
Poverty and Unemployment: Implications on Terrorist Activities in Nigeria Boko Haram in Perspective

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Abstract: *In the recent past, Nigeria has faced a lot of security challenges. The most recent is terrorist activities by the Boko Haram terrorist operating mostly in the North Eastern Nigeria though their effects are felt in all parts of the country. One tends to wonder what factors have given rise to terrorism in Nigeria. With a view to answering the question, this paper used primary data to find out reason for the emergence of terrorism in Nigeria with specific reference to Boko Haram terrorist group. Using survey design and collecting data from the major states where Boko Haram terrorists are in operation namely, Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states through empirical evidence, results gathered revealed that poverty and unemployment are contributing factors for the emergence of the Boko Haram terrorist group in Nigeria. Recommendations were thereby made towards ways of reducing poverty and unemployment in Nigeria.*

Key words: *Terrorism, Poverty, Unemployment, Boko Haram*

Introduction

Nigeria which can be easily described as a colonial creation gained independence in 1960. As an independent nation, Nigeria's democratic rule has been truncated several times by military dictatorship. However, in 1999, Nigeria returned to democratic rule which was multiplicity in nature. Civil society organisations and the international community that hitherto play an observer and advisory role in the happenings in Nigeria had high expectations that Nigeria would soon begin to reap the benefits of democracy. It was hoped that Nigeria would witness positive developments to include; respect for civil and political authority as well as accountability and good governance. Sadly, since Nigeria's democratic period of 1999, several crises have engulfed the country which has been a set back to our nascent democracy. These threats have spread across the nation including violent religious clashes, crisis in the oil producing areas of the Niger Delta regions and in the recent past terrorist activities perpetuated by the Boko haram terrorist group predominantly in north eastern part of Nigeria. Despite Nigeria's endowment in both human and natural resources, Nigeria remains one of the poorest nations in the world as most Nigerians live in abject poverty.

Unemployment and poverty in Nigeria remains a problem both to government and society. Though, Nigeria has one of the world's highest economic growth rates averaging 7.4%, poverty still remains significant at 33.1% in Nigeria, the Africa's best economy (World Bank, 2014). The efforts of government to create jobs are getting worse as the unemployment rate in

Nigeria is on the increase. About half of Nigeria's population is made of youths; these are citizens between the ages 15-34 years (NPC, 2014). With a population figure of 167 million, this remains a fact that youthful population is on the increase as the unemployment rate is also on the increase (NPC, 2014). Unemployment continues to remain a challenge in Nigeria since about 1.8million youths enter the labour market every year (Falasi, 2014). Specifically, unemployment rate in Nigeria increase to 18.8% in the third quarter of 2017 from 16.20% in the second quarter of 2017 (NPC, 2017). Poverty and unemployment are interwoven as unemployment is a major trigger to poverty in Nigeria. Nigerians are so poor that almost 100million people live on less \$1 dollar (0.63) a day, this figure shows that 60% of Nigerians live in absolute poverty (NBC, 2012). Unemployment is a major reason for poverty and both of them have negative consequences on the Nigerian society.

With these in mind, this paper tries to investigate how poverty and unemployment have encouraged the rise and existence of terrorism in Nigeria with specific emphasis on the Boko Haram terrorist group. The major objectives of the research are;

- i. To determine the major factors that gave rise to the emergence and survival of Boko Haram terrorists in Nigeria till date.
- ii. To establish the linkage between poverty, unemployment and terrorism in Nigeria.

Research Questions

- i. What are the factors that gave rise Boko Haram in Nigeria?
- ii. Is there any linkage between unemployment, poverty and terrorism in Nigeria?

Research Proposition

This research has the following as its research proposition;

1. Poverty and unemployment could play a crucial role in the existence of terrorism in Nigeria

Conceptual Framework

Poverty

Poverty has existed from the creation of man. It is a global phenomenon which affects continents, nations and people at various levels at different times and phases of existence. There is no nation globally that is also totally free from poverty. The main difference is the intensity and prevalence of this menace (Mbah et al, 2017). Poverty is a multidimensional and is a problem in any society, Nigeria inclusive. It is unwholesome in which every way it is viewed and lack of resources of persons to attend to basic needs of life.

To Revallion and Bidani (1994) poverty is the lack of command over basic consumption needs, a situation of inadequate level of consumption bringing about insufficient food, clothing and shelter. Poverty is harmful as it leads to ill health and malnutrition; it also leads to violence and mental instability. When citizens are poor, they are denied access to work, school and health facilities; generally, poverty leads to an unusual negative lifestyle.

The United Nations Human Development Report (1998) defines poverty as a situation which refers to inadequacy of resources and deprivation of choices that would enable people enjoy decent living conditions. On the other hand, the Central Bank of Nigeria (1999) defines poverty as a state where an individual is not able to cater adequately for his or her basic needs of food, clothing and shelter, unable to meet to social and economic obligations, lacks gainful employment and has limited access to social and economic infrastructure like good health education and general facilities that makes life better and comfortable.

In the same vein, Ayo (2012) opines that, poverty encompasses both income dimensions of deprivation which includes; lack of income and other materials, lack of access to basic social services such as education, health and safe water, lack of personal security and lack of empowerment to participate in political process and decisions as well as issues that influence life.

To Adeyemi (2007), poverty is seen as a human condition characterized by sustained or chronic deprivation of resources, capabilities, choices security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic and political rights.

Unemployment

The importance of employment in any society, Nigeria inclusive cannot be overemphasized. Employment is so important because it not only affects the person employed but also affects the nation at large. Unemployment is usually understood in general terms as people that do not have jobs. The General International Community defines unemployment as someone who is without work, available to work and is seeking for work (ILO, 1982). Unemployment remains a major indicator of standard of living in any society and thereby remains a primary goal of any government in authority. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) further distinguishes the various forms of unemployment which include frictional, a period between job transitions, voluntary; those who chose not to work, structural; when skills and qualifications don't match job openings and institutional; when governments concerned do not create the enabling environment for employment to take place.

such as accountants, engineers and others (Akintoye, 2003). Unlike developed nations, Nigeria has no social security system, so unemployed citizens have no benefits thereby making them unable to take care of basic needs pushing them to engage in activities that are security threats to the nation since they are already frustrated (Adekola , 2016).

Terrorism

This is a dreadful form of aggression against mankind. It takes place globally. This form of aggression has been meted on man from the days of antiquity to the era of civilizations. This is the oldest and most painful form of violence man has suffered. Terrorist groups pose a serious security challenge, they are dreaded around the globe, Boko haram is a good example of a terrorist group.

The word terrorism originates from the French word *terrorime*. The word is in turn derived from the latin verb *terreo* which means "frighten" (Campbell, 2001). To Eugene (2014) terrorism is an overwhelming impulse of fear, extreme fright or dread, that which or who causes extreme fear. On the other hand, Carusu (2014) sees terrorism as violent acts (or threat of violent acts) intended to create fear or terror, perpetrated for economic, religious, political or ideological and which deliberately targets or disregards the safety of non combatants. Kwagher (2015) observes that terrorism is committed with the intention to cause political effect and their actions are always aimed at causing fear in the minds of the target audience, they use violence and destruction to drive their points and make their target or victims believe in their so called inability. Usually, terrorist have scores to settle with those in authority but since they don't have access to them. They use their targets who are innocent citizens to get those in authority to yield to their demands thereby making the innocent civilians suffer untold hardship.

In line with this assertion, Freeman (2008) views terrorism as the use of violence by non state actors against non combatants designed to influence an audience in order to achieve political outcome.

In his analysis Ali (1987) views terrorism as sprouting from the existence of aggrieved groups, these groups share two essential characteristics, they are have specific political objectives and they believe violence is an inevitable means to achieving political ends, violence basically is what distinguishes terrorism from other crimes.

Theoretical Framework

Frustration and Aggression Theory

This theory was formulated and developed by John Dollard and Neal Miller et al in 1939. The theory was later expanded by Leonard Berthowitz in 1962. The theory associates the root cause of aggression in society to the frustration which comes as a result of individuals in society inability to attain their goals. Basically, the theory states that “occurrence of an aggressive behaviour is always presupposed by the existence of frustration which always leads to some form of aggression.

In Nigeria, unemployed youths and the poor are frustrated because of the socio-economic situation in the country. They often fall prey to the appeals of terrorism and are easily radicalized by terrorist who are also frustrated by the situation in which they find themselves. Most of them feel society has not given them enough and they feel they deserve better (Magstad, 2011).

Review of Literature

Boko Haram Terrorist Group in Brief Perspective

Boko Haram remains a dreaded terrorist group in Nigeria and neighboring countries. In the recent past, activities of this group have become very deadly and are also a source of concern. Founded by Mohammed Yusuf in Maiduguri in 2002, the group had the aim of establishing Sharia in Borno State. The meaning of the group name is Western education is forbidden as they view everything about western as being wrong and corrupt. The group received training in Afghanistan and Mauritania and is suspected to be allies with the Al Qaeda terrorist group (Adebanjoko, Ojua and Okorie, 2017). In the first seven years of the existence of the Boko haram terrorist group, were peaceful till in 2009 following investigations of the groups’ activities and subsequent killing of their leader Mohamed Yusuf and a death toll of over 700 people, the infuriated followers laid siege on policemen in Maiduguri. The group re-emerged with a new leader Abubakar Shekau as a full terrorist organisation (Adebanjoko, Ojua and Okorie, 2017). Under Shaka, the group became extremely violent, brutal and militant in nature staging more audacious attacks in the north and Central Nigeria. Full terrorist activities took place as government buildings were destroyed; schools worship centers, buildings both private and even national. Suicide bombings became the order of the day as most towns in the north were ravaged by their activities. They went as far as kidnapping of students in schools causing fear, harm and terror in the northern region of Nigeria beyond (Kwagher, 2015).

Methodology

Research Design

Survey design was adopted for this study. This is because it is a suitable method of obtaining information from various respondents in a physical setting and makes generalization of the data possible. Kasume (2005) observes that survey research design differs from other kinds of data gathering approach because when conducted properly, survey design allows the opinions of many people by studying the subject of them which stands as a representation.

Area of Study

The study area of this research is north eastern Nigeria. The north east states are made up Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Gombe, Bauchi and Taraba. The states chosen randomly for this paper within the north east are Borno, Adamawa and Yobe. Borno state has a population of 4,151,193 (NBS, 2012), Yobe state has a population of 2,321,339 (NPC, 2017) Adamawa state has a population of 3,168, 100 people (LGIDD, 2012).

Population of the Study

The targeted population of the study was the indigenous, residents and those affected by Boko Haram activities; respondents include farmers, security experts and the academia. The states are Borno State with a population of 4,151,193 Adamawa, 3,168,101 and Yobe 2,321,37 thereby the total population of the study is 9, 640, 633.

Sample Size Determination

The sample size determination for this research study was calculated with a confidence level of 95%. The statistical formula by Taro Yamane was used to determine the sample size of the population of study. This formula is appropriate have since the population size is known;

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where

- n = Sample size
- N = Total population
- e = acceptable error link or margin error

Thus

$$\begin{aligned}
 n &= 9640663 \\
 e &= 4\% = 0.04 \\
 (e)^2 &= 0.0016 \\
 n &= \frac{9640663}{1+9640663(0.0016)} \\
 n &= \frac{9640663}{1+15425.0608} \\
 n &= \frac{9640663}{15426.0608} \\
 n &= 624 \\
 n &= 600 \text{ (rounded)}
 \end{aligned}$$

The sample size was rounded down to 600 thereby having a round figure of 200 each per state for equal representation.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection of this research was a questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised both open and close ended questions. It was administered to respondents which include academia, civil servants, farmers, security operatives, and the general public. A total of 600 questionnaires were administered. However, 577 copies were returned thereby giving a success rate of 97%.

Method of Data Analysis

The research used simple percentages to answer the research question as well as to confirm or disapprove the proposition. These were computed using the statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Findings of the Discussions

Proposition

Poverty and unemployment could play a crucial role in the existence of the Boko Haram terrorist in Nigeria.

Table 1: Percentage on poverty and unemployment as it jointly influences the existence of Boko Haram terrorist in Nigeria.

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
SA	294	50.8
A	119	20.6
D	156	26.9
SD	10	1.7
Total	579	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

The above reveals that 294 representing 50.8% out of the 579 respondents strongly agree that poverty and unemployment have crucial roles in the existence of Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria. 119 representing 20.6% agree that poverty and unemployment play crucial roles in the existence of Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria while 156 representing 26.9% disagree and 10 representing 1.7% disagree and strongly disagree respectively that poverty and unemployment do not play a crucial role in the existence of Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria. The total number and percentage of the agreement according to the results of the survey are 413 representing 71.4% of the respondents while those who do not agree are 166 respondents 28.6%.

From the above results it has shown empirically that poverty and unemployment play crucial roles in the existence of the Boko Haram terrorist group in Nigeria and also shows that there is an existing relationship between poverty, unemployment and terrorism in Nigeria. This result goes in line with the findings of Adeshina (2013) who observes that the high level of unemployment in Nigeria has given rise to the security challenge of terrorism the country is facing. According to the popular maxim “the idle mind is the devils workshop”. A situation where people are poor and hungry and a lot of youths are jobless and unemployed will no doubt engender high insecurity in the land. To further buttress this point, Olaniyi (2017) posits that Boko Haram terrorist took advantage of poverty and unemployment to mobilize its membership since the failure of government to design and implement policies that are capable of reducing poverty and since such policies have little or no impact on the people. He further posits that the incessant violent attacks by terrorist in the north east and other parts of the country are as a result of poverty. Also, the unemployed and uneducated youths in Northern Nigeria’s called Almajiri

dependence on alms or rich benefactors are a link, since terrorism is linked to lack of economic resources further linked to poverty and lack of education (Olomjobi, 2015).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper looked at poverty and unemployment in Nigeria in relation to terrorist activities in Nigeria with specific reference to the Boko Haram terrorist group in Nigeria. This was with the view to find out the major reasons for terrorist activities in Nigeria and how unemployment has encouraged the existence of terrorism in Nigeria. Findings from the paper show that poverty and unemployment are key factors that contributed to the rise and existence of terrorism in Nigeria. Also based on the literatures reviewed, it is evidently clear that there is a very strong positive relationship between youth, unemployment, poverty and terrorism in Nigeria. Having revealed the above, the following recommendations are suggested to help curb this existing menace.

1. Corruption in Nigeria must be reduced to the least, since successive governments have tried in the area of poverty reduction or alleviation policies but due to corruption these policies have not been successful.
2. Government needs to be responsible to the issue of job creating as many graduates are coming out of the universities and polytechnics without employment. This can be done by enhancing the activities and broadening the scope of the National Directorate of Employment (DE). Skills acquisition should be encouraged while banks should be made to give or grant soft loans as a source of creating employment.

Further research can be done to look beyond poverty and unemployment to find out whether there are any other factors that give rise to the emergence of terrorism in Nigeria

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