



RESEARCH ARTICLE

EFFECT OF ARMED BANDITS AND BOKO-HARAM ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH-EAST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on multidimensional implications of Boko-Haram and armed bandits on socio-economic development of Northern Nigeria. It is not in contention that nefarious activities of these non-state actors have been the center of security crisis in Nigeria. The implications of these developments have also created complex challenges with a significant impact on food production. Hence, the study adapted secondary sources of data collection. A desk method of data analysis and frustration-aggression theory in discussing the consequences of Islamic radicals and armed bandits in northern states with a significant effect in notable states such as Zamfara, Niger, Kaduna and Kastina, and Borno-States. The study found that the high rate of insecurity in Nigeria, and most worrisome in these states have created untold hardship for people living within, and has continued to impact governance negatively. The paper further argues that there is a wide gap between the citizenry and government security agencies in protecting life and properties. Therefore, the objective of this study is to examine the dimensional impact of these radicals on socio-economic development of these aforementioned states. The paper concludes that the activities of these group in northern, and more importantly those states mentioned have impacted socio-economic lives of the people in the area which is synonymous to a failed state. The paper therefore recommends the imperative and urgency in technological approach to tackling this ugly trend, strengthening cooperation and engagement of the indigenes by strengthening local security outfit, as well as creation of more employment opportunities for the teaming youths, and good governance. Nigeria should also push for the review of ECOWAS Protocol that guarantee free entry and free exist of member states. This would halt the excesses of terrorism and other forms of criminalities towards enhancing national security and robust socio-economic development.

Keywords: Armed bandit, socio-economic development, Boko-Haram, insecurity,

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INTRODUCTION

There is no gainsaying that state of security situation in Nigeria currently is alarming. Given this, Nigerian government has come under strong criticism for its ineffective strategies in containing the Islamic extremism, and armed bandits killing people for exciting in the country. Security has been described as a concept that is prior to the state and the state exist in order to provide that concept Omoyibo & Akpamera (2013). Basically, security is the prime responsibility of a state, however, with the current development; it appears government is incapable and ineffective in discharging the necessary constitutional responsibilities.

The rate in which Islamic fanatics, Boko-Haram, armed banditry, Herdsmen among others are rioting all over the country has continued to create fear among the citizens, and derailing efforts aimed at national development. No doubt, activities of Boko-Haram especially in northern part of the country, has created the impression that Nigeria is a safe haven for terrorists' organizations and by implication brought dishonour and dented the image of the country (Chukwurah & Ogbesi, 2015).

In 2020, Nigeria was ranked ninety-eight out of one hundred and seven countries by Global Hungry Index (GHI), in 2021, the country was ranked one hundred and forty-six among one hundred and sixty-three ranked by Global Peace Index (GPI), while in 2022 it was ranked one hundred and forty-three among one hundred and sixty-three independent nations and territories. This paper therefore evaluates implications of Islamic extremists poses to Nigerian-state in her quest for sustainable development.

Amidst worsening security situation, the challenges of poverty; worsening exchange rate; skyrocketing inflation; and social infrastructural decay have added impetus to trends of insecurity in Nigeria. It is thus suggested, Nigerians would have no option than believing that the entire nation, irrespective of regional affiliations, would soon be submerge and controlled by recalcitrant and dissident groups of the Islamic Jihadist movement; the Boko-Haram and Islamic State in West African Province (ISWAP), formerly known as Jam'al Ahi as Sunnah lid-Da wa'-Jihad, (Musan 2014).

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Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to evaluate effect of armed bandits and Boko-Haram on socio-economic development of Northeast Nigeria. To achieve the aim the following specific objectives are investigated:

- To discuss the impact of armed bandits and Boko-Haram on socio-economic development of Northeast Nigeria.
- To discuss the manifestation of state failure in Nigeria.
- To discuss summary of some killings and kidnapping between 2021 – 2024.

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Armed banditry

Armed banditry is regarded as the practice of raiding and attacking innocent people by armed group using offensive weapons for the purpose of overpowering the victims, and loot their possessions in achieving political goal. Therefore, armed bandits are groups of people involved in criminal activities such as kidnap-for ransom, armed robbery, cattle rustler, rape, attack on farmers and traders, and attacks on gold mineral and traders particularly in North-West Nigeria (International Crisis Group, 2020). Basically, kidnapping for ransom has become a lucrative business in Nigeria. These days, it is easy for these armed gangs to kidnap people inside their bedroom without security obstruction. Government appears to be making frantic efforts in taming the crisis. But it has remained difficult in hotbed of these notorious groups in states like Zamfara, Kastina, and Kaduna states.

Thus, in an editorial comment by Olaide Oyelude in (Punch Newspaper, 24 May, 2019), banditry is described as a composite crime and that underlines the absence of a singular legislation in Nigeria that describes and proscribes banditry as a crime, although the component crimes are criminalized in extant legislation. Thus, it is safe to argue that banditry are crimes committed by criminal group of people involved in illicit activities, kidnapping for ransom not only for the purpose of living, but also for primitive accumulation of wealth. They usually operate in rural areas and occasionally in the cities with the help of their informants. Their activities involve using force, or threat against their captives to achieve their main goal. Hence, profit and personal enrichment drive banditry, rather than political ideology or nay sectional interest (Suliman and Abdul, 2019).

Boko-Haram

Boko-Haram are group of sects whose members were formerly drawn from the pool of Almajirai and other destitute children who crosses into Nigeria from neighbouring countries of



Chad, Niger and Cameroon. Some analysts have also described them as decades of deserted and impoverished people in our society. Thus, Boko-Haram is viewed by many as part of the intended consequences of unjust society that has squandered its oil wealth through decades of corrupt regime and a product of political leadership that has failed to tackled the fundamental problems of a nation (Amaraegbu, 2013). In spite the above argument, Boko-Haram is described as “hyperactive Jihad group” whose aim has been to overthrow the constitutional authority in Nigeria and established Islamic Caliphate through Sharia law. The emergence of Maitasine and the military offensive launched by former President Obasanjo administration led to collapse of the sect. However, Boko-Haram had since then become “direct successor of Maitasine”. The founder was an Islamic preacher named Mohammed Yusuf. He started his activities in “Northeastern capital of Maiduguri” Bornu-state but later spread across entire northern Nigeria.

Sustainable development

Sustainable development is a process of development that contains several features, but not limited to education, economic development, strong democratic institutions among others. It is a development that meets the immediate need of the citizens, while not jeopardizing and compromising the desire of future generations to meet future needs. Thus, it is argued that sustainable development requires the empowerment of social groups, equity, cooperation and security in a particular country (UNDP, 1997). Given this, it is expected that sustainable development would engendered socio-economic stability, while not compromising democratic consolidation, which analysts have argued remain significant indices for any development to take place. Hence, the synergy between consolidation of democracy and good governance contributes stronger foundations to overall growth and sustainable development.

Theoretical Framework

Frustration aggression theory is a displacement theory proposed by John Dollard, Neal Miller, Leonard Doob, Orval Mowrer, and Robert Sears in 1939. Frustration aggression theory shows the wide gap between goal target and outcome of the goal. According to this theory, “the occurrence of aggressive behaviour presupposes the existence of frustration and contra wise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some forms of aggression”. This theory posited that aggressive behaviour do not just happen without some forms of frustration.

By implication, the theory found that frustration and aggression usually generate negative feelings which in turn leads to terrorist act and other forms of nefarious activities as its occurring in Nigeria today. Relative deprivation aggression theory thus exists where people feel that their basic necessity to life is not available or that their expectation for better living condition for life has not been attained. Therefore, this theory is appropriate in discussing multidimensional spate of spate of insecurity, Islamic extremists’ banditry, and Boko-Haram



terrorist activities in Nigeria, which experts have argued emanated from the frustration created by unjust condition in Nigerian society. Nigerians are currently suffering from different spate of insecurity ever witnessed since the journey to current democratic dispensation. This theory has justified why teaming of jobless youths in Nigeria have resorted to crime in the name of survival. Though, it may not be in their interest to engage in crime, but in a society where there is a wide gap between rich and the poor, the likelihood that the country will witness high rate of insecurity will be higher.

The domination of political and economic structure of the country by powerful elites has not only denied majority of Nigerians youth to feel dividends of democratic governance, but had instead widened the gap between the haves and have not. Thus, people's expectation is likely to be disproportionately to what they can actually get to meet their desires, thus frustration deepens. Hence, thousands of Nigerian Youths today are into kidnapping business for ransom, or as in the case of fraud gangs called 419 and yahoo business. Therefore, it is worthy to argue that as Nigerians are increasingly frustrated on daily basis, thousands of Nigerian youths are continuously taking into crime. Nigerians frustration against the situation in the country has not only worsened security situation in the country, but had also tainted Nigerian state as unsafe in the comity of nations.

METHODOLOGY

This article adapted descriptive method as the article seeks to find out the impact of Islamic extremism on socio-economic development of North-East Nigeria, as well as revealing some these killings in the last 2-3years. The study is also analytical, as it aims to clarify the cooperation between Boko-Haram and armed bandits, and its multiplier effect on Nigerian state. Hence, the study relies on secondary source of information such as textbooks, internet materials, peer reviews articles and other relevant materials.

DISCOURSES

Challenges Boko-Haram and armed bandits pose to Nigerian-State.

Islamic extremism more than 15years had remain a threat for stability of Nigerian-state. For decades, Nigerian security forces have been battling with Boko-Haram terror groups. However, in the last few years, insecurity has taken new dimension with armed banditry; while Islamic State in West African Province, (ISWAP) have continued to rain terror on Nigerians and the state itself in the northern part of the country. The alliance of armed Bandit and ISWAP had increased the brutal state of deteriorating insecurity in the country. The previous bombing in the country especially, the 2022 bombing of rail lines in northern Nigeria by group of terrorists, as well as 2023 attacked on 'Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) where scores were kidnapped 'is a testimony the extent these groups are ready to hold Nigerian state hostage.



Even though government has improved their efforts with the introduction of various counterterrorism measures. However, the country is yet to get over the activities of these groups. Owing to this, some analysts and scholars have argued that, all their reactive security attempts are basically inadequate in ensuring a sustainable management or resolution of a value-based insurrection (Ngels and Ukandu, 2012). And as argued by scholars, the Boko-Haram insurgency is still rampaging in the north east in its over 15 years, while some parts of the north-west is not left out.

It has been reported severally in national dailies that Bandits are still holding several people to ransom demand across Nigeria, while also informed that some have been married off to leadership of these gang men, such as the case of Leah Shuaib among others, who was kidnapped in Yobe-state by Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) in 2018. The South-west states which before was known to be peaceful has today turned to another hotbed of criminal elements, while the south-eastern part of the country is not better off either. The implications of these dastard acts have been on the state economy which is currently struggling to survive. In addition to the above are far-reaching implications with the following:

National Threat

The dimension of insecurity in the country as evidenced in the current spate of Islamic extremists, kidnapping and abduction and other forms of insecurity have made everyone to be vulnerable regardless of one's status. The series of killing, ambushes and kidnapping across many states particularly in Northern Nigeria has conditioned analysts to classify Nigeria into categories of failed states. As argued by Adams, et al. (2014, p. 25); the preponderance of militia and violent group with international linkages has constituted potent threats to national security and economy, unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state and its citizens. Insecurity and other forms of terrorism in the country have continued to thwart development. Also supporting this argument Babalola (2013: 18) noted that failed efforts of the government in tackling insecurity and terrorism especially kidnapping for ransom, and indiscriminate killing by Boko-Haram strongly confirms the underlying hypothesis of a failed state. The worrying situation currently is kidnap-for-ransom which has now become motivational and flourishing business as Nigerian economy continuing struggling, with rising inflation and high rate of unemployment.

Socio-economic Impact

There are strong correlations between armed violence and worsening economic conditions in Nigeria. Currently, people have been spending their meager resources to 'compensate for the lack of public service, reducing the investment capacities of the country (SAS 2003 cited OEO, 2005). The level of direct investment inflow to the country has also drastically reduced based on various statistical data released by the government officials, National



Bureau of Statistics and national dailies. Similarly, the spate of kidnapping and armed banditry has increased drop-out of school children especially in north-eastern states Nigeria, and some part in the north-west. The cumulative effects of these trends have increased crime rate, deepened poverty and worsening economic situation among Nigerians. Against this backdrop was the argument that, underdevelopment is the main reason why extremists' groups like Boko-Haram/ISWAP rebel (Agboa, 2014, p.23).

The impact of this trend has continued to implode food crisis in the country. It was reported by 'Economics of Nigeria's Kidnap Industry 2023 Update that, between July 2022 and 2023, three thousand, and six-hundred and twenty (3,620) people were abducted in five hundred and eighty-two (582) kidnap related incidents in Nigeria, and at least #5 billion (\$6,410,256 as of 30 June were reported as ransom demand. Similarly, the International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), 2023 reported that, there has been a significant surge in kidnapping within Nigeria, resulting in ransoms to free their beloved family members from abductors.

Worsening Humanitarian Crisis

There is no dispute that high rate of insecurity and terrorism especially in northern Nigeria has escalated the number of 'Internally Displaced People' (IDPs) with it is attendant worsening humanitarian condition especially in states such as Maiduguri, Benue, and Jos-Plateau, where militant Headmen have been on rampage for some years. The current food crisis has also been traced to constant destruction of farm and farmers product, as terrorists frequently warn farmers from going to their farms or harvesting their crops without paying necessary monetary dues to these terrorists.

In recent times, there were reports of worsening humanitarian disaster on men and women in some IDPs in Bornu state., while in some camps there have been reported cases of, abandonment of IDPs camps by the government (NSRP, 2015), while in recent times, there were cases where by IDPs were attacked. It was the ferocious and unimaginable waves of kidnapping, banditry, Boko-Haram/ISWAP especially in North-East and North-West of the country that it was suggested, North-East had seen the largest internally displacement and migration since the beginning of Boko-Haram insurgency in 2009 (2015, p.132).

Review and summary of some killings and kidnapping in (2021-August 2024)

If security crisis is not confronted early in any society, it becomes dreadful, as depict in Nigerian state today. On Thursday 12th March 2021, all media houses and Nigerian newspapers reported gunmen kidnapped 39 students from Federal College of Forestry Mechanization in Mando, northwest Nigeria. Similarly, on July 5, 2021, all Nigerian daily newspapers reported that armed gang ambushed school students near Kaduna City and kidnapped one hundred and forty (140) children, but later reported twenty-six (26) were



released. Thus, more than two thousand and six- hundred (2,600) civilians were killed by armed bandits in 2021 (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2021).

According to several media reports in Nigerian national Dailies, particularly Premium Times (January 23, 2022), it was reported four hundred and eighty-six “(486) people were killed in first three weeks of 2022”. It is stated that over, 80 percent of killings were committed by terror groups in North-West and North-Central Zones, while 50 percent of the total killings occurred in Niger State, North-Central. Similarly, the same Newspaper revealed the killing of over 1,200 people in the month of March, 2022, while at least five hundred and nineteen (519) were kidnapped or abducted. Data released by Nigeria Security Tracker (NST) analyzed by Human Angle, informed at least killings of 1,214 across the country between March 1st and 31st 2022. Also, on March 28th 2022, gunmen attacked a train between Abuja-Kaduna City, and seven passengers were killed while abducting scores. However, on 13th 2022, gunmen released eleven (11) of the sixty-five (65) missing passengers (BBC News 2022, Guardian Newspaper, Reuters, 2022).

It is worthy to argue that gruesome death and killings have been taken place in states such as; Zamfara, Niger, Kebbi, Anambra, Imo and Kaduna states. Other deaths and killings as reported in national dailies in the month of March alone, as “20 people in Taraba, 24 in Zamfara, thirty-seven (37) in Kaduna, another fifteen (15) and twenty-three (23) in Kaduna, and so on”. On March 28th 2022, terrorists planted explosive on Abuja-Kaduna rail track leaving eight people dead, more than twenty (20) people injured, with several uncounted for; while over one hundred and sixty (160) were abducted by the terrorists. On 10 April 2022, more than one hundred (100) people were killed in attacks in several communities in Kannen local government area of Plateau state. Between 4 and 7 June 2022, at least sixty (60) civilians were killed by Boko-Haram in Dikwa Local government area of Bornu-state. Also, at least forty (40) people were killed by ISWAP during church service in Owo, Ondo-State, located in Western part/region of Nigeria on June 5.

Regional analysts have argued that recent kidnapping is mostly carry out by armed bandits rather than Jihadists. Abductions for ransom has become increasingly lucrative enterprise for both groups (African News, 2022; CNN, Deutsche, Welle, Wall Street, 2022). Similarly, the Cable Index revealed that ‘an average of 19 Nigerians died daily in various violent attacks as reported by media from January-March 2022. From the data released by Cable Index in the month of April, three hundred and thirteen (313) people have been killed so far due to state of insecurity. In 2023, according to Data source released by National Security Trackers, (NST) an initiative of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR); Data emanated from several cases of kidnapping and killings as reported by Nigerian state and International media platforms, which excluded killings carried out by security operatives and deaths of suspected criminals, like kidnappers, armed bandits and Boko-Haram/ ISWAP fighters from January-December 2023 across 36 states and FCT as three thousand eight hundred and forty-one (3,841) deaths.



It was also reported that, Plateau, Benue, Bornu, and Zamfara states topped the list of killings in the 36 states of the federation including the FCT, Cable Index, 2023. According to this Cable Index, Plateau state recorded the highest deaths in 2023, when compared with two hundred and seventy-four (274) recorded in 2022. It also shows that Gombe and Jigawa recorded the least numbers of deaths from non-state actors, closely followed by Akwa Ibom, while Ekiti state recorded 4 deaths which was the least. Beginning from January 2024, Civilians have been faced with intense threat and kidnapping across the country especially in the north. Thus, In January, 30 people were killed in clashes between herder and farmers clashes in several villages and Communities in Plateau State.

On April 5, clashes between herder and farmers in Kogi State claimed 21 lives. In June, at least 50 people were killed, while undisclosed numbers of people were also abducted. Among the reported cases of kidnapping were 85 travelers abducted along the Kaduna-Abuja highway in Kachia Local Government Area of Kaduna State between January 4&5, 2024. In May, over 500 persons were abducted; while in the same month May 24, bandit killed four security task force and abducted 200 villages in Munya local government area of Niger State. On June 29, female suicide bombing attacked the town of Gwoza in Bornu-State claimed 32 lives, while several persons were injured. In August, among those kidnapped were 20' Medical and Dental' Students by gunmen in Benue State. In summary, there were 68 mass abduction in 2024, while a total of 2,140 kidnapped people were reported within the last seven months, January-July. (The Punch Newspaper, 18 August 2024; Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2024).

Without much ado, cases of kidnapping and armed banditry have continued unabated since the beginning of 2025, and more escalating now is the deferral capital territory Abuja. Manifestations of State failure in Nigeria and other sobering indicators Nowadays, Nigerian state appears to have failed in all areas of governance in a country hitherto described as a powerful black nation in Africa. Although, the terms “failed “failing” or “collapsed” states are controversial because some states which were categorized as failed or failing decades ago, are now or almost middle-income countries, such as Rwanda, Mexico and some few less developed nations. However, failed or failing states, connotes a situation where sovereign states are unable or have failed in its constitutional responsibility in meeting the yearnings of its people such as providing and upholding standard of living, security of lives and properties, creating job/ employment opportunities, functional social system/ infrastructures and many more.

In addition, Stewart and Brown (2009), for example recommends a working definition with three basic dimensions of fragility: ‘Authority, Service and Legitimacy. They stated that failures occur, when the state fails to protect her citizens and to be recognized by citizens. There is no refuting, Nigerian-state has been suffering from leadership deficit for decades. Nigerian leadership is found of making speeches/statements which extols virtue of patriotism and nationalism; they often claim to be ready to die for the country. But in practical terms,



their actions in office and other public places toward Nigerian-state and its citizens have remained a question. There is no doubt that Nigeria's political development since 1999 has been wrecked aground due to lack of active leadership; while social vices such as corruption, abuse of offices, and other unethical behavior across Nigerian society remain prevalent.

There are clear indications that all the presented indices are attributes of failing states, and there is no debate as to whether Nigerian-state has failed in it is constitutional responsibilities. Mass poverty, economic stagnation, galloping inflation, endemic corruption, ethnic conflicts, while high level of poverty and economic misfortune has continued worsened standard of living. All these have added impetus to already comatose state of insecurity in Nigeria. Its therefore argued that, individual and national development has been hindered and eroded by corruption; underdevelopment and insufficient human services and industrial infrastructure, over reliance on a single commodity (Oil), a poor education system, and ever-growing youth bulge, Gordon (2011). In spite of Nigerian endowment in oil and other resources, the country is thriving in poverty, and has been described as one of the, poorest countries in the World (World Bank, 2022).

According to World Bank data, 93:97 percent people are currently living below the poverty line. The international body, had in few years ago revealed the steadily rise in poverty level among Nigerians from "40.1 percent in 2018/19 to 42.0 percent in 2020 and 42.6 percent in 2022. Also, in 2023, 133 million Nigerians as National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) put it are living in abject poverty, as four more million Nigerians were into poverty in the first six months in 2023. By implication, the number of poor people in Nigeria was "89.0 million in 2020", "95.1million in 2022 and 133 million in 2023" according to (NBS). It was therefore remarked that, Nigeria's persistent poverty pointed to failure in national and local governance and exposed the corruption that defined Nigeria's life or living in Nigeria (Jaquish, 2011, p.28).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This paper has revealed the several damages insecurity has caused Nigerian-state. It had also critically analyzed the effect of this worrying development on socio-economic situation in the north-east and the country at large. The paper argues that kidnapping, Boko-Haram menace, and other forms of criminality has continued unabated due to leadership deficit at various levels of government. The paper had also revealed that government appears to have been incapacitated in taming the rising insecurity in the land, because the situation has not fair better to allay general fears among Nigerians. The paper found that Insecurity thrives in Nigeria due to frustrations of some citizens especially the youths who felt cheated, oppressed and neglected.

Consequently, terrorist groups and other act of criminalities kept creating fears and disillusionment on both citizens and other nationalities across various geo-political zones in



Nigeria. This has led to economic hardship, underdevelopment and despair among Nigerians. No doubt, Islamic extremists' and other criminality such as banditry have severed the minimal gains in economic development the country has achieved in recent years.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has meticulously argued the worrying trend of insecurity in Nigeria, and how this had impacted socioeconomic development of north-east Nigeria. Hence, to resist further deteriorating situation, the following measures are recommended.

Nigerian authorities as a matter of urgency should quickly demonstrate its competence on the country's porous border through effective policing. This can be done by incorporating the locals for prompt information to appropriate quarters, and proper surveillances; recruitment of more security personnel, well trained and better equipped with modern equipment such as drones and other gadgets.

Above all, Nigeria economic policies must be drive toward wealth and job creation in the country for the young populations. This will improve their economic fortunes; keep them engage and useful for personal and national socioeconomic development. Providing such atmosphere will also deter youth involvement in crime, criminality and terrorism. The recruitment, training and retraining of security personnel for the purpose of ensuring maximum security of lives and properties would usher in quality measures in addressing this menace.

Competing Interest

The authors have declared that no conflicting interest exist in this manuscript.

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