

DOMESTIC INSURGENCY AND THE CHALLENGES OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN YOBE STATE

Ahmed Buba, Ph.D¹

Abdulrashid Sani¹

Mohammed Kaku²

1. Department of Political Science, Kaduna State University, Kaduna.

2. Department of Public Administration, Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, Yobe State.

E-mail: ahmedbubasamaru@gmail.com; gimisco85@gmail.com; mkaku1970@gmail.com

Abstract

This article examines the implications of domestic insurgency on socio-economic development in Yobe state, Nigeria. Indeed, Northeastern Nigeria has been grossly embroiled in an age-long scourge of insurgency which has caused downtrodden consequences on the lives of the people in the region, particularly Yobe state which appeared to be the focus of this work. Available data on the level and dimensions of insurgency in Yobe state reveals an increase over time, which constitutes serious threat to lives and properties, hinders businesses and agricultural activities, attendant evidences of massive displacement of people, wanton destruction of infrastructures, and disruption to social endeavors among many have stifled and retarded socio-economic development in the state. Human Needs theory was adopted as the theoretical underpinning which depicted the possibility of violence due to deprivation of human needs. The paper dwelt on qualitative means of eliciting data in which key informant interviews, focus group discussions were conducted, secondary sources from books, journals and materials on the internet were consulted, more so, observation of real life situations have aided the study. It was found that insurgency has wrecked countless havoc on the socio-economic destiny of Yobe state, hence, subjecting the state into a seemingly irretrievable socio-economic quagmire. There were cases of internal displacement, closure of businesses and challenges of food insecurity. In the light of the above the paper recommends that government has to be proactive in dealing with security issues and threats, through modern methods of intelligence gathering and sharing among security personnel, training, logistics, motivation, and deploying advanced technology in managing security challenges and to create an environment with relevant social, economic and physical infrastructure to support business and industrial growth.

Keywords: Insurgency, Socio-economic, Displacement, Yobe State

Introduction

The phenomenon of domestic insurgency has remained worrisome in the northeastern part of Nigeria with Yobe State as one of the worst hit States in the region. The myriad of its devastations remain indisputable as a serious humanitarian disaster, activities of domestic insurgency in Northern Nigeria particularly Yobe State seemed to pose serious downtrodden consequences on socio-economic activities in that state. Moreso, activities of insurgency in the state posed serious threat to the social and political economy of the state. The crises of insurgency in different parts of yobe state have destroyed numerous

infrastructures and prevented a peaceful environment for the development of further infrastructure, and a safe environment for socio-economic and political activities by individuals.

Okoreocha (2012), hinted that drain of human capital and investors have grossly hampered economic development in the region, such is evidenced in odious attacks on banks, markets, parks and government departments. Consequently, many people seemed to flee to relatively safer enclaves as a result of ill-gotten actions of the insurgents.

Statement of Research Problem

The security challenge posed by domestic insurgency has reached a point where many people are leaving the northern region to avert being killed by the insurgents and business owners close down their shops, as a result, there is seeming retardation of economic activities in Yobe State where the domestic insurgency spread their tentacles and such have seriously crippled socio-economic activities in the state.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study therefore is to unveil the effects of insurgency on socio-economic activities in Yobe State, Insurgency in the state has resulted in countless loss of lives and properties and the obvious displacement of people from their homes. All areas of human endeavors were highly disrupted particularly social and economic endeavors. This study therefore seeks to examine the extent to which the activities of insurgency have affected the area under study.

Literature review

According to Tukur (2015), Insurgency “is a means of expressing a long and deeper exclusion and marginalization, people react over social and environmental harms imposed by the people or government”. This reaction comes in many forms among which include rebellion and insurgency. The word insurgent refers to “any rebel group that are involved in any sort of violent with the intention of taking over a territory from the government to establish another but separates one, usually, the government in power in response also fights back to make sure that it protects its entity, the lives and property of its citizens, in addition to political and socio-economic interests of the state (Roberts & Timothy, 2009).” The economy in the northeastern Nigeria has been affected grossly due to the unnecessary attacks and killings of innocent lives in the region, consequently, on 14th of May 2013, former President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in Yobe State along with some neighboring state, which include Borno and Adamawa State, due to the activities of the terrorist network group (MNCH2, 2018).

Over the years and since 2009, there have been a series of both coordinated and other attacks by the insurgents on the Nigerian authorities, especially security agencies, churches and mosques, private properties, markets, public buildings, as well as the public which claimed tens of thousands of lives of many people and properties worth billions of Naira in BAY states- Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states. Such ill-gotten activities have directly and indirectly affected the Socio-economic development of the Nigerian states especially the BAY states that appeared to be worst hit by insurgency. In the recent years, the crises caused by the insurgency has brought not only violence among the people but also heightened the mutual suspicion, hostilities, and ethno religious tension, which the Nigerian state is already embroiled in (Alanamu, 2005 & Ajayi, 2011).

Yobe State. It is observed that activities of the insurgents have affected and crippled the socio-economic activities of the places they spread their tentacles, such greatly led to the massive fleet of people from their places of abodes to other relatively safer destinations as internally displaced or as refugees (Ajayi, 2011). Due to persistence of insurgency countless number of people have fled to neighboring states or southern parts of the country for safety and livelihood (Ali et al., 2018). As gathered from NEMA, (2014), Nigeria accounts for about 13% of Africa’s internally displaced persons (IDPs) due to

conflict as at January 2011. Between October 2010 and October 2011, NEMA gave an account for a total of 3,777,01 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria. As at 2013 alone, 470,500 persons were displaced in Nigeria and that was the third highest in ranking globally during that period.

Report by NEMA, (2014), revealed that, north east region is the region with the highest number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) rising to 11,360 in the first quarter of 2012. In a related view Badiora, (2017) & Cauldewood (2014), mourned that all IDPs are living in a precarious condition not only in Nigeria society but in other parts of the World where there are crises. The internally displaced persons (IDPs) suffer a variety of intimidations and threats to their physical safety, health, and deprivation of basic necessities of life such as education, water, food, clothing and housing. It is noted that, there are numerous cases of sexual abuse on women and children of the IDPs and many cases of infectious diseases related to unfortunate types of food, protection, security, water, and sanitation as well as shelter they live.

The effects appeared to be tough as mostly, assessing farmland became vulnerable, this best explains the major reason for the rising cases of shopbreakings, burglaries and home robbery in northern Nigeria and drastic shortage of food stuff as farming has been interrupted. It remained indisputable that the prices of goods have been rising due to shortage of production and supply.

Ali, Zakuan & Ahmad, (2018), observed that, orphans and widows suffer from physical and mental health care deprivation, educationally neglected, without proper and usual life management, face shelter problems, lack household and personal sanitation, face social and integration difficulties, lack basic nutrition, suffer cognitive and academic deficiencies, likewise emotional and behavioral problems.

The phenomenon of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) has become a social problem and inimical to economic Development. The population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the north is worrisome because many of them are family men and women who ordinarily are supposed to fend for their family but have found themselves in pathetic conditions. The fact cannot be denied that IDPs have their basic rights to livelihood and existence, food, shelter, education, security among other amenities are indeed basic for livelihood.

Dauda, (2014), opines that the insurgency in the north has drastically reduced government commitment towards providing and fulfilling their responsibilities and such is posing negative consequences politically. The insecurity challenge continues to make it difficult for the government to execute vital projects for the people, instead, the government is spending much on curtailing the scourge of insurgency.

People are in dire need of infrastructure but no or less effort is being given towards such needs due to activities of insurgency in the region, such therefore is dearly retarding the socio-economic destinies of northeast particularly Yobe state.

It remains an undeniable fact that a region which experienced conflicts almost frequently and persistently could be termed as politically unstable. As a result of recurring insurgency, the government has not been at rest in an effort to curb the menace of insurgency in the polity. Due to the sensitivity, dangerous and very deadly nature of insurgency, government has tilted its attention towards addressing the menace and such has interfered with the adequate, efficient and effective implementation of the transformational agenda, such if poses a retardation to national development (Leadership Newspaper, 2012)

Theoretical Framework

This work is built on human needs theory based on the idea that, lack of available socio-economic and political alternatives to meet growing needs and desires of human being are among the triggers of conflicts and violence in the society. To them, violence occurs in the event of safeguarding

interest or in a struggle to compete over needs in the society. The needs are not just subsistence ones like food, water, healthcare and shelter but more so include biological needs such as affection, identity, participation, understanding, recognition, security, belonging, self-esteem and personal fulfillment (Maslow 1973).

The choice of this theory is to address issues regarding the effects of insurgency on socio-economic and political activities in Yobe state. The choice was informed by the understanding that there is a nexus between human needs satisfaction and societal harmony. The core of the argument is that satisfying human needs will prevent occurrence of social conflicts. Conflicts arise mostly because the basic needs of the individuals and groups are deprived, hence, frustration ensues and the aggrieved think of a way out of the malaise of deprivations and despair. The result of such psycho-social and personality imbalances, social harmony, eventually lead to chaos and loss of social order. The theory therefore is relevant because if the daunting socio-economic and political challenges are ignored, may result in proximate humanitarian crises, hence, the need for curbing deprivation-based insurgency and development of socio-economic and political order in Yobe state, Nigeria.

Assumptions of the Human Needs Theory

The human needs theorists were of the idea that, lack of available socio-economic and political alternatives to meet growing needs and desires of human beings are among the triggers of conflicts and violence in the society. To them, violence occurs in the event of safeguarding interest or in a struggle to compete over needs in the society. The needs are not just subsistence ones like food, water, healthcare and shelter but more so include biological needs such as affection, identity, participation, understanding, recognition, security, belonging, self-esteem and personal fulfillment (Maslow 1973).

The Human needs theory hinged on the premise that certain life essentials are basic for survival. The essentials for livelihood go beyond water, shelter and food, it encompasses all that it takes to make man's physical and psycho-emotional needs that make life worthy.

Methodology

Qualitative method was employed in the course of eliciting data from respondents whereby two types of instruments were used viz: key informant interview schedule and focus group discussion schedule respectively. Interviews were conducted with community leaders, Government officials, marketers and security operatives. The focus group discussions engaged communities of Internally displaced persons and some members of host communities across the three senatorial zones in the state. Books, Journal and material from the internet were consulted. Participant observation has also aided the enrichment of the data.

Discussion of Findings

The study has found out that domestic Insurgency in Yobe State has grossly retarded socio-economic development in various ways. These include: population displacement in which countless number of populace have fled to various destinations that seemed to be safe for refuge, such displacements have disrupted businesses, it is obvious that Yobe zone 'A' and zone 'B' are the most affected by the activities of insurgents, zone 'C' senatorial district happened to be safe haven for most displaced persons. Responses from an FGD session revealed that the internally displaced were forced out of their homes to official camps in the state, eventually to host communities due to official closure of camps in Yobe state. A respondent stated that:

We are farmers both seasonal and irrigation but insurgents chased us away, some of our neighboring villages were attacked, killed and houses burnt down, we are now finding living very difficult.

Insurgency has dislocated and disrupted several families and communities who are predominantly farmers; farming has become a vulnerable venture because rural areas have become insecure for farmers to assess. Because insurgents do not have identity, there tends to be a high level of mistrust, fear, anxiety as people become apprehensive of who to interact with in the society, hence, social disharmony ensues. Social cohesion becomes difficult, the internally displaced are finding it difficult to integrate into the host community. A respondent reveal that:

We are not feeling free in the community, the members are doubtful of our integrity, they look at us as insurgents in disguise, and they don't fully accept our participation in day to day activities.

An interview with a community leader confirmed that there is a problem with social cohesion; some members of the host community could not embrace the internally displaced persons for fear that they may be or have affiliation to the insurgents.

Responses from market groups and market leaders revealed that their businesses have come to halt, their investment capacities seriously affected, such is evident in the closure of most shops and street stall, a respondent further hinted that where there are security stations like check point, people become wary of effecting transaction with such threatening areas, hence, some shops were forced to close due low patronage.

Many commercial engagements were forcefully halted, shops and markets were threatened and attacked, and such makes investment unattractive to business people. An FGD participant added that:

Our people are suffering hunger because we don't have enough food; our children are forced into hawking because our businesses are no longer promising.

In corroboration to this argument, an interviewee asserted that Yobe state has for long been in a pathetic condition of food insecurity; the phenomenon of insurgency has deteriorated the situation, obvious in pervasive hunger and poverty.

An FGD respondent buttressed that:

We are suffering, money to buy food is difficult to get, our children don't go to school, going to hospital for medication is not easy, and the government should come to assist us because we are in trouble.

A key informant attested to the fact that social service provision in the state has grossly declined. He revealed that the living conditions of people are pitiful, their children rather constitute nuisance in the community because they are out of school and in serious deprivation. They roam the streets bare footed and with less food to eat, such is obviously a social menace.

Conclusion

Insurgency is a bane to successful growth and development in every society and constitutes threat to lives and properties, hinders economic activities, and discourages all sorts of investments and consequently stifles and retards socio-economic and political development of a country. Age long domestic insurgency in the northeast and particularly Yobe state has caused serious downtrodden consequences on lives and properties. The activities of the insurgency have wrecked serious humanitarian crises in the region, innumerable numbers of people were displaced, markets and shops were razed down, schools were shut down and education process halted, infrastructures were destroyed leaving the state in a seeming perpetual backwardness.

Recommendations

- i. The elimination of the threats by insurgency should be the number one goal of government which will be through proactive approach in dealing with security issues and threats using modern methods of intelligence gathering, and intelligence sharing, training, logistics, motivation, and deploying advanced technology in managing security challenges.
- ii. The Yobe state government should accelerate the pace of development. Development in this context consists of creating an economy with relevant social, economic and physical infrastructure for growth and development, to provide gainful employment for the teeming youths, high level of educational facilities, and to boost agriculture.
- iii. Yobe state government should ensure that rising poverty indices are addressed and a realistic social and economic security programme is pursued and systematically implemented to ensure that those that got their businesses affected will recover in good time.
- iv. Government and other stakeholders should sensitize the general public on value reorientation as regards social cohesion so that there will be peace devoid of mistrust between the displaced persons and the host communities so as to improve social relationship.
- v. Government should strictly address food insecurity challenges through embarking on laudable agricultural initiatives.

References

- Ajayi, A. I. (2012). "Boko Haram" and Terrorism in Nigeria: Exploratory and Explanatory notes.
- Alanamu, A. S. (2005). Reflections on Religious Violence in Nigeria (1999-2004)" in Issues in Political Violence in Nigeria. Hamson Printing Communications.
- Ali, M. A., Atiyah, U., Zakuan, A., & Zaki, M. (2018). "The Negative Impact of Boko Haram Insurgency".
- Badiora, A. I. (2014). "Civil unrest, insurgences and the challenges of community displacement in Sub-Community Displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa": A Silhouette of selected stat, (November). <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1034678>
- Leadership Newspaper, (2012) "Boko Haram": Thorns of Flesh of the Nation "Damaturu Attack.
- Maslow, A. (1973). The Further Reaches of Human Nature. Harmondworth: Penguin Books.
- MNCH2. (2018). Maternal Newborn and Child Health Programme.
- NEMA. (2014). National Emergency Management Agency. Abuja: Records of IDPs in Nigeria, December, 2014.
- Nwadiegeu, O. O. Interview Respondent. Interviewed at Jattu, Edo state on July 4, 2016.
- Okereocha, C. (2012), "Heartache for the Economy", TELL, May 14, Pp. 46 – 47.
- Roberts, A and Timothy, G. A, (eds.). (2009). Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present, Oxford University Press.

Tukur, M. D. (2015). The Effect of Insurgency on Borno State Economy (2008 – Oct.2014), 6(16), 94–103.