfill their human needs. It is based on the general premise that all humans have basic needs which they seek to fulfill and that any blockade to the fulfillment of these needs by individuals or groups elicit violent responses.

Frustration-aggression theory emphasizes the difference between what people feel they want and the discrepancy however, marginal, between what is sought and what they get, the greater the violent reaction. In the face of these frustrated expectations, a group is most vulnerable to embark on violent destructive behavior or be a ready army to be used to cause crisis. Central to this explanation is that aggression is the natural outcome of frustration. In a situation where the legitimate desires of an individual or group is denied either directly or by the indirect consequence of the way a society is structured, the feeling of frustration can compel such persons or group to express their anger through violence that is directed at those perceived to be responsible for their misfortune or others who are indirectly related to those frustrating their expectations.

The relevance of the frustration-aggression theoretical framework to the insurgency of Boko Haram is better appreciated when viewed against the backdrop of widespread poverty in Northern Nigeria. Poverty though endemic throughout Nigeria, the rate is highest in the north. The three northern regions have the highest incidence of poverty having an average poverty incidence of 70.1% compared to 34.9% of the three geo-political regions of the South. Ten states in Nigeria with the highest incidence of poverty are all in the north, while ten states with the lowest incidence of poverty are in the south (Lukeman 2012). This means that about 70% of people in the north live below poverty line with an income of less than one dollar per day.

The poverty profile is exacerbated by the problem of unemployment and hopelessness. A negative condition caused not by the unwillingness of the people to work but by bad governance that creates capability gap. The capability gap portrays the inability of governance to effectively utilize the resources of the state to better the lots of its citizenry through the provision of job opportunities, infrastructural development and initiation of potent or viable poverty alleviation and eradication programmes. This failure of governance breeds frustrated expectations. Under this pathetic condition, members of this sect and other frustrated persons are readily available to be recruited under the auspice of Boko Haram as a destructive political agent for indiscriminate and sporadic suicide bombings in northern Nigeria.

The Boko Haram Debacle and the Problem of Sustainable Insecurity Human Development in Nigeria

The incessant bombing by Boko Haram insurgents no doubt impact negatively on lives and property. Though, there is the dearth of quantitative evaluation of the catastrophic attacks, available statistics has it that between July 25 and February 2011, Human Rights Watch (2012) reported a total death toll of 935 persons in 164 attacks. It is also reported that an estimate of 550 people were killed through bombing and other means; 550 persons were killed in 135 attacks in 2011 alone. While in 2011, at least 500 people were killed in Boko Haram attacks (Amnesty International 2012). Apart from the loss of lives, there is also the wanton destruction of property worth several billions of naira through bombing. (Oluwaseun 2012)

The above scenario has dire consequences for sustainable development in the regions of attack in particular and Nigeria in general. In the regions where the bombings are pervasive and the property destroyed potentially and in real terms drag their economic fortune back by several steps. Besides the property destroyed, economic life in those regions is automatically grounded to a halt.

People are no longer free to go about their economic activities for fear of being killed. This is made worse as several thousands of people have migrated swiftly to the southern part of Nigeria. The overall implication for sustainable development is that the economy is fast deteriorating. The murderous campaigns and vicious onslaughts on individuals and institutions provide an highly unfavourable business environment for internal and foreign investors. Foreign investment is a major factor in the achievement of sustainable development.

It contributes significantly in boosting the Gross Domestic Product of any country and Nigeria is not an exception. Apart from the significant contributions to the economy at the national level, foreign investors create livelihood opportunities through the creation of job opportunities and the provision of large scale products and services in the host country. Nigeria can no longer avail itself of this opportunity due to unfavourable business environment of insecurity created by the violent activities of Boko Haram.

Apart from the unfavourable investment climate and stagnated external resources inflow into Nigeria, the Boko Haram's insecurity problems has caused a greater percentage of the internal resources and attention to be devoted only to the security sector. With the enormous resources at its disposal, leadership in Nigeria is confronted with the problem of focusing its expenditure priorities on security in disfavour of viable human capital development and other growth and productivity promoting sectors. This no doubt, poses a serious challenge to a dynamic framework for the provision of job options and the elimination of poverty, which of course constitutes the hallmark of sustainable development. This is made worse as leadership is preoccupied by waging and bent on winning the war against terrorism through huge budgetary allocations to the security sector.

Disproportionate attention to the security sector by the Nigerian leadership is another challenge to sustainable development. There is also the problem of micro economic instability distortions and leakages in the Nigerian economy with the attendant problem of infrastructural constraints and hyper inflation. The implication of this scenario for sustainable development is that more people are trapped into the vortex of interlocking vicious circle of poverty. This constitutes a dismal performance of the economy with devastating implication for sustainable development in Nigeria.

Another way in which insecurity negatively affects sustainable development is in the sphere of tourism. Tourism is a viable sector with sufficient economic, socio-cultural benefits. However, for a country to reap these benefits, a country must be free of security threats. Security constitutes a sensitive aspect of tourism. Nigeria has abundant tourist centres. However, they have made negligible contribution to sustainable development due to the security challenges perpetuated by the incessant bombing by Boko Haram.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The discourse shows that Nigeria is confronted with the problem of insecurity. This is made manifest in the Boko Haram's murderous campaign against individuals and institutions in the Northern East region of Nigeria. The upsurge of terror unleashed by this Islamic religious sect is rather unprecedented with monumental loss of lives and property. The problem of insecurity as identified in this paper is the outcome of frustrated expectations which breed aggression. The way the Nigerian society is structured paved way for frustration and that people are inevitably compelled to express their frustration through various shades of anti-social behavior including violent responses that are directed at those perceived to be responsible for their predicaments or are readily available to be used political agents for destructive purposes.

The prevailing vicious onslaught of Boko Haram and the inability of the security sector to guarantee security has dire consequences for sustainable development. The economic life of people in those regions is grounded to a halt. The Boko Haram debacle creates an unfavourable investment climate for both indigenous and foreign investors that would have propelled the economic fortune of Nigeria. In order to surmount the insurgency, governance in Nigeria devoted all resources and attention on the security sector at the expense of other sectors that impact directly on the welfare and living standard of its citizenry. This further moves Nigeria away from the path of sustainable development.

From the foregoing, it is evident that with her enormous resources, sustainable development remains elusive due to the menace of Boko Haram and general insecurity. Against this backdrop, the paper puts forward the following recommendations:

- The Nigerian state should desist from addressing the symptom instead of the cause. Consistent deployment of security personnel is only a first aid measure. The long term solution is good governance with a robust institutional framework that ensures a prudent and effective management of resources to better the lot of its citizenry.
- There should be reprioritization of government expenditure in favour of poverty alleviation measures including the creation of job opportunities and other welfare packages.

- The anti-corruption war should be intensified by enacting a law that will make it possible for any person caught in corrupt transaction to go to jail and forfeit all that he or she has worked for in life.
- The Nigerian state should build strong viable institutions that can proactively respond to the challenges of security.

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