

## **Socio – Economic Effects of Boko Haram Violence on Oyo State, Nigeria**

**Lawal Rafiu Adeniran**

*Department Of Peace and Conflict Studies, University Of Ibadan, Nigeria*

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**Abstract:** *Since amalgamation by the British in 1914, Nigeria, the most populous black nation in the World, abundantly blessed both naturally and humanly has been experiencing one form of challenge to another. This includes political instability, electoral violence, ethnic conflicts, economic dysfunction, territorial and social insecurity and religious fundamentalism. The latest one is posed by a dreadful fundamentalist sect. Boko Haram, a terrorist organization has become a threat to the security of lives of people both residents and also traders who visit Northern Nigeria. The sect has carried out several attacks which have led to unjustifiable destruction, internal and external displacement and political instability. An example of such was one of the 2013 attacks, in which several traders from Ibadan, Oyo state who went to buy foodstuffs in Mogunu, Borno state, Nigeria were massacred.*

*Over the years it is estimated that over 13,000 people have being killed. The activities of the terrorist group have become unbearable and have generated several interpretations both within and outside the shores of Nigeria.*

*Oyo state, located in the Southwestern part of Nigeria has had her own share of the spoil due to the massive migration and displacement of people from Northeastern part of Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that this paper attempts to examine the socio-economic effects of Boko Haram Violence on Oyo state, Nigeria. At the end, the paper recommends that if government is to win the battle against Boko Haram and return positive peace to the region, it must do so not necessarily militarily but by negotiating and putting in place the necessary pillars of peace.*

**Keywords:** *Boko Haram, Terrorist, Socio-Economic effects*

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### **I. Introduction**

The end of the cold war in 1989 shifted the attention of the World away from the battle between two Western super powers. Since then there has been a fundamental change in the dimension of conflicts. Huntington (1993) argued that the fundamental source of conflict will now be cultural, that clash of civilizations will be between Western, Islamic, Confucian, Japanese, Latin American, Hindu and probably African civilizations.

Based on the above it is not out of point to assume that the battle between the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Boko Haram sect is a testament to Huntington's assertion i.e battle for the supremacy of civilization, between western civilization and Islamic civilization.

Boko Haram began in 1995 in Northern Nigeria, known as the Jamatu Ahlis Sunna Lidda await wal Jihad people committed to the propagation of the prophet teachings and jihad under the leadership of Abubakar Lawan. The leadership changed hands when Abubakar Lawan went for further studies in Medina leaving Mohammed Yusuf as the leader (Temilola, 2013).

Although there are records of similar movements traceable to the Maitatsine movement between 1945 and 1980 led by Mohammed Marwa and the Othman Dan Fodio Jihad of 1804 which captured the Hausa territories and imposed Islamic administration on its inhabitants. Similarly, Boko Haram originally created with the support of the some set of Northern politicians to restore law and order in a bankrupt society as a fall out of Military rulership now aspires to Islamize Nigeria or creates territories where Sharia laws will be the guiding principle. Its members are loosely scattered across Yobe, Borno, Bauchi, Adamawa, Kano, Kaduna, Zamfara states and operate in simple cells which protects them from vulnerability.

In 2000, former Governor of Borno state, Mala Kachallah introduced Sharia laws in the state through the Borno state Sharia Administration of Justice Law. In pursuance, the Governor set up an Implementation Committee in February 2001 under the chairmanship of Professor Abubakar Mustapha the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Maiduguri. Interestingly, the late Mohammed Yusuf was a member of the committee (Sheriff, 2014). As it started off, death penalty, amputations and flogging were used as punishment for offenders, (World Report, 2012)

In 2004 Boko Haram struck in Kanama, Yobe state, attacked a police station, killed a constable, stole arms and set the building ablaze. Two major narratives could be attributed to the attack; first, due to the failure of the Governors of Northeastern states to implement Sharia laws fully in their states which manifested in the pronouncement that Sharia laws will not be binding on the Christian population in the states and also some of the Governors who had helped in the formation of the sect committed crimes punishable under Sharia laws and refused to be tried. Consequently the sect resorted to armed struggle to enforce the law.

In June 2009, seventeen members of the sect were killed by members of the 'Operation flush' (a combined security outfit) in Maiduguri. Members of the sect were alleged to have attempted to forcefully seize the weapon of a soldier at a checkpoint while on their way to bury some of their members who had died in a motor accident. The following day the leader of the sect Mohammed Yusuf held an open sermon which he tagged an 'open letter to the President', declared war on the Nigerian government and vowed to avenge the death of his members. Instead of looking for a way around the sect the government under late President Umar Yar'adua declared war on the sect. Security personnel raided the headquarter of the organization in Maiduguri leading to the arrest of Mohammed Yusuf and the financier of the group one Alhaji Foi (a former commissioner in Borno state), both Mohammed Yusuf and Foi later died in the custody of the police. Subsequently, Abubakar Shekau assumed the mantle of leadership, revolutionized the sect method and strategies, seek to revenge the gruesome murder of its members and continue to fly the banner of 'No to democracy and Westernization' because to them it was in a democracy that most of their members were killed extra judicially. Democracy had failed them.

As a result, the sect has carried out several attacks from 2009 to date. Prominent among are the Christmas day bombing of Saint Theresa Catholic Church in Madala killing 35 people, bombing of the United Nations building in Abuja killing 23 persons, bombing of the police headquarters in Abuja (Oladunjoye, 2013). Punch newspaper reported that ten traders from Ibadan, Oyo state who went to buy agricultural produce were massacred in Mogunu, Borno state. Politicians, traditional rulers and religious leaders (both Christians and moderate Muslims) are not spared. In April 2014, Recently, Boko Haram kidnapped over two hundred and seventy six girls from Chibok secondary school in Borno state (Jonathan, 2014). As at the time of writing this paper, the whereabouts of the girls is still unknown. Over the years it is estimated that over 13,000 people have been killed, communities razed down and hundreds of persons displaced (Smith, 2014).

Governor of Borno state Kashim Shettima who spoke to Reuters news agency stated that those Boko Haram members are better equipped than the Nigerian troops and that given the present state it is absolutely difficult for us (Nigeria) to defeat Boko Haram. Consequently, Boko Haram sect have captured some major towns like Barma, Michika, Mubi, Gulak in the northeast while its attempt to capture Maiduguri the state capital of Borno state is still being resisted by the Nigerian soldiers. The Nigerian military recently confirmed the death of Abubakar Shekau in an operation carried out in Kodunga, Borno state. However there is a counter claim that Abubakar Shekau is still alive.

## **II. Greed And Grievance Analysis**

Much of the academic debate on the economic changes of contemporary armed conflict has become polarized around the greed and grievances dichotomy juxtaposing loot seeking with justice seeking (Bellentine and Haiku, 2003). While greed is the excessive desire to acquire or possess more than what one deserves especially with respect to wealth, power and prestige, grievance on the other hand is the feeling of being treated unfairly which forms legitimate grounds for complaint.

Members of Boko Haram rather than being driven originally by the zeal to enrich themselves, predation have been used to finance the insurgency driven by both objective and subjective grievance. Their grievance is rooted in the level of lawlessness and corruption manifesting in the so called democratic system, their hatred for westernization and vengeance for the death of members. Apart from their desire to reject all western doctrines ranging from education, banking, taxation, jurisprudence, theory of evolution, they also want to revenge the atrocities committed by the Nigerian security institutions. It is on record that what escalated the sect's bloodletting was the massacre by the Nigerian soldiers of seventeen members of Boko Haram in Maiduguri on their way to bury their members who died from motor accidents and also the subsequent murder of their leader Mohammed Yusuf by the police in Maiduguri, Borno state.

Financial combatant is crucial to the success of any rebellion. Extortion and donation from Diaspora becomes necessary. As a result of Northern Nigeria's lack of oil, members of the sect attack financial institutions for money, markets for foodstuffs also road travelers for resources. Former governor of Borno state Senator Ali Modu Sheriff has also been accused of providing funds for the sect coupled with the assistance from Al-Qaeda.

It is not coincidental that Boko Haram has chosen the northeastern part of Nigeria because it provides a safe abode due to its mountainous and forest composition. This explains why it is difficult for the military to counter the insurgents. The unexplainable gap between the rich and the poor, structural corruption, massive unemployment and poverty amidst plenty in the country provided the sect the luxury of recruitment of young and old citizens into their fold.

From the above one can safely conclude that there is a nexus or an interlocking between greed and grievance as a major factor driving the sect. It was in a bid to sustain their fight against westernization that the sect became dependent on predation for survival thus transforming into greed rebellion.

### **III. Socio-Economic Effects Of Boko Haram On Oyo State**

The activities of Boko Haram have had a devastating effect on Nigeria. Nicklas Jansler and Mandele Lofton (2014) posited that Nigeria is considered to be an emerging economic power house in the World. Foreign Direct Investment plays a vital role in her growth rate. There is a high dependency ratio between the FDI, Nigerian oil sector and gross domestic product.

According to the UNCTAD report, FDI flows to Nigeria fell to \$5.6 billion in 2013, a decline from the \$6.1 billion released in the 2010 fiscal year. The decline in FDI is attributed to the activities of Boko Haram. It is important that if no adequate measure is taken to curb Boko Haram FDI may decline further, as no foreign investor want to invest in an atmosphere of fear and insecurity. Also worthy of note is the drastic reduction of government derivation from the affected regions and the slow growth of business in those areas (Dawodu, 2012).

Paramount to this paper is the effects of Boko Haram violence on Oyo state.



**Map of Nigeria of Showing the Location of Oyo state.**

Source: [www.waado.org](http://www.waado.org)

Oyo state is located in the Southwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria; Oyo State was one of the three States carved out of the former Western State of Nigeria in 1976. Oyo State consists of 33 Local Government Areas, which are: Akinyele, Afijio, Egbeda, Ibadan North, Ibadan North-East, Ibadan North-West, Ibadan South-West, Ibadan South-East, Ibarapa Central, Ibarapa East, Ido, Irepo, Iseyin, Kajola, Lagelu, Ogbomosho North, Ogbomosho South, Oyo West, Atiba, Atigbo, Saki West, Saki East, Itesiwaju, Iwajowa, Ibarapa North, Olorunsogo, Oluyole, Ogo Oluwa, Surulere, Orelope, Ori Ire, Oyo East, Ona Ara. The State covers a total of 27,249 square kilometres of land mass and it is bounded in the south by Ogun State, in the north by Kwara State, in the west it is partly bounded by Ogun State and partly by the Republic of Benin, while in the East by Osun State. The landscape consists of old hard rocks and dome shaped hills, which rise gently from about 500 meters in the southern part and reaching a height of about 1,219 metres above sea level in the northern part([www.oyostate.gov.ng](http://www.oyostate.gov.ng))

Though the state has not been attacked directly, yet Oyo state has had a fair share of the spoil. Oladunjoye (2013) noted that with the increased intensity of bombing in the North, there is a strategic mass movement of individuals from the most attacked northern states especially in early 2012. A lot of persons have abandoned their businesses and migrated from northern Nigeria to Oyo state. This has led to over population, over stretching of the social amenities, increased competition for the few productive opportunities available in the state. Many of the migrants who are now jobless and idle constitute threats to the peace and security of the state.

In the same vein Oladunjoye (2013) posits that with the massive killing of youth corps members serving in the Northern Nigeria in 2010 most corps members especially southerners reject postings to the north. The National Youths Service Corps (NYSC), an organization established in 1973 which aims to integrate and unite student graduates by posting them to serve in places outside of their regions in order to mix with people of other ethnic groups has been badly hit. Corps members now refused to serve in violence prone regions instead now chose to serve in their states of origin. Oyo state which traditionally accommodates 7,000 corps members and pays each N3, 800 monthly now absorbs over 12,000 corps members yearly (Mfoniso, 2013). This has led to increment in the state government allocation for the scheme.

He argued that this sudden migration directly affects school attendance among students. Some were forced to change location and school. Consequent upon the increased violence in the north, there is a sharp increase in the number of admission seekers in institutions established in Oyo state. Three major institutions in the state, the University of Ibadan, the Polytechnic of Ibadan and Ladoke Akintola University, Ogbomoso have being flooded with admission seekers who ab initio would have chosen northern universities. For example 10,609 applicants applied for admission in Ladoke Akintola University (Lautech) in 2014 while 50,274 applied for admission at the University of Ibadan, a sharp increase from what it used to be.

Boko Haram has succeeded in instilling fear and inter communal hatred among people who have been living together in peace and harmony for decades. Yoruba speaking people now see every Hausa speaking person as an extremist and fundamentalist and therefore want to avoid contact as much as possible. Punch newspaper reported that on 23rd of August, 2013 in Ibadan, there was a commotion between the Yoruba and the Hausa traders at Bodija market leaving at least five persons dead. Since the massacre of fourteen Yoruba traders in Borno state, Yoruba have shunned the troubled zone, paving the way for the Hausa traders to bring in foodstuffs (especially beans) to Ibadan and sell at preferred prices. The tension erupted because only the Hausa traders have being selling beans in large quantity, leaving the Yoruba traders idle. As I write, there is an Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) stationed at the entrance of the market as a preventive deployment measure. Some Hausa speaking people who prior to this time serve as security guards in various homes and private companies have being relieved of their jobs due to the fear of the unknown.

As the 2015 general election draws near, also worthy of attention is the possible proliferation of small arms and light weapons from Northern Nigeria into Oyo state. These weapons find their way into the hands of unemployed youths, cultist and political thugs who used them largely to increased insecurity and caused mayhem in the state.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Several writers have argued that terrorism should be dealt with like any criminal act, if terrorism were simply an individual crime; it would not be a political problem. The distinction between political terror and crime is that the former makes an open claim for support, unlike the criminal; the political terrorist is not easily deterred by punishment. Whatever we may think of their methods and beliefs, members of Boko Haram have a cause, and a need to be heard. Notwithstanding claims that terrorists are nihilists who wrap themselves up in objectives, but have none, and so we must remorselessly attack them, one needs to recognize that terrorism cannot be stopped militarily (Mamood, 2002).

If the government is to win the battle against Boko Haram and return positive peace to the region, it must be ready to negotiate and put in place the necessary pillars of peace. Ensuring and getting the Boko Haram sect to ceasefire is not enough, the sources of their grievance must be eliminated. The problem of corruption both at the highest and lowest level should be immediately looked into. Existing institutions should be strengthened to arrest the rising growth of corrupt practices in the country. The government must as a matter of urgency put in place measures to arrest the unemployment crises in Nigeria. Adequate provision must be made to productively engage the unemployed graduates who usually serve as a pool for recruitment for terrorist and other related activities. The government must also ensure that the people retain the rights to choose freely their leaders and representatives in free and fair elections.

Macroscopically, the battle between civilizations is a global phenomenon, not limited to Nigeria alone and can be understood only within the framework of International politics. Religious fundamentalism and Islamist terrorism are one of the produce of Western Imperialist Ideology. For this to be curbed there is a need for a drastic twist in the World Socio-Economic order from profit oriented to welfare based.

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