

Minireview Paper

NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND THE CHALLENGE OF BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA

ABSTRACT

Nigeria, since independence, has witnessed crises which have posed threats to its peace and security. In the last few decades, especially from the usurpation of administrative powers by the military, Nigerian societies have been undergoing difficult times vis-à-vis ethno-religious conflagrations that impacts on the nation's integration. This is as a result of the nature of interactions among the various amalgamated ethno-religious and regional groups which pursue their various objectives through different means to ensure they achieve their ends. These groups which have applied militant approach in carrying out their primary objectives include the Oodua People's Congress (OPC), the Arewa People's Congress (APC), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) as well as the current Boko Haram sect (our focus), the Fulani Herdsmen crisis, the Niger Delta Avengers, and the Indigenous People of Biafra. The study, hence, examines the challenge of the Boko Haram insurgency to national integration in Nigeria. To analyze this heinous phenomenon, the study made use of secondary data which include the review of published textbooks, journals, reports, etc., and the social-structural conflict approach was adopted as the tools of analysis for the study. The paper shows that Boko Haram insurgency has posed a great threat to the integration of the Nigerian state, just as it has undermined Nigeria's development by causing the loss of human lives and economic resources, dislocation of people, and increased poverty rate. The paper, therefore, recommends the need for a context-specific and multi-layer conflict resolution, management and prevention initiative(s) encapsulating a broad based local, regional and international collaboration between all concerned stakeholders; reforms in the nation's educational and infrastructural sectors; and the governments' need to place as their basic attention the welfare of the citizens through well guided policies so as to increase citizens' living standards and support human capital development.

Keywords: Boko Haram, national integration, insurgency, insecurity, social-structural conflict approach.

INTRODUCTION

Since her independence, Nigeria has witnessed various crises which have posed threats to its peace and security. This is as a result of the nature of interactions among the various ethnic, religious and regional groups which had come together in Nigeria in order to pursue their various objectives through different means to ensure they achieve their ends. These groups which have applied militant approach in carrying out their primary objectives include the Oodua People's Congress (OPC), Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the Arewa People's Congress (APC), Bakassi Boys, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) as well as the current Boko Haram sect, the Fulani Herdsmen crisis, and the Indigenous People of Biafra, to mention a few.

The emergence of Boko Haram has posed serious danger to Nigeria and its citizens at large by causing massive death rate, inflicting injuries, posing serious security challenges, causing national disintegration, destabilizing and crippling economic activities (especially in the North Eastern part of Nigeria) as well as the negative effect it has in the country's global image. Boko Haram attacks on churches and mosques are particularly disturbing because they are intended to inflame religious tensions and upset the nation's social cohesion (Eme & Ibietan, 2012). In carrying out its attacks, the sect has applied the use of various tactics among which are targeted assassinations, suicide bombings, kidnapping and hostage taking, shootings etc., which have so far taken place in the Northeast of Nigeria. The failure of the Nigerian leaders to establish good governance may have hampered national integration which has led to mass poverty and unemployment and resulted into communal, ethnical, religious and class conflicts that have now characterized the entire nation (Abdi & Shittu 2013). Since its emergence, the sect has tried to mimic and adopt the tactics and strategies of other international terrorist groups such as the Al-Qaeda.

According to the 2017 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) (cited in Ukpong, 2017), on a global scale, in 2017, Nigeria was ranked the 3rd most terrorized country in terms of terrorist attacks and terrorism based deaths. Boko Haram insurgency has caused an inestimable damage in every facet of life in Nigeria. Survey, interview and focus groups conducted in Nigeria in 2013 suggest that poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and weak family structures make or contribute to making young men vulnerable to radicalization (Onuoha, 2014).

This study, therefore, succinctly examines the insurgency of the Boko Haram sect which has resulted to violence, insecurity as well as its challenge to national integration, the origin of

the sect and its effects on Nigeria. Also, the study examines the nature of national integration in Nigeria as well as the disparate ways the activities of Boko Haram impacts on the national unity and integration of the Nigerian state.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Nigeria as a multi-religious state has faced the problem of integration. Although various policies have being implemented to resolve the issue of disintegration in the Nigeria society, the incessant religious and ethnic conflict in Nigeria has posed as a threat to the nation's unity. The activities of the Boko Haram sect has since 2009 done more harm to the Nigeria society and led to ethnic chauvinism, religious crisis as well as the killings of innocent Nigerians in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria. The sect is both a serious challenge and manifestation of more profound threats to Nigeria's security and has destabilized the North-Eastern part of Nigeria. The challenge posed by the Boko Haram sect on the security of lives and properties in Nigeria and the implication on the corporate existence of Nigeria is a serious issue which motivates the study. Thus, the main essence of this **research work** is to investigate the activities of the sect and its immediate effects on the country's integration. Therefore, since any **research work** is aimed at providing solution to problems, this research shall proffer solutions to the lingering insecurity issue in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Nigeria is a plural society with different ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic as well as geo-political region. Prior to the coming of European traders, these multi ethnic nationalities existed as independent states. They were engaged in trans-border relations in matters of trade, commerce, production, security and socio-cultural relations devoid of phobic activities. However, these ethnic nationalities forcefully unified for the economic advantage of Britain thereby leading to engendered dimensions of pluralism, complexities and corporatism (Malachy & Nwobi 2014).

With the diverse nature of Nigeria, Agbodike (cited in Majekodunmi 2013) argues that the acrimonious existence among the diverse groups in the federation of Nigeria leading to mutual distrust and inter-community conflicts has become perennial and endemic in the nation's body politics and has militated against the political stability of the country since independence. The integration crisis facing Nigeria is manifested in the minority question, religious fundamentalism and conflicts, ethnic politics, dialectic resource control, youth restiveness and militancy and the clamor for a (sovereign) national conference or conversation

about the terms of the nation's continued unification (Omifade & Imhonopi 2013). On this note, for Ifeancha and Nwagwu, scholars have acknowledged the fact that Nigeria's efforts at achieving national integration have remained largely unrealized (cited in Onifade & Imhonopi 2013). Socially, ethnic politics and social conflicts in Nigeria have weakened the smooth integration, oneness and togetherness among the ethnic groups in Nigeria. Akwara, Udav and Onimawo (2013:55) argues that "in most African nations and indeed Nigeria, the absence of national identity and integration is caused by ethnic and cultural differences."

Though Nigeria has faced series of ethnic conflict challenging its national integration, the one caused by the activities of the Islamist sect, the Boko Haram remains quite unique in all ramifications. Abdi and Shittu (2013) argues that the outbreak of the Boko Haram group since July of 2009 marked another new phase in the recurring pattern of violent ethno-religious uprisings in Northern Nigeria. The sect claims responsibility for several bombings and other activities in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria, thereby placing the nation at the threshold of disintegration. Aleyomi (2012) notes that the impact of ethno religious rivalry as it is evident in the increasing bombing activities of the Islamic sects on sustainable development and sustainability of Nigeria cannot be overemphasized.

The over 300 ethnic groups that had enjoyed relative cordiality in the past, even after a few years of civil war, have suddenly become "strange bed fellows" due to the insurgence of the Boko Haram in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria (Akanji, 2013). Akanji further posits that the danger posed by this insurgent group to the corporate existence of Nigeria is aptly captured by Robert Kaplan in his 1994 article titled "The Coming Anarchy" in which he states that:

...the country is becoming increasingly ungovernable...ethnic and regional splits are deepening, a situation made worse by an increase in the number of states from 19-30 and a doubling in the number of local governing authorities. Religious divisions are more serious. Muslim fundamentalism and evangelical Christian militancy are on the raise. This will to keep Nigeria together is now very weak (Akanji 2013:87).

Corroborating the above, Nwozor (2013:8) notes that "the philosophy of religious bigotry which motorizes the Boko Haram insurgency is undoubtedly at variance with the notion of peaceful co-existence, especially in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious state like Nigeria."

National integration, according to E.J. Philip and T. Henry as a relationship of community among people with the same political entity and also a state of mind or a disposition

to be cohesive, to act together, to be committed to mutual programs (in Ojo, 2009), is farfetched in Nigeria as a result of the ideology of the Boko Haram sect and their intention to Islamize Nigeria against the will of the majority of Nigeria citizens. On this note, Schulze (2009) asserts that the sect lacks popular support from the population and Muslim leaders. The Islamic sect believes that Northern politics has been seized by a group of corrupt and false Muslims. It aims to wage war against them and the Federal Republic of Nigeria generally, to create 'pure' Islamic state governed with strict adherence to the Shari'a (Duke, Agbaji & Etim, 2016; Duke, Agbaji & Bassey, 2017). Its condemnation of mutual program like education has made the group to call for a segregated Nigeria. Onuoha (2012; 2014) notes that the sect's ideology is premised on an extreme Islamic teaching that rejects most of Western ideas and institutions as un-Islamic which earns the group its popular name: Boko Haram literally meaning "Western education is Forbidden". Its destruction and bombing of schools and also the abduction of school girls (the Chibok girls) is a clear evidence of its condemnation of education.

Boko Haram members are fully convinced that moral and social decadence has eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian society and are resolved to rid the society of corruption and moral bankruptcy by establishing an ideal Islamic society, devoid of political corruption and moral deprivation (Duke et al, 2016). From being an obscure movement confined to North-Eastern Nigeria, the sect has emerged as the most palpable threat to the polity's continued peace and development (Eme & Ibietan, 2012). Fatai (2012) observes that while Nigerian national security is under security threat by the intensity of violence orchestrated by ethnic militia in the country on the basis of transformed identities, the truth however is that violence and transformation is having unprecedented implication for the stability and disintegration of the country. Barna (2014) observed that the sect originally a peaceful Islamist movement, has moved progressively towards militant extremism since 2009, regularly attacking foreigners, Christians and Muslims, Northerners and even residents of the capital, troops and civilians, in an effort to destabilize the state. The fear caused by the Boko Haram bombing in particular, Duke et al (2016) writes, has made residents in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria to migrate to other parts of the country leaving behind their homes, properties and businesses and striving for survival from the act of the sect. Eme and Jide argue that the Boko Haram sect has created widespread insecurity across Nigeria, increased tension between various ethnic communities, interrupted development activities, frightened off investors and generated concern among Nigeria's northern neighbors (Eme & Jide 2010). The group's attacks appear to have steadily increased since its reemergence in 2009. The Human Right Watch asserts that media reports show that suspected Boko Haram attacks between July and December 2010 killed at least 85

people in some 35 separate attacks in 4 states in Northern and central Nigeria, as well as in Abuja, the nation's capital. Furthermore, in 2011, at least 550 people died in some 115 separate incidents. And in the first nine months of 2012, more than 815 people died in some 275 separate attacks in 12 Northern and central states, and Abuja. Human Right Watch also asserts that since the group reemerged in 2010, armed gunmen have bombed or opened fire on worshippers in at least 18 churches across eight Northern and central states, killing more than 127 Christians and injuring others (Human Right Watch 2012).

The **research work** employs the Social-structural conflict theory which will be used to analyze the grievances that propel the emergence of the Boko Haram sect which has posed serious threat to national integration in Nigeria. The main **gist** of the social structural conflict perspective is that albeit certain fundamental psychological processes seem to determine an inherent human readiness or propensity for conflict, these processes do not operate in an automatic and inevitable fashion. Hence, the social-structural approach explains that individuals are born into group structures within society where conflict may be socially widespread as a result of the struggles for scarce resources. These groups may be defined by race (apartheid South Africa), ethnicity (Nigeria, DR Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, etc.), religion (Central African Republic, Egypt), and so on. In this vein, the structural theory emphasizes the sense of group position and of group competitive threat or interests as prime motivators of conflict. Here, it is generally maintained that group conflict emerges from competing interests – of domination and exploitation; intergroup status differentials, convergent group boundaries, differential treatment of groups, and intergroup differential in social roles (Duckitt, 1992) – and that dominant groups develop and propagate ideologies that maintains and even legitimizes their higher social status, e.g., the institution of the Sharia in Nigeria's northern states, the Central African Republic (CAR) crises, the apartheid policies in South Africa, the US "Jim Crow", and so on. Consequently, ethno-linguistic, religious, and racial related conflicts emerge from (the threat of) competition and struggle over real or symbolic resources and privileges, rather than an irrational psychological disposition amenable to curing through proper socialization (Bobo & Fox, 2003). Also, the mere awareness of the presence of an out-group is sufficient enough to invoke intergroup conflictual responses.

The racial regulations in apartheid South Africa explains this via the "color bar" where the overwhelming majority of white workers identified with policies of white domination and used their power as voters to press for discrimination in employment, racial reservation of many skilled categories of work, segregation in living areas and the inability to promote blacks to high

ranking positions, underpayment and other forms of oppression. Thus, going by Burton's (in Bassey, 2007) argument, when these structural situations and conditions transcended the black racial group's ability to accommodate what is being done to them, they resorted to physical violence.

Furthermore, the social-structural approach takes into account the level or extent of acceptability and loyalty to group values, and these structures the way groups' value-systems are formed and acculturated, and these value-systems vis-à-vis group dynamics shape the way a group view other ethnic, religious, or racial groups. Little wonder the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970) and the Rwandan genocide in 1994 where over 800,000 Tutsis were killed by Hutus, occurred. It is alleged that the Igbos and Hutus **has** undergone a period of conditioning, which made them view the Nigerian state as repressive and partial (thus, their desire to secede) and the Hutus to view the Tutsis, members of the minority ethnic group but which wielded state power, as "cockroaches". This, according to Duke and Agbaji (2018), goes a long way to affirm the Babylonia Talmudic words adopted by Anaïs Nin in her 1961 work "Seduction of the Minotaur" that "we don't see things as they are; we see them as we are."

Some of the structural theorists like the renowned German scholars, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Ralf Dahrendorf, and Johan Galtung, opine that conflicts are generally characterized by weak political system that does not allow for a diversity of voices, weak social, political and economic structures that sanctions the unequal distribution of power and resources, inequality, high rate of human capital flight, hunger, religious tensions, etc. (in Williams, 2012). Karl Marx for instance, sees rigidly structured economies **divvied** up along the bourgeois and proletarian classes within which the former had to be overthrown forcefully by the later for the sake of the fairer, yet differently structured societies – the Communist state. Dahrendorf (1958) believes structures caused conflagrations, but discerned substructures within society that could exert influence, or be influenced in ways that might vary from reactions of society as a whole. Some cases in point are the repressive regimes of particularly the Middle East and North African (MENA) region like the Muammar Qaddafi of Libya, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, Idi Amin of Uganda, Siad Barre of Somalia, just to mention a few. In these countries, their leaders were accused of being patrimonial and were removed (some were even killed) leading to military takeovers and tumultuous conflagrations engulfing them. This situation further results in problems of unstable political transitions like in Egypt and Libya; civil wars like in Democratic Republic Congo (DRC), Somalia and Uganda; ethnic cleansings like in Burundi and Rwanda;

ethno-religious tensions like in Central Africa Republic (CAR), Sudan, Tunisia, Nigeria and Niger.

Different scholars like Edward Azar, John Burton, and Johan Galtung, it must be noted, have tried to describe and analyze in line with several other concepts, how political, social, and organizational structures act as sources of conflict. Amongst others, the structural victimization, social deprivation and structural violence comes to mind (Williams, 2012).

NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN NIGERIA

National integration is the awareness of a common identity among the citizens of a country. This implies that though we belong to different castes, religions and regions and speak different languages, we recognize the fact that we are all one. The essence of national integration is for enhancing nation-building. The greatest challenge facing Nigeria today is the threat to national unity as resource control, ethnicity based identity and religious cleavages have enveloped national consciousness. Since the colonial era, efforts have being made to ensure a cohesive Nigeria with the use of various constitutions and policies which were introduced. The basic rationale behind the promotion of national integration is to unify and regulate all political, economic and social activities in the state so as to eradicate any feeling of inferiority complex and ensure equitable distribution of the nation's income. By so doing, a society free from oppression, subjugation, suppression, dehumanization, war and other forms of political and socio-economic vices will be properly enhanced and controlled. (Ezema, 2013).

For the purpose of this study, effort to integrate Nigeria would be succinctly examined in three phases which are the colonial era, military era and the civilian era.

COLONIAL ERA

The journey to Nigeria nation unintentionally began in 1807 when Britain abolished the Atlantic Slave Trade due to technological advancements and subsequent industrial revolution in the eighteenth century across Europe (Oduwobi 2011). By 1893, according to Ikime (cited in Malachy & Nwobi 2014:150), "pre-colonial independent states such as Ijebu kingdom, Benin kingdom were integrated to form the Niger coast protectorate in 1893 and renamed the protectorate of Southern Nigeria in 1900 to signify the imposition of colonial rule." The British brought together the various Nigerian people whose languages and cultures were different and began the long process of amalgamation that brought all the people under one political unit – Nigeria. For Malachy and Nwobi (2014:150) "while the protectorate of Northern Nigeria

suffered serious financial deficit because it had only one source of revenue, which is the age long tradition of the imposition of taxes... the colony and protectorate of the Southern Nigeria experienced budgetary surplus due to its multiple channels of revenue that were associated with trades in many commodities.” Consequently, under the British overlord stationed to oversee affairs in West Africa, Lord Friedrich Lugard, the northern and southern protectorates were amalgamated in 1914 to bring about a level playing field for the simultaneous administration of the political and economic affairs of the Northern and Southern protectorates of Nigeria. This marked the beginning of the political unit called Nigeria.

Another effort to promote national integration is the 1946 Richard Constitution. The introduction of the Richard’s Constitution factionalized the emerging spirit of nationalism through the creation of the three regions: Eastern, Western, and Northern (Alapiki 2005). The idea of the constitution was to integrate the hitherto isolated Northern Province into the political mainstream and to establish regional councils for regional deliberation.

The constitution had the following as its objectives:

1. To promote Nigeria unity;
2. To promote adequately within the unity for the diverse elements which make up the country; and
3. To secure greater participation of Africans in the discussion of their affairs (Nnamdi, 2009).

Furthermore, the establishment of federalism in Nigeria has also being an imperative means of fostering national integration in Nigeria. The Lyttleton Constitution of 1954 introduced federalism in Nigeria as an integrative mechanism (Onifade & Imhonopi 2013). Nigeria began with a formal federal constitution in 1954, which was decentralized to accommodate the diverse ethnic groups, each of the constitute federating unit, known then as regions operating its own regional constitution, police, civil service and judiciary (Ojo, 2009). It may not be out of place to note here as Onifade and Imhonopi (2013:77) describes that “the colonialists must have being swayed by the opinion that such a system of government was necessary to preserve both integration and stability in a deeply divided country like Nigeria.”

MILITARY ERA

Subsequent military governments in Nigeria since 1966 have employed state creation policy and National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) program as mechanisms to ensure a cohesive Nigeria.

State creation as a strategy for national integration began under the administration of General Yakubu Gowon in 1967 when he divided Nigeria into twelve (12) states. The rationale behind the creation of the twelve states can be seen from two major dimensions. First, was the attempt to ameliorate minority fear and integrate minorities as unique components of a federating society; second, is that state creation attempted to balkanize the hegemony of dominant ethnic groups, in order to ensure the unity of a federating society. The creation of the states was appropriate because it succeeded in weakening secessionist tendencies that almost disintegrated the country under Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu. The twelve states created were the “North Eastern State, North Western State, Kano, Kaduna, Kwara, Benue-Plateau, Lagos, Western State, Bendel, East Central State, Cross River, and Rivers” (Babalola, 2016:5-6). Furthermore, under the administration of Murtala/Obasanjo, the old twelve states structure was split into nineteen states in February 1976 with a new federal capital territory at Abuja. The creation of the nineteen states was meant to reduce minority problems, give room for even development and provide for a strong federal structure.

The Babangida administration was not an exception in the creation of additional states to ensure a cohesive Nigeria. To this end, he sets up the political bureau in 1986 which was to provide a political blue print for Nigeria. The Bureau which was given the latitude to discuss the various socio-economic and political problems confronting the nation, also found it imperative to discuss the creation of more states. Creation of a few additional states is important for the removal of a major source of political and social tension which have bred stability and frustrated the country’s march towards national greatness. The additional states created are Akwa Ibom and Kastina states from Cross Rivers and Kaduna states respectively (Babalola, 2016). Babalola (2016:8) further adds that,

In creating the two States, General Babangida announced that the demand for new States will no longer be tolerated. However, in August 1991, the regime back-paddled and created nine new States which brought the number of States to thirty (30). The nine States were Abia, Enugu, Delta, Jigawa, Kebbi, Osun, Kogi, Taraba, and Yobe.

In addition to the created thirty states, General Sani Abacha on October 1996, further created six states which make up the thirty-six states in Nigeria. These six states were Ebonyi, Bayelsa, Nasarawa, Zamfara, Gombe, and Ekiti.

A second policy implemented by the military regime to foster national integration in Nigeria is the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in the administration of General Yakubu Gowon established under Decree No. 24 of May 22, 1973. One of the expectation of the program is that Corps members should be posted to cities or states far from their homes and state of origin, where they are expected to mix with people of other tribes, social and family backgrounds where they could better understand the cultures, perhaps language and the general lifestyle of their host communities (Onifade & Imhonopi, 2013).

CIVILIAN ERA

The effort at national integration in the civilian era has being clearly stated in the 1979 Republican constitution of Nigeria. This constitution spells out the Federal Character Principle which has being adopted by subsequent constitution. The Federal Character Principle was first popularized in the late General Murtala Muhammed regime in his address to the opening session of the Constitution Drafting Committee on October 1975 (Majekodunmi 2013). The Federal Character Principle was adopted in the 1979 Nigeria constitution as a directive principle of state policy. This is clearly stipulated in section 14(3) of the 1979 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which states that:

The composition of the government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such manner as to reflect the Federal Character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity and command national loyalty thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few state or from a few ethnic or sectional groups in that government or any of its agencies.

In this light, as a strategy for national integration, the Federal Character Principle has been adopted to ensure fair appointment of persons to high ranking government establishments and parastatals without any form of discrimination. In practice, this implies that in the appointment, promotion and postings of the Federal public servants, every state, ethnic group, religious or any other sectional group should be represented (Bello, 2012). Little wonder Bamidele and Ikulege (cited in Majekodumi, 2013) believes that the introduction of the Federal Character Principle in Nigerian state is to foster unity, peace, equal access to state resources and promote the integration of the less advantage states for better improvement and good condition of living in the country. It also fosters loyalty and gives every citizen of Nigeria a sense of belonging in the nation (Malachy & Nwobi, 2014).

The 1999 constitution also encouraged national integration in Nigeria. This is provided in Chapter 2, Paragraph 15(2) of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The section of the constitution states that: “Accordingly, national integration shall be actively encouraged, while discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic, association or ties shall be prohibited.”

THE CHALLENGE OF BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA: THE ORIGIN OF BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY

The Islamic sect, Boko Haram, is commonly known as an anti-western group which sees Western education or civilization as forbidden knowledge; as in, a curse. Its official name in Arabic is Jama’atu Ahlissunna Lidda’ a Watiwal Jihad, which means “people committed to the propagation of prophet’s teaching and Jihad” (Duke et al, 2016; Duke et al, 2017). The origin of the Boko Haram sect, Duke et al (2017) has being traced to a Shabaab Muslim Youth Organization in 1995 with its founder as Lawan Abubakar. As Duke et al (2017) further notes:

According to this origin, the leader who left to study in University of Medina in Saudi Arabia was succeeded by a young and versatile Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf. Mohammed Yusuf began as a preacher and leader in the youth wing, Shababul Islam (Islamic youth vanguard), of Al- Sunnah, a Salafi group... Immediately Yusuf took over, he changed the doctrine of the sect and abandoned the cleric’s view and came up with extremist Boko Haram doctrine. Yusuf argued that Western education, or ‘Boko’, had brought nothing but poverty and suffering to the region and was therefore forbidden, or ‘Haram’ in Islam... The group stands for the outright rejection of western education, western culture and modern science. It rather advocates the propagation of strict adherence to Islam in its purest form...

From 2002 to 2009, the group was led by Mohammed Yusuf in Borno State in the Northeastern region of Nigeria. His aim was to establish a Shari’a government in Borno state under former Governor Ali Modu Sheriff... The sect believes the establishment of Islamic government would address the ills of society including corruption, and bad governance. On this note, Yusuf subsequently became increasingly critical of government and official corruption. His popularity soared, and the group expanded into other states, including Bauchi, Yobe and Kano... It is alleged that by 2004, the

sect leaders had established links with the Algerian Salafist Group now known as Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which gave some of their members training in combat, weapons handling and the use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)... In fact, the sect established a base called “Afghanistan” in Kanamma villages in Northern Yobe State.

The group became known internationally following riots that lasted from 25th July to 30th July 2009 and spread across the four states of Bauchi, Kano, Yobe and Borno, the latter of which saw the most extensive rioting perhaps because it was the leader of the movement’s base... With the effort of the Nigeria armed forces, the said leader of the sect (Mohammed Yusuf) was executed along with some of the members of the sect. After the death of Yusuf, his followers went underground for a year before surfacing with attacks on police stations and military barracks to avenge the killings of Mohammed Yusuf and other members of the sect. The group also carried out jailbreaks to free members, and demanded prosecution of Yusuf’s killers, release of its detained colleagues, restoration of its destroyed mosques, and compensation for members killed by the Nigerian troops.

Late Mohammed Yusuf was later succeeded by Abubakar Shekau who emerged as a new leader in July, 2010. As the head of the sect, he accentuated the movements’ radicalization and extremism. With Shekau at the helm of its most significant faction, Boko Haram has grown more ruthless, violent and destructive and less open to dialogue... The group may be willing to increase the tempo of its attacks and expansion of its perspective of a ‘developed society’ (vis-à-vis the adoption of the Shari’a)... owing to its adoption of the name “Wilayat Ghard Afriqiya”, which when translated to English means, ‘Islamic State West African Province’, to show that it is a branch of the Islamic State (IS). The group’s act of kidnapping 276 schoolchildren from their school in April 2014 brought the group, the little town of Chibok in Borno State, and particularly, the nature and extent of terrorism in Nigeria to the limelight. The incident was trending on the social media platforms. A trend was even created on Twitter, #BringBackOurGirls. This was followed by mass protests on an international scale by individuals, and groups to condemn the action and to

call for a global effort to search for, rescue, and reunite the schoolchildren with their families. Also, a non-profit was created owing to this called the BringBackOurGirls (BBOG) campaign, and it championed many protests in Nigeria (Duke et al, 2017:5-6).

IMPLICATIONS OF BOKO HARAM ACTIVITIES ON NATIONAL INTEGRATION

The effect of Boko Haram violence has led to constant threat to Nigeria's fragile unity and peace with the fault lines of disintegration emanating and growing daily along religious, tribal and ethnic lines (Casmir, Nwaoga, & Ogbozor, 2014). The sect's condemnation of Western education and its intention to establish an Islamic state across Nigeria has made Nigeria to be divided into two poles which has constantly hindered national integration. To this end, the absence of national identity weakens the governmental structures and institution there by creating national crisis and political instability (Akwara et al, 2013).

The activities of the sect have caused the loss of a vast wealth of human lives and the massive migration of people especially non-indigenes from the Northeast where the sect normally carries out attacks. According to Duke and Agbaji (2018:14), "... in Nigeria, the Boko Haram crisis has led to the displacement of over 1.3 million **denizens** in the northeastern region." The destructiveness of the conflict is epitomized in the death of Nigerians in gargantuan proportions. For instance, according to Governor Kashim Shettima of Borno state, the Boko Haram sect accounts for almost 100,000 deaths (Tukur, 2017).

The activities of the sect have also negatively affected the socio-economic structure of Nigeria as it has slowed down the national economic growth and development since no investors would prefer to invest in a crisis ridden nation. According to Duke et al (2016):

When insecurity and terrorism is the case like in Nigeria, investors, who are to facilitate industrial growth and employment generation, would avoid such unfavourable crisis-ridden business environment, thereby, impoverishing the economy... according to a World Investment Report (WIR) of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Nigerian economy lost a whopping N1.33 trillion Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) owing to Boko Haram's activities. FDI flows to Nigeria have been depleting over the years. According to the CBN statistics... FDI flows fell to 4693.83 million USD in 2014 from 5608.45 million USD in 2013, and further fell to 3064.17 million USD in 2015. These

statistics are quite similar to the World Bank's where FDI flows fell from 8841.11 million USD in 2011 to 7069.93 million USD in 2012, 5562.87million USD in 2013, and to \$4655.85 million USD in 2014... Thus, a downward slope in the FDI flows is the only available reality.

The attacks of the sect have also led to the closing and abandoning of shops by some traders who reside in the affected states. Little wonder Duke et al (2016) writes that:

Former Minister of Information, Mr. Labaran Maku, purported that Boko Haram's attack on Kano State especially is so significant because it affected the multi-billion naira Kano Textile Market, otherwise called the Kanti-Kwari Market, regarded to be the oldest and biggest textile markets in sub-Saharan Africa, and as such it affected the foundation of economic and social well-being of the northern region.

Also, Dauda noted that there has being the reduction of people's patronage of product from Northern region because of rumors that members of the Boko Haram are planning to send poisonous product from their region to other parts of Nigeria. This according to him has affected 97% of business in the region. (Dauda, 2014).

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme which was introduced as a mechanism for national integration has faced set-back particularly in the Northeastern part of Nigeria as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency. This is clearly seen in youth corps members' refusal of serving in the north when they are posted there. Those who have being posted to the Northeastern part of Nigeria have on several occasions sought for redeployment. According to Okpaga, Chijioke and Eme (2012) reports have it that those posted to Kano, in particular, requested to be posted to state outside the North. Some of them specially asked the authorities to stop further posting of youth corps members to Adamawa, Kano, Kaduna, Bauchi, and Niger until the insecurity in the region is over (Okpaga et al. 2012).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

National integration in Nigeria has to a large extent being threatened as a result of the emergence of the Boko Haram sect. The ideology as well as the various activities of the sect has led to a disintegrated Nigeria. Unless the Nigerian government effectively tackles with concrete remedial actions the factors which have bred aggression of the sect, national integration in Nigeria would not again fruitful result. The sect will continue to destabilize the Northeastern

part of Nigeria and its attacks would eventually spread to other parts of the country. The government should therefore address the issue of corruption, poverty, encourage investment in the north, promote government transparency and citizenship dialogue as this would bring about a sustainable solution to the violence and insurgency against the Nigerian state and citizens and would to a large extent foster national integration in Nigeria.

From the review of various literatures on the issue of Boko Haram, it is pertinent to say that the activities of the sect have posed as a threat to the corporate existence of Nigeria. Therefore, to effectively curb the activities of the sect, the Federal Government should apply pragmatic approach. The following recommendations will help to curb the activities of the Boko Haram sect in Nigeria as means to sustain its federalism and maintain its national integration:

1. The government should address the issue of poverty and unemployment in the Northern part of Nigeria. This can be done by introducing socio-economic empowerment programs which would create jobs for the jobless youths who are used as tools by the sect's leaders to carry out attacks.
2. There is the need for a context-specific and multi-layer conflict resolution, management and prevention initiative(s) encapsulating a broad based local, regional and international collaboration between all concerned stakeholders
3. There should be developmental reform in the aspect of education and infrastructures in the Northern part of Nigeria. The building of schools and making them free will pave way for the poor Almajirai to be educated.
4. The Nigeria security agencies should be modernized by training their personnel on how to go about in search of members of the sect in order to avoid extra-judicial killings and other forms of human right abuse of sect's members and other innocent Nigeria citizens. Those suspected to be members of the sect should face prosecution and if found guilty, should be given capital punishment.
5. The Federal government should find those responsible for sponsoring the movement of the sect and make them face prosecution as cutting the sect's source of income would make it almost impossible for them to purchase sophisticated weapons to carry out further attacks.
6. The Nigerian government should provide funds to upgrade its intelligence gathering gadgets. Fund should be spent on sophisticated weapons and technological equipment which can be used to trace the location of the sect, detecting and denotation of bombs effectively.

7. In order to eliminate or reduce the rate of corruption which is part of what caused the aggression of the sect, the Federal government should strengthen the already established institutions such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) which have being set up to fight against corruption in Nigeria.
8. Nigerian government should continue to collaborate with external states such as the United States of America and United Kingdom which have succeeded in Fighting against terrorism as information sharing, intelligence and lessons learnt from the past would be of help.
9. More personnel should be recruited into the military in order for the military to be able to suppress the Boko Haram sect. Also, the government should take cognizance of the increment of personnel's salary because if they are not well paid and treated, they might not be willing to carry out their duty effectively.
10. The Federal government should encourage national conference which would consist of representatives of different ethnic groups and create a platform for inter-religious dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims. This would to a large **extend** encourage good relationship and corporate existence between these groups and promote greater understanding between them in order to avoid future conflict between these groups.

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