

Illiteracy, Poverty and Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria: The Management and Policy Options

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ABSTRACT

Boko Haram (BH) drew international attention in July 2009 when it launched a violent uprising against the Nigerian state, resulting in the deaths of approximately 800 people, including civilians, group members, and security personnel. The group again captured global headlines in May 2014 when it abducted over 200 schoolgirls, aiming to use them as leverage in negotiations for the release of imprisoned members. Former President Goodluck Jonathan reported that the group's attacks had claimed around 12,000 lives, injured or maimed 8,000 others, and displaced countless more. Another report estimated that between 2009 and 2016, the Boko Haram insurgency killed nearly 17,000 people, displaced approximately 2.2 million individuals, destroyed thousands of communities, and severely hampered economic growth. It is in this regard that the research article examines illiteracy, poverty and BH insurgency in Nigeria: the management and policy options, using the secondary method of data collection. The findings from the study show that poverty does not directly lead to religious extremism, but it creates the conditions that make people to be vulnerable to easy indoctrination into extreme religious view. Several policy recommendations towards mitigating the above stated ugly trends have been stated, such as: the government should monitor and regulate the curricular of religious schools to ensure that they are devoid of extreme religious views; there should be adequate funding of education in line with UNESCO 26% recommendations, and outright eradication of poverty.

Keywords: Boko Haram, Extremism, insurgency, illiteracy, Nigeria, poverty.

INTRODUCTION

Religion has been defined by a French sociologist, Emile Durkheim as, “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things” (Abubakar, 2022). On the other hand, extremism refers to the imposition of an individual or group’s beliefs, values, and ideologies over others through coercion to curtail civil and human rights (Schmidt, 2014, cited in Hassan et.al., 2021). Religious extremism results from a situation where religious individuals reject the ideologies and beliefs of others whose interpretation is different from theirs (Rizvi, 1993, cited in Hassan, et al., 2021). There is a difference between extremism and radicalism. While extremists are bent on closed-minded supremacists, radicals on the other hand are open-minded egalitarians (Schmidt, 2014, cited in Hassan, et al., 2021). Radicalization has been viewed as the rejection of the status quo, usually democratic in nature, and the adoption of extreme political, social, and religious views, which are usually enforced through acts of violence (Shahzad et. al., 2022).

Radicalisation is a product of deprivation of individuals or groups (Onuoha, 2014). Religious sectarian intolerance can be traced to the inability of different religious sects within a faith to tolerate their religious views and practices (Shahzad et. al., 2022). The cause of terrorism, such as the Boko Haram (BH) insurgency in Nigeria has been traced to religious extremism (Osewa, 2019a; Adesoji et al., 2016). Walter and Todd (2012) view terrorism as the “premeditated use or threat of violence by individuals or sub-national groups to obtain a political or social objective through the intimidation of a large audience beyond that of the immediate victims.”

Several persons and institutions have expressed mixed feelings with respect to the type of actions that can be counted as terrorism. For example, Yasir Arafat a one-time leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, once stated in an address to the United Nations Organization, that whatever acts that is carried out for just cause cannot be termed terrorism (Yonah, 1976). From Arafat’s view, the actions of Islamists, commonly referred to as terrorist acts can have justification when the cause is just. The view of Arafat is similar but not equal to what political scientists and theologians have referred to as the concept of a just war.

But a just war and a terrorist attack are still two different things since terrorism has no basis for justification. The controversial aspect of this view is whether there is any known

justification for acts of terrorism. Cardinal Martino, who served as the Vatican ambassador to the United Nations, and later the head of the Vatican Council for Justice and Peace, once described terrorism as the 4th World War, with the Cold War between the capitalist and socialist block being the 3rd World War (Osewa, 2019b, cited in Osewa, 2019a). So, the illustration above implies that terrorism is a crime against humanity, and there is no moral justification whatsoever for acts of terrorism. The above views of Yasir Arafat may have been borne from the frustration experienced by the Palestinians due to the superior firepower of Israel in the dispute between the two regions. According to Hoffman (2002), one major effect of religious extremism in global history is the US terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, which led to the death of over 3,000 people, including 400 police officers and firefighters.

The two major religious groups in Nigeria, Christianity and Islamic religious groups have been identified to exhibit various dimensions of extremism. For example, the southeast of Nigeria has witnessed a dichotomy between the major religions in that region into a “Catholic-Anglican” dichotomy. The extremism between these two groups is commonly manifested in the refusal to give their daughters out in marriage to an opposite group, and violation of that position attracts excommunication enforced by the hierarchy of the respective churches. The emergence of Pentecostal churches has led to a third faction, which has literally threatened the mutual intended dominance of one of the Orthodox Church over the other. Unlike the southwestern region of Nigeria, where there is a relatively balanced interaction between the two major religious groups (Abubakar, 2022). This, therefore, implies that there is no uniform involvement in religious extremism in Nigeria.

The northern part of Nigeria has been identified to be more engrossed in religious extremism than any other regions, as evidenced in the heinous acts of terrorism perpetrated by BH terrorist group with Northern Nigeria as their operational base. It is in this regard that this study examines illiteracy, poverty and BH insurgency in Nigeria: the management and policy options; and the specific objectives are to: determine the relationship between illiteracy and BH insurgency in Nigeria; investigate the relationship between poverty and BH movement; explore the impact of BH insurgency to national security. The study is divided into various sections to facilitate achievement of its objectives. These are: the introduction, statement of the research problems, nexus between illiteracy and BH Islamists ideologies: an empirical investigation, poverty and BH insurgency in Nigeria: issues and perspectives, Islamic

extremism in Nigeria: the phenomenon of BH, theoretical framework, methodology, discussion of findings, conclusion and policy recommendations.

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEMS

BH attracted global attention in July 2009, when it launched an aggressive campaign against the Nigerian state, a process that led to the death of 800 persons, comprising civilians, group members, and security personnel. The revolt witnessed an unprecedented massive deployment and operation of security personnel which eventually arrested the situation on July 30, 2009, following the capture and subsequent execution of the charismatic leader of the BH, Mohammed Yusuf. In May 2014, the activities of the group once again attracted global attention when it adopted over 200 school girls to negotiate an arrangement for a swap of their imprisoned colleagues and the kidnapped school girls (Reinert et. al., 2014; Onuoha, 2014). Since 2009, the group's activities have been based on a revenge mission against politicians, police, and Islamic authorities for the violent suppression of the sect by the Nigerian state, which led to the death of their foremost leader (Walker, 2012).

There is no exact claim of the casualties from the BH attacks, but former President Jonathan Goodluck stated that 12,000 lives were lost through their deadly attacks and another 8,000 persons were either injured or maimed, amidst the displacement of so many others (Wakili & Igidi, 2014). Another similar report stated that “Boko Haram, one of the world’s deadliest armed groups, is waging an insurgency in the name of creating an Islamic caliphate. This violent conflict in Nigeria’s Northeast has killed nearly 17,000 people between 2009 to 2016, displaced nearly 2.2 million people within the same period, devastated thousands of communities, and slowed the economy” (Mercy Corps, 2016). The activities of the group became poignantly worrisome in 2004 when some tertiary institution students in Borno and Yobe states tore their certificates and joined the group. The height of the activities of the group was exhibited on September 24, 2004, by their attacks on the Bama and Gwoza police stations in Borno State, killing several police personnel, and stealing arms and ammunition. Violent Islamic extremists have been launching attacks on several military bases across the northeast region of Nigeria, notable amongst these attacks is the Metele on 28 November 2018, which claimed the lives of 200 military personnel (Osewa, 2019a).

The revolt that accompany the extra-judicial execution of the sect leader, Muhammed Yusuf by some officials of the Nigerian Police led to the death of over 20,000 people between 2009 to 2016, with the abduction of thousands of women and girls, and children forcefully

conscripted into playing the roles of suicide bombers for the group. The crisis has led to 2.1 million people fleeing their homes, while 1.9 million people are internally displaced, and another 200,000 people seeking solace in Chad, Cameroun and Niger Republic (Ocha, 2016, cited in Osewa, 2019a). The group drew global attention when it bombed the United Nations compound in 2011, leading to the death of 23 people (Onuoha, 2014). The above trend illustrates the colossal damage religious extremism has caused Nigeria. The above issues are what constituted the problems which have necessitated this research article.

THE NEXUS BETWEEN ILLITERACY AND BOKO HARAM ISLAMIST IDEOLOGIES: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

Illiteracy has been identified as a major cause of BH insurgency, as evidenced in Nigeria with the highest rate of children that are out of school, which is currently more than 20 million, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in its 2022 report, but on the contrary, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) put the figure of the Nigerian children that are out of school in the same period at slightly above 10 million. The divergence in both reports can be attributed to the fact that the data used in the study by UNESCO are those of children between the ages 6 to 18 years, ranging from those in primary one to senior secondary three. While the data used by UBEC are those of children between the ages 6 to 11 years, all of which are still in primary school, despite the disparity in both reports, Nigeria with any of the reports has been adjudged the country with the highest numbers of children that out of school in the world (Umeh, 2023); with northern Nigeria topping the list, and also, with northeast Nigeria, the epicentre of religious extremism in the country having the highest case with 33 per cent of the children in that region declared to be out of school (Abubakar, 2022; Mefor, 2014).

An empirical study conducted in several states in northern region of Nigeria found that ignorance of the full teaching of Islamic religion was a major factor responsible for the adoption of extreme religious doctrine by young people (Omonobi & Marama, 2014; Komolafe, 2012). In Kano, 75 per cent of surveyed respondents were of the view that illiteracy was responsible for religious extremism (Mefor, 2014). This view was also corroborated by a former Governor of Borno State, (now the Vice President of Nigeria), Kashim Shettima (Omonobi & Marama, 2014). The above studies observed illiterate people to be susceptible to accepting radical doctrines and ideologies by extremist movements (Mefor, 2014).

Poverty and illiteracy have been identified as prime causes of terrorism in Nigeria (Osewa, 2019b, cited in Osewa, 2019a; Onuoha, 2014). BH recruits its members from disenchanting youths, unemployed high school and university graduates, and destitute children, It also recruits some of its members from the wealthy, educated, and influential members of the society (Onuoha, 2014), although, the educated members of the sect play certain strategic functions that are technical or professional rather than the roles of foot soldiers, which is the realm of the illiterates and the destitute children recruited into the sect. Despite the low level of education in Nigeria, the government at all levels prefer to waste the commonwealth of the country on frivolous recurrent expenditures and bureaucracy rather than investing such funds in the formation of human capital. This prodigal approach to public management was why Walter Rodney in his cerebral book titled: “How Europe Underdeveloped Africa”, lamented that the only sector that thrives in third-world countries is administration (Rodney, 1972).

POVERTY AND BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA: ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES

Poverty is an index of lack of development (Odeh & Aimuan, 2018). It is on this note that McNamara (1968, cited in Osewa, 2019a) argued that a country that lacks development is at the same time not secured. In the view of McNamara poverty breeds insecurity. It is on this basis that the World Bank in 2018, described Nigeria as the poverty capital of the World. Unemployment and poverty in northern Nigeria are some of the factors responsible for the involvement of youths in religious extremism (Komolafe, 2012). Many scholars have argued that poverty does not lead to religious extremism (Sageman, 2004; Abadie, 2005; Goldstein, 2005; Krueger & Latin, 2008; Butler, n.d.; Gassebner & Luechinger, 2011). Several other scholars view poverty as instrumental to religious extremism (Chevrier, 2017; Enders & Hoover, 2012; Blomberg & Hess, 2004; Li & Schaub, 2004; Blomberg & Hess, 2005; Bravo & Dias, 2006; Burgoon, 2006; Freytag et. al., 2010; Enders & Hoover, 2012; Enders et. al., 2016; Kiendrebeogo & Ianchovichina, 2016). There is a correlation between poverty and religious extremism (Enders & Hoover, 2012; Enders et. al., 2016). King and Taylor (2011) cited in Chevrier (2017, p. 5) observed that:

The essential idea is that a potential violent extremist need not be poor himself to be frustrated, angry, and (he/she is) morally outraged by the poverty of those considered part of his/her collective identity group ... it is by this mechanism that vicious poverty and marginalization can be a strong factor contributing to radicalization. Many extremists have expressed their extreme moral outrage over the conditions of their brothers in Palestinians

or Iraq living thousands of miles away from them. What connects them is their sense of collective identity as Muslims, as part of the umma (Muslim identity group). This sense of collective strain around collective grievances. Group-based feelings of injustice have been shown to reliably predict collective action.

The CIA World Fact Book (CIA, 2016) claimed that 21 of the bottom 25 poorest countries in the world are in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). It has been observed that the poorest region of the SSA is more deeply associated with religious extremism than the region that is better off economically (Olojo, 2013; Ojielo et. al., 2017). Nonetheless, a case worth mentioning is the high poverty rates in the northeast region of Nigeria, which is the highest in comparison to the rest of the country. It logically follows that the region has experienced the worst form of religious extremism, such as BH and (Islamic Province of West Africa, ISWAP) than the other regions, with lower levels of poverty (Olojo, 2013). It is in this regard that Professor Thomas Imobighe observed that:

When I hear people calling for more sophisticated weapons for the police to combat the increasing wave of crime in the country, I often feel sorry for this country, because we do not seem to realize that the deviants, we are seeking sophisticated arms to eliminate are the products of our bad policies. Our experience here in Nigeria is a bad manifestation of how easy it is for a self-serving political class to wreck the aspiration of a thriving polity through the mismanagement of its resources (Imobighe, 2006, p. 5).

The above statement implies that poverty and insecurity in Nigeria is due to bad governance. "The same relatively high levels of underdevelopment and extreme poverty are seen for northern Mali, where al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) emerged, the Diffa region of Niger (BH), the far north of Cameroun (BH), the Sahel region in the north of Burkina Faso (AQIM), and the northeastern region of Kenya (al-Shabaab)" (Chevrier, 2017, p. 8). Previous researches showed that poverty lead to conflict, while newer researchers have found that conflict creates circumstances that are conducive to religious extremism (Gassebner & Luechinger, 2011; Policy, 2016). According to Mark Green, a USAID Administrator: "We look at some of the trouble spots in the world, and while poverty doesn't cause terrorism, destitution and abject poverty can create the kinds of conditions that drive people to despair. And we know, sadly, that despair is a condition that all too easily is exploited by dangerous influences" (Green, 2017, p. 3). Abject poverty per se does not directly cause religious

extremism, but it creates conditions that can make the local poor people susceptible to being recruited by Islamic extremist groups (Chevrier, 2017).

ISLAMIC EXTREMISM IN NIGERIA: THE PHENOMENON OF BOKO HARAM

There is no clear account of the origin of BH, but a common view traces its origin to the year 2002, when Mohammed Yusuf a charismatic Islamic preacher became the head of the organization (Taiwo & Olugbode, 2009). Similarly, another source argued that BH was founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002, in Borno State, with a philosophy based on Sunni Islam, which abhors Western civilisation, technology and modern science (Itaobong, 2018). The Nigerian intelligence community traced its origin to the establishment of Ahlulsuna wal'jama'ah hijra, or shabaab group (Muslim Youth Organization) by Abubakar Lawan in 1995, in Maiduguri, Borno State (Taiwo & Olugbode, 2009). Before the emergence of Mohammed Yusuf as the leader of the group, it has adopted a civil and non-violent posture with several nomenclatures, such as the Muhajirun, Hijrah, Ahlis Sunnah wal Jama'a, Yusufiyah, and Nigerian Taliban (Onuoha, 2014). The mode of operation of the group has advanced from poorly planned confrontations with security officials to a more sophisticated application of improvised explosive devices, targeted assassinations, ambushes, drive-by shootings, suicide bombings, and kidnappings (Onuoha, 2012).

BH detest Western education and ideologies viewing them as un-Islamic, an act that earned the group the name BH, which connotes "Western education is forbidden" (Onuoha, 2014). Although, the group prefers to be addressed by its Islamic name, which is "Jama'atu Ahlissunnah Lidda'awati wal Jihad, which is interpreted as "people committed to the propagation of the prophet's teachings and Jihad". It aims to substitute the secular nature of Nigerian state with an extreme Islamic republic through the imposition of strict Islamic sharia laws as the legal framework of the country (Onuoha, 2014). The sustenance of the group and its operation is based on several sources, such as membership dues, contributions from politicians, financial donations from foreign terrorist groups, bank robbery, and collection of ransom from kidnapping. Also, it has derived its funding from levying taxes on the residents of areas of its control and threatening certain wealthy individuals to pay them protection fees to avert attacks from the group (Onuoha, 2014).

Its history of violence can be specifically traced to its multiple attacks launched against police stations and public buildings and infrastructures on 24 December 2003, at Geiam and Kanamma towns both in Yobe State (Onuoha, 2014). The flags of the Taliban movement of

Afghanistan were hosted on their conquered territory until they were eventually removed by counter-attacks by Nigerian security forces after killing 18 members of the groups and arresting several others (Suleiman, 2007). The group embarked on sporadic guerrilla attacks on several security formations and infrastructures in some sections of Borno and Yobe States, until the July 2009 anti-government violent campaign by the group (Onuoha, 2014).

The July 2009, violent uprising has been attributed to violent shootings of sect members on June 11, 2009, by security operatives engaged in a campaign tagged “operation flush” (Onuoha, 2013, cited in Onuoha, 2014), occasioned by the default of sect members on a funeral procession for not wearing a crash helmet. In avenging the attack, the sect members destroyed the Dutsen Tanshi police station on July 26, 2009. This sparked up the wave of violence and unrest that pervaded Bauchi, Borno, Kano, Katsina, and Yobe States. The uprising ended on July 30, 2009, following the arrest of Mohammed Yusuf, who was subsequently executed extra-judicially by the Nigerian police, who based the reason for such action on Yusuf's attempt to escape from detention. The action further escalated the insurgency and terrorism perpetuated by the sect against the Nigerian state following the appointment of Abubakar Shekau by the sect to replace Mohammed Yusuf (Onuoha, 2014).

The revolt that accompanied the death of the spiritual leader of the BH, Mohammed Yusuf led to the death of over 800 people, who comprised mainly of sect members, while hundreds of others were arrested (Onuoha, 2014). Since the July 2009 revolt, the activities of BH have become ferocious and decentralised with random spread across several states in the northern region of the country. Following the protracted nature of the BH insurgency, former president Goodluck Jonathan in January 2012, declared a state of emergency in 15 local governments across four states in the northern part of Nigeria. At the end of the state of emergency, the security challenges in those regions had not abated. That led to further declaration of a state of emergency in the three most affected states of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe in May 2013 (Onuoha, 2014).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Frustration-Aggression Theory

Frustration-aggression theory was formulated in the 1930s by Dollard et. al. (1939). It states that “the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration (Dollard, et. al., 1939, p. 1). Aggression is a product of frustration (Odeh, 2023; Breuer & Elson, 2017; Dill & Anderson, 1995; Berkowitz, 1988; Miller et. al., 1941). Apart from

aggression, frustration can also lead to an increase or creation of prejudice (Grossarth-Maticek et al., 1989) and depression (Seligman, 1975).

Morlan (1949, p.1) noted that, “the expression of an aggressive impulse ...sets up a vicious cycle that leads to further aggression”. Also, Miller et. al. (1941, p. 279) opined that “the occurrence of the aggressive response depends on the subject’s understanding of the situation.” Several studies attributed arbitrariness to acts of frustration and aggression (Cohen, 1955; Worchel, 1974; Zillman & Cantor, 1976; Rule et. al., 1978; Kulik & Brown, 1979). Unjustified frustration has been observed to be responsible for aggressive behaviour (Dill & Anderson, 1995). A study conducted by Kregarman and Worchel (1961) showed a reduction in acts of aggression when the frustration that led to the aggressive behaviour was expected.

Frustration can occur as a result of incompetent or selfish attitude preventing individual or group from achieving a common goal (Nickerson, 2023). The experience of frustration by people make them aggressive towards the object of frustration if possible (Nickerson, 2013; Zillmann & Cantor, 1976). Competition among groups of people can lead to frustration (Berkowitz, 1989; Deutsch, 1949). However, situations have emerged where aggression known as displaced aggression is directed to sources that are not sources of frustration (Breurer & Elson, 2017; Green, 1968). Several studies have shown that aggressive acts towards a frustration can assist the aggressor to overcome the frustration (Buss, 1963, 1966; Thompson & Kolstoe, 1974). Certain aggressive acts exhibited towards a source of frustration can be for the purpose of defence (Ichheiser, 1950). Several studies have found that males are more aggressive than females (Bettencourt & Miller, 1996; Buss, 1963; Caprara, 1982; Verona & Curtin, 2006). In addition, it has been observed that an aggressive act is more severe towards a partner of the same sex with the aggressor (Harris, 1974).

The occurrence of frustration can be due to a reduction or outright removal of expected reward from effort exerted (Amstel, 1962, 1992), insults, anxiety (Hokanson, 1961), unpleasant and annoying situations (Breurer & Elson, 2017), acute economic recession and institutional discrimination against certain groups (Gurr, 1970), the drive to achieve a vital goal, and perception of it successful achievement (Brown & Farber, 1951). These challenges have been identified by Feierabend and Feierabend (1966, p. 250) as “systematic frustration”.

The relevance of the frustration-aggression theory to this article is based on the fact that since majority of the masses in Nigeria have been neglected by the Nigerian state in terms of the provision of their basic needs, such as education, employment, health and other forms of

poverty alleviation; some then resort to violence against the state and other innocent citizens in a form of revenge mission for their being short change by the government using the platform of religious extremism to hatch such plans. This trend is clearly observed in the phenomenon of BH.

Social Movement Theory

The Social Movement Theory (SMT) is one of the theories that offers a better explanation to the phenomenon of radicalisation and violent extremism (Gunning, 2009). A social movement has been perceived as a set of beliefs and opinions held by people, which further instigates them to strive for changes in certain elements of the social structure (Zald & McCarthy, 1987). The emergence of the SMT is traced to the 1940s. The social movements' influence and impact are hinged on its progressive growth (Borum, 2012). SMT theorists also observed that members of a movement in an attempt to recruit other members into the movement operate as “rational prospectors” (Brady et. al., 1999). That is, they adopt a productive membership recruitment approach by seeking those they know would not turn down the offer of joining the movement (Brady et al., 1999). A variant of SMT, called Framing Theory (FT) has been suggested by Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen of the Danish Institute for International Studies (Dalgaard-Nielson, 2008). Framing Theory, according to Borum (2012, p. 18), “focuses on how social movements frame messages in ways that will best resonate with the interests, attitudes, and beliefs of its potential constituency”.

FT is in consonant with the BH insurgency in northern Nigeria, which uses distorted Islamic teaching as a constructivist instrument to deceive and persuade the recruitment of adherents into the group (Abubakar, 2022). It is worthy of note that Donatella Della Porta is one of the first renowned researchers on terrorism to apply SMT to violent extremism, which she exhibited in her study of Italian and German militants (Della Porta, 1995). The application of SMT to this work is because BH insurgents in a bid to ensure the sustenance of terrorism and insurgency which they believed would translate emergence of an Islamic caliphate (republic) continuously embarked on aggressive recruitment process from the vulnerable groups in the society. In the same vein, the work also aligned with a variant of SMT, known as FT as discussed above. The BH insurgents in line with the aforementioned FT promised its adherents an Islamic Republic that would be manned by the group members and their leaders (Mercy Corps, 2016). Also, the group leaders promised the adherents of the movement that if they died in the struggle, they would be entitled to seven virgins as wives in paradise. These

constructionist viewpoints have in no small measure aided the recruitment process of BH leading to more formidable followers (Warraq, 2002).

The Political Opportunity Structure Theory (POST)

The POST buttress the implications of certain arrangements in the governmental structure that would serve as an opportunity for non-state actors to deploy non-conventional and belligerent actions to take advantage of the perceived weakness in the governmental framework and launch an attack against the state or any other constituted authority as a way of making certain demand (McAdam, 1982; Tarrow, 1994; Meyer, 2004). POST can easily be understood through observing circumstances that have caused a decline in state powers, authority and deterrence, a situation that therefore, bolsters the drive to achieve an illicit collective interest by extremists of various shades and opinions (Tilly, 1978; Skocpol, 1976).

As a corollary to the foregoing, “Ethiopia provides a good example illustrating how state instability and periods of weakness can encourage resort to violence” (Gleditsch & Ruggeri, 2010, p. 302). The theory assumes “that leaders who have entered powers by irregular means will have a high likelihood of conflict, but that the positive effect of initial irregular entry will dissipate with longer tenure, as these leaders become more secure in office” (Gleditsch & Ruggeri, 2010, p. 303). The application of the theory to this study is based on the fact that the weakness and vulnerability of the Nigerian state stimulates collective violent actions against it by BH sect who would always predicate their violent offensive against the government on several demands.

METHODOLOGY

The secondary method of data collection and analysis was adopted in this research work due to its ability to enable the researchers to have wide coverage of issues without necessarily involving in field research, and it is also not too capital-intensive in comparison with the research conducted using the primary method of data collection. These advantages are what made this method indispensable in this research study.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from the study show that abject poverty per se does not directly cause religious extremism, such as BH insurgents, but it creates conditions that can make poor people susceptible to be indoctrinated and recruited by Islamic extremist groups (Chevrier, 2017). In other words, abject poverty per se does not directly cause religious extremism, but it creates

conditions that can make poor people susceptible to be recruited by Islamic extremist groups, such as the BH sect. Also, the study found that “a potential violent extremist need not be poor himself to be frustrated, angry, and (he/she is) morally outraged by the poverty of those considered part of his/her collective identity group ... it is by this mechanism that vicious poverty and marginalization can be a strong factor contributing to radicalization” (King & Taylor, 2011, cited in Chevrier, 2017, p. 5). In simple terms, another way poverty can also contribute to religious extremism is that even those persons who belong to a particular religion, and who have a high socio-economic standard tend to react violently if they witness the poverty and deprivation of their religious colleagues.

In addition, the study found that illiterate people are amenable and susceptible to easy manipulation sequel to their low level of social and economic deprivation which makes them lack the capacity and initiative to logically verify the contents of the propagated doctrines and ideologies by extremist movements (Mefor, 2014). Poverty and illiteracy have been found in this study to be prime causes of terrorism in Nigeria (Osewa, 2019b, cited in Osewa, 2019a; Onuoha, 2014), because illiterate people are susceptible to accepting radical doctrines and ideologies by extremist movements (Mefor, 2014). Furthermore the study found that ignorance of the full teaching of Islamic religion was a major factor responsible for the adoption of extreme religious doctrine by young people (Omonobi & Marama, 2014; Komolafe, 2012), a trend that led to emergence of BH insurgency in Nigeria. In addition, findings in the study reveals that BH sect has greatly undermined Nigeria’s national security (Osewa, 2019a; Reinert et. al., 2014; Onuoha, 2014; Walker, 2012; Mercy Corps, 2016)

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that poor and illiterate people are susceptible to indoctrination into religious extremism sequel to their low level of social and economic deprivation which makes them lack the capacity and initiative to logically verify the contents of the propagated doctrines and ideologies by extremist movements. Specifically, BH also recruits some of its members from the wealthy, educated, and influential members of the society, although, the educated members of the sect play certain strategic functions that are technical or professional in nature, rather than the roles of foot soldiers, which is the realm of the illiterates and the destitute children recruited into the sect. It has been observed that a potential violent extremist need not necessarily be poor himself to be frustrated, angry, and, but he can be morally outraged by the poverty of those that share similar religious identity

with him, and it is by this frame of mind that vicious poverty and marginalization can serve as impetus to radicalization and other acts of religious extremism..

In addition, the lack of economic opportunities and mobility due to illiteracy, poverty, perceptions of economic marginalization, unemployment, underemployment and frustrated aspirations have all contributed to the rise of violent extremism in Nigeria. Finally, it was observed in the study that illiteracy and poverty does not directly cause religious extremism, such as BH insurgents, but they can create conditions that make the poor people susceptible to be indoctrinated and recruited by Islamic extremist groups.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following policy recommendations towards mitigating the menace of BH insurgency have been suggested:

- . The government should monitor and regulate the teaching curricular and standards of religious institutions in the country to ensure that the curricular are devoid of elements of religious radicalism and also to ensure that teachers with extreme religious views are excluded from such schools.
- . Governments at all levels should deploy every available means and resources to drastically reduce illiteracy to the barest minimum through massive investment in quality basic education. In view of the above, the various levels of government should adhere to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization recommended minimum of 26% of Third World countries' annual budget to be invested in education sector.
- . To make funds available for human capital development, there should be a reasonable reduction and cut down on the bogus cost of governance at all levels of government. In the light of the above, the legislatures at all levels of government should be placed on part-time, without fixed monthly salaries but they should only be paid sitting allowances.
- . The government should embark on a massive drive towards combating poverty in the country, as this would go a long way in fortifying the people from being susceptible to indoctrination into extreme radical religious ideology.
- . The government should deploy every relevant machinery to aggressively combat unemployment in the country, as it has been identified as one major factor responsible for the easy recruitment of adherents by BH insurgents.

In Nigeria, corruption is one major obstacle to the achievement of national security and sustainable development. Therefore, both political, economic and bureaucratic corruption should be curbed at all levels of government. It is in this perspective, that the various anti-corruption agencies should be re-strategized for optimum service delivery. Also, these agencies must be truly independent. One way of achieving this is to ensure that the agencies are not funded through the executive, but their funding should be charged on the consolidated revenue fund. Similarly, the president must no longer exercise the right to appoint and remove from office heads and members of any anti-corruption agencies, but these functions should be assigned to the National Judicial Commission and the National Assembly.

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