

States and the Nigerian Government's Response to the Human Development Crisis Caused by Boko Haram Insurgency in Northeast, Nigeria (2014-2022)

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Abstract

The Boko Haram insurgency has had a devastating impact on human development in Northeastern Nigeria, particularly from the year 2014-2022. This study examines the responses of the Nigerian government and international stakeholders to the human development crisis caused by the insurgency. Using a thematic approach that combines insurgency and human development through a Marxist theoretical lens, this study reveals that Boko Haram's activities are a symptom of deeper societal contradictions and class struggle. The study utilized a qualitative research design, gathering data from Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, and Gombe States through in-depth interviews and purposive sampling. The findings indicate that the response to the crisis has been multifaceted, involving various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international organizations. While significant progress has been made in providing humanitarian assistance and promoting stability, challenges persist in ensuring accountability, transparency, and effective governance. The study recommends that the Nigerian government and other stakeholders should prioritize accountability and transparency in humanitarian response efforts to ensure that aid reaches those in need and is used effectively. Efforts should be made to address the underlying grievances fueling the conflict, including socio-economic disparities, marginalization, and radicalization.

Keywords: Boko Haram insurgency, human development, States, Northeast, Nigeria

Introduction

Security is a vital issue for the survival of any nation. The Boko Haram insurgency has significantly impacted human development in Northeastern Nigeria, resulting in widespread displacement, disruption of livelihoods, and damage to infrastructure. The conflict has forced over

2.5 million people to flee their homes, with many seeking shelter in overcrowded camps where living conditions are often substandard. The insurgency has also severely affected education, with numerous schools being targeted, destroyed, or forced to shut down due to insecurity. This study aims to probe the responses of the Nigerian government and international stakeholders to the human development crisis caused by the Boko Haram insurgency, with a focus on their efforts in delivering aid, protection, and advocacy for affected populations.

The Boko Haram insurgency has had a profound impact on human development in northeastern Nigeria, resulting in widespread displacement and disruption of essential services. By 2022, over 2.5 million people had been forced to flee their homes, with many seeking shelter in overcrowded IDP camps where access to clean water, sanitation, and healthcare is limited (UNHCR, 2022). This displacement has led to significant livelihood disruptions, with many individuals losing their sources of income and facing food insecurity (FAO, 2021). The conflict has also had a devastating impact on education, with numerous schools being targeted, destroyed, or shut down due to insecurity (UNICEF, 2021). As a result, an estimated 1.6 million children were out of school in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states as of 2021, with girls being disproportionately affected (UNICEF, 2021). The long-term implications of this disruption in education will likely be felt for generations to come, affecting the region's economic and social development (UNDP, 2022).

The Boko Haram insurgency has placed immense pressure on the healthcare system in Northeastern Nigeria, resulting in damaged or destroyed healthcare facilities and targeted attacks on healthcare workers. This has led to shortages of personnel and medical supplies, further complicated by the mass displacement of people and heightened risk of disease outbreaks and malnutrition, particularly among children (WHO, 2021). The insurgency has also had a devastating

impact on the region's economy, disrupting agricultural activities, trade, and infrastructure development, and contributing to pervasive poverty and economic stagnation (World Bank, 2020). This study aims to investigate the responses of UN humanitarian agencies, states, non-state actors, and the Nigerian government to the human development crisis caused by the Boko Haram insurgency. Specifically, it will assess the intervention efforts of foreign and federal governments in delivering aid, protection, and advocacy to affected populations. The study's focus is on the impact of the insurgency on human development in Northeastern Nigeria, where millions of people have been forced to flee their homes and seek refuge in IDP camps or host communities.

Before the conflict, the region had a thriving economy, with Borno State engaging in trade with neighboring countries such as Cameroon, Niger, and Chad. However, the insurgency has severely disrupted economic activities, including fishing and cattle trading. For example, fishing activities in the Lake Chad Basin, which previously supplied dried fish to Lagos, have been significantly reduced to less than 5-10% of their former levels. The Fulani people have also been forced to abandon their cattle, which have been taken over by Boko Haram.

The Boko Haram insurgency has resulted in widespread destruction of critical infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, and transportation systems. For example, travelling between Maiduguri, Adamawa, and other areas has become extremely challenging due to safety concerns (Garba, 2018). Instead of taking direct routes, people often have to take lengthy detours, such as going from Damaturu to Buniyadi, Bunigari, and then to Biu. The insecurity has rendered many roads and routes impassable, disrupting the free movement of people and goods.

Against this backdrop, this study examines the humanitarian interventions implemented by the Nigerian government and foreign governments in response to the human development crisis triggered by the Boko Haram insurgency in Northeast Nigeria between 2014 and 2022. The study

aims to assess the effectiveness of these interventions in addressing the humanitarian needs of affected populations.

Literature Review

Muhammad and Mohammed (2020) conducted a study on the crises of Boko Haram insurgency going on in the Lake Chad Basin region since 2009 affects the means of livelihood and relationships of the people and communities in the area. Almost every sector is affected by the atrocities of the Boko Haram group, and the governmental efforts to end it have not been enough as the miscreants continued to launch attacks of different dimensions and are in control of some communities in the area. This study examines the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on economic development in the Northeast region and using secondary data. The study reveals that the activities of the insurgents no doubt crumbled the economy of the region to the extent that farmlands are deserted due to fear of attack and improvised explosive devices. Food and non-food productions in the region have drastically reduced. Marketplaces lost huge opportunities for the exchange of goods, especially between international marketers and southern business people. It also reduced the effectiveness and efficiency of financial institutions like banks. Thus, underscoring the point that no meaningful development takes place in a region without human peace. The study, therefore, concludes that if security and peace are not restored in the region, things would continue to fall apart in the country's economic sphere. More importantly, the crisis would continue to place the Northeast zone at the backwater of economic development, in addition to other underdevelopment challenges associated with the crisis.

Babatunde, Idowu and Chris (2021) conducted a study on the Implications of the Boko Haram Insurgency for Educational and Economic Development in Nigeria. The study is an attempt to look

at the Boko Haram Insurgency in the Northeast part of Nigeria with a view to unravelling how the activities of these insurgents impinge on the educational and economic development of the country. The study adopts the ex-post factor research design. Data from articles, books, magazines, etc., were gathered and analyzed using content analysis. The findings revealed that Boko Haram insurgency adversely affects Nigeria's educational sector as it has led to the death of teachers and students alike; shortage of qualified personnel, massive destruction of school buildings and other academic facilities, exodus of academic experts from the region under review, disruption of academic calendar and the like. To this end, the study also shows that the sect's activities have negative effects on the economy, which still finds negative expression on the educational sector. Based on the findings, it was recommended that religious extremism, inequality, poverty, unemployment and hunger, which are the underpinning causes of insurgency, should be tackled head-on by the government, civil society and other relevant stakeholders.

Lastly, Manu (2023) studied insurgency and national security from the separatist struggle in Cameroon. In order to add to conceptual, theoretical, and methodological discussions in war/conflict studies, the study looked at the nature and circumstances connected to the start of the conflict in Cameroon's North West and South West regions. It took an exploratory approach, looking at key areas of government policy as well as the immediate political tensions that preceded hostilities. It demonstrates that the strategic errors made by the government and rebels, together with the demonstrations of teachers and attorneys starting in 2016, are what led directly to the start of the conflict. The fundamental causes include colonial ancestry, selfishness, a history of insurgencies, a volatile regional environment, unfavorable international relations, poor macroeconomic performance, the capacity to finance authoritarianism without resorting to taxes, an internal geography that encourages group conflict and guerrilla warfare, political decay, and

slow political development. Four primary contributions to ongoing discussions in war/conflict studies are made possible by the results. To begin with, an insurgency is a unique kind of warfare. Second, insurgencies occur due to several immediate and underlying factors unique to each case. Third, studying insurgencies requires a holistic approach, examining immediate and underlying factors. Finally, although rebel victory is impossible in an insurgency, multiple and widespread insurgencies can nullify the essence of a state, making insurgencies important national security threats.

All of the studies reviewed provided an understanding of the knowledge gap, as the work of Muhammad & Muhammad (2020), which made a study on the crisis of Boko Haram insurgency going on in the Lake Chad Basin region since 2009, affects the means of livelihood and relationships of the people and communities in the area. Another gap identified from various works was the work of Babatunde, Idowu, & Chris (2021). Their study adopts the ex-post facto research design. they collected data from articles, books, magazines, etc., were gathered and analyzed by using content analysis. Despite using a qualitative approach as well, the current study examined the responses of the States and Nigerian governments to the human development crisis in northeastern Nigeria. However, the study collected primary data through interviews with participants in the afflicted states and document analysis.

Theoretical Framework

Research is largely dependent upon relevant theories to establish facts. Thus, the theoretical framework in research entails situating the research problem within the context of a relevant theory. This allows for proper analysis of the problem. In this study, therefore, the theoretical framework adopted was Marxist Conflict Theory.

The Marxist Conflict Theory provides a valuable framework for analyzing the Boko Haram crisis in Northeast Nigeria. This theory emphasizes the role of power, class struggle, and economic inequality in shaping social relations and conflict (Marx, 1818-1883). According to this perspective, society is characterized by competition for limited resources, with social institutions reflecting and perpetuating inequalities. In the context of the Boko Haram crisis, the theory suggests that the conflict is driven by underlying economic and social inequalities.

The exploitation of the working class by the capitalist class creates conditions for discontent and rebellion. As Marx argued, the greater the economic exploitation, the more likely the working class is to experience discontent and challenge the existing social order (Marx, 1967; Seepersad, 2008). In Nigeria, the crises in the Northeast region have been fueled by governance failure, economic marginalization, and corruption, leading to poverty, unemployment, and inequality. These conditions have created a pool of vulnerable individuals who can be recruited by conflict entrepreneurs. For many jobless youths in the region, engaging in insurgent activities becomes an alternative means of survival, particularly given the high level of illiteracy. Since Nigeria returned to democracy, there were expectations that democracy and good governance will improved but there is only little progress (Garba, & Shaapera, 2018).

The Marxist Conflict Theory provides a useful lens for understanding the root causes of the Boko Haram crisis and the role of economic factors in driving the conflict. By examining the structural constraints and inequalities that underpin the conflict, this theory offers insights into the challenges of addressing the crisis and promoting sustainable peace and development in the region. The Marxist Conflict Theory offers a valuable framework for analyzing the complex dynamics of power, economics, and class in shaping government responses to the human development crisis in Northeast Nigeria.

By applying this theory, we can gain insights into: **Economic interests:** How government responses are influenced by economic interests, such as oil, trade, and investment. **Class dynamics:** How different classes are affected by and respond to government policies and interventions. **Power struggles:** How power is exercised and contested among various actors, including governments, insurgents, and local communities.

The theory highlights power dynamics, examines economic interests, and contextualizes conflict, providing a nuanced understanding of the conflict's root causes and the roles of various actors. As the economic gap between the rich and poor expands, the tendency for rebellion increases. While the Boko Haram crisis may have multiple drivers, economic factors have played a significant role, with evidence suggesting that financial rewards are used to lure and recruit fighters (Garba, 2018). By applying the Marxist Conflict Theory, we can better understand the complex interplay of power, economics, and class dynamics that shape government responses to the human development crisis in Northeast Nigeria. This framework can help us identify the underlying causes of the conflict and inform more effective policies and interventions.

Methodology

This study described the methodology used, including the survey research method, data collection, and sampling approach.

The study employed a qualitative research approach, utilizing in-depth interviews to gather opinions and perceptions from respondents. Primary and secondary data were collected through document analysis and interviews conducted from 12 to 22 December 2022 in Yobe, Borno, Adamawa, and Gombe States. The survey research method was used to interview people, and a purposive sampling approach was adopted to select respondents who have a direct relationship with and experience of the subject matter.

Twenty respondents were interviewed, including religious leaders, youth leaders, police officers, military officers, IDP camp managers, people living in the region, and State Security personnel. This sample size is consistent with Creswell & Plano's (2018) estimate of 10-50 participants being a sufficient sample size, depending on the type of research and research questions. The use of in-depth interviews allowed for a nuanced understanding of the impact of Boko Haram insurgency activities and the responses of humanitarian interventions. The respondents' views and perceptions provided valuable insights into the complex issues surrounding the conflict.

Discussion and Results

This section discusses the humanitarian efforts and responses to the crisis in northeastern Nigeria, particularly in the states of Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, and Gombe. Thus:

UN Humanitarian Agencies, AU, and Non-State Actors' Intervention in Human Development Crisis in Northeastern Nigeria

The United Nations Humanitarian Agencies, in collaboration with the Federal Government of Nigeria, have made significant efforts to respond to the humanitarian crisis caused by the Boko Haram insurgency in Northeastern Nigeria. According to study participants, these efforts have been impactful, restoring hope and laying the foundation for human development in the region.

The Boko Haram insurgency has created a devastating humanitarian crisis, resulting in millions of displaced people, unmet basic needs, and crumbled infrastructure. In response, a multitude of actors, including UN humanitarian agencies, have stepped in to provide essential services, protection, and support to affected communities (Garba, 2018; Abdullahi & Garba, 2025).

The UN humanitarian agencies have played a crucial role in responding to the crisis, providing assistance and addressing the needs of affected populations. Their efforts have been instrumental in mitigating the impact of the insurgency and promoting human development in the region

The role of UN humanitarian agencies in responding to the Boko Haram crisis in Northeastern Nigeria.

The UN humanitarian agencies have played a vital role in delivering life-saving assistance to affected populations in Northeastern Nigeria. For example, the World Food Programme (WFP) has provided food aid to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and vulnerable communities, reaching thousands of people in need despite the challenging security situation (WFP, 2021). Additionally, UN agencies have focused on protecting the rights and well-being of vulnerable populations, including women, children, and refugees fleeing violence perpetrated by Boko Haram. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has supported the establishment of refugee camps and assisted survivors of gender-based violence, helping them rebuild their lives and recover from trauma (UNHCR, 2020).

The impact of these efforts has been acknowledged by study participants, who highlighted the provision of essential services such as water, medical outreach, and rebuilding of basic infrastructure. One participant noted that the intervention of UN Sustainable Development Agencies has been instrumental in restoring public utilities, including boreholes, hospitals, and roads, which have improved the lives of the common man.

The role of UN humanitarian agencies in advocating for increased attention and resources to address the humanitarian crisis caused by the Boko Haram insurgency.

UN humanitarian agencies have been instrumental in advocating for increased attention and resources to address the humanitarian crisis caused by the Boko Haram insurgency. Through reports, briefings, and appeals, agencies such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) have highlighted the urgent needs of affected populations and called for greater support from the international community. This advocacy has helped ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches those most in need and that efforts to address the crisis are adequately funded and coordinated (OCHA, 2019).

Despite these efforts, significant challenges persist in responding to the humanitarian crisis. Ongoing insecurity, including attacks on humanitarian workers and facilities, continues to hinder aid delivery and exacerbate the suffering of affected populations. Furthermore, funding shortfalls and bureaucratic obstacles have constrained the capacity of UN agencies and their partners to scale up their response and reach all those in need (UN News, 2021).

The role of the African Union (AU) and individual African countries in responding to the humanitarian crisis in northeast Nigeria.

The African Union (AU) and individual African countries have responded to the humanitarian crisis in northeast Nigeria through various means, including humanitarian aid, funding, deployment of troops, and support for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The AU has provided food, shelter, and medical assistance as humanitarian aid to Nigeria and has donated funds to support humanitarian efforts, including a \$10 million donation in 2020 (AU, 2020). The AU has

also deployed troops to Nigeria as part of the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to combat Boko Haram and support humanitarian efforts.

Several African countries have also played a significant role in supporting the humanitarian crisis response. Chad, Niger, and Cameroon have provided troops to the MNJTF and supported humanitarian efforts, including refugee assistance and IDP support. South Africa has provided humanitarian aid worth R50 million (approximately USD 3.5 million) in 2020, while Egypt has pledged \$1 million to the Lake Chad Basin humanitarian appeal and provided medical aid and food supplies worth \$500,000 in 2016.

The respondent's comment highlights the complexity of the crisis and the need for a multifaceted response. While the intervention efforts of UN Humanitarian Agencies, NGOs, state, and non-state actors have been significant, the respondent notes that the crisis has been ongoing for over 15 years, and that a lasting solution may require dialogue with Boko Haram.

The role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in responding to the humanitarian crisis caused by the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria.

NGOs have played a vital role in providing aid and support to affected communities in northeastern Nigeria. Organizations such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) have delivered medical assistance to communities affected by violence, setting up clinics and mobile medical teams to provide essential healthcare services to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other vulnerable populations (MSF, 2021).

NGOs have also provided protection and assistance to vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, who are disproportionately affected by the conflict. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has implemented programs focused on preventing and responding to gender-based violence

(GBV) in conflict-affected areas, providing safe spaces, psychosocial support, and legal assistance to survivors (IRC, 2020).

In addition to providing aid and protection, NGOs have engaged in advocacy efforts to raise awareness about the humanitarian crisis and mobilize support for affected populations. Amnesty International has published reports documenting human rights abuses committed by Boko Haram and called on the Nigerian government and the international community to take action to protect civilians and uphold human rights (Amnesty International, 2022).

However, NGOs face significant challenges in responding to the humanitarian crisis, including insecurity, access constraints, funding shortages, and bureaucratic hurdles. Despite these challenges, NGOs continue to play a crucial role in addressing the immediate needs of those impacted by the conflict and advocating for long-term solutions to address the root causes of the crisis.

A respondent's comment highlights the complexities of NGO intervention, noting that while NGOs provide essential services, they also inadvertently support Boko Haram members' families in IDP camps. The respondent laments that NGOs' logistics and aid may sustain Boko Haram members, making it challenging to address the issue.

The role of non-state actors in responding to the humanitarian crisis caused by the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria.

Non-state actors, including civil society organizations, community groups, and religious institutions, have played a vital role in responding to the humanitarian crisis caused by the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. These actors have made diverse contributions to addressing the humanitarian needs of affected populations, including providing aid, protection, and promoting peacebuilding efforts.

Organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) have delivered medical assistance, food aid, and other essential services to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other vulnerable populations in northeastern Nigeria (ICRC, 2021; MSF, 2021). Non-state actors have also played a critical role in protecting and advocating for the rights of affected populations, particularly women and children.

Religious leaders, traditional rulers, and community elders have facilitated dialogue, reconciliation, and social cohesion initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of the conflict (United States Institute of Peace, 2020). These efforts have contributed to building resilient communities and preventing the spread of extremist ideologies.

However, non-state actors face numerous challenges in responding to the humanitarian crisis, including limited resources, capacity constraints, and security risks. Political interference and restrictions on civil society organizations can also hinder their effectiveness in advocating for the rights of affected populations and promoting peacebuilding efforts.

The importance of non-state actors in responding to the humanitarian crisis is underscored by the finding that non-governmental humanitarian interventions supporting government efforts have a significant impact on human development in the Northeast. Sustained support and collaboration from the international community are necessary to overcome the challenges faced by non-state actors and ensure an effective humanitarian response to the Boko Haram crisis.

The responses of foreign countries to the humanitarian crisis caused by the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria.

The humanitarian crisis caused by the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria has prompted various responses from foreign countries. The United States, the United Kingdom, China, and Saudi Arabia have all contributed to the humanitarian efforts in northeast Nigeria.

The United States has provided significant humanitarian aid to Nigeria, including emergency food assistance, relief commodities, and support for internally displaced persons (IDPs). The US has also supported Nigeria's security sector, providing military aid and working to mitigate civilian harm in conflict zones.

The United Kingdom has played a leading role in the international response to the humanitarian crisis, providing security sector assistance to tackle the threat of terrorism. Britain has provided humanitarian aid to over 1.5 million people on the brink of famine, treated up to 120,000 children at risk of severe acute malnutrition, and supported education for 100,000 girls and boys.

China has contributed \$5 million to the United Nations for emergency humanitarian aid and partnered with the World Food Programme (WFP) to provide emergency food assistance to those affected by the crisis.

Saudi Arabia has provided humanitarian aid to Nigeria through the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSrelief), including food, shelter, and medical assistance. Saudi Arabia has also donated funds to support humanitarian efforts in Nigeria and collaborated with international organizations to provide humanitarian assistance.

These efforts demonstrate the commitment of foreign countries to providing humanitarian support to those in need in Northeast Nigeria.

The Nigerian government's response to the humanitarian crisis caused by the Boko Haram insurgency.

The Nigerian government has responded to the humanitarian crisis caused by the Boko Haram insurgency through a multifaceted approach. The government has deployed military forces to provide security and restore law and order in affected regions, launching operations such as Operation Lafiya Dole to combat Boko Haram militants and restore stability (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020).

The government has also been involved in providing humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other affected populations. The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has coordinated relief efforts, including the distribution of food, shelter, and medical supplies to displaced communities (NEMA, 2021). State governments in affected regions have implemented programs to support IDPs and facilitate their resettlement and reintegration into society.

However, challenges persist in ensuring accountability, transparency, and effective governance. Security operations have been criticized for human rights abuses and civilian casualties, raising concerns about accountability and adherence to international humanitarian law (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Corruption, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and political interference have also hindered the effective delivery of humanitarian aid and reconstruction efforts.

Despite these challenges, the Nigerian government's efforts to address the root causes of the conflict and promote long-term stability and development in affected regions are crucial. Initiatives aimed at promoting socio-economic development, addressing marginalization, and countering radicalization have been implemented to address the underlying grievances fueling the conflict (United Nations, 2019).

The Presidential Committee on Northeast Initiative (PCNI) has been established to coordinate development projects and reconstruction efforts in the northeastern region affected by the

insurgency (PCNI, 2016). By addressing socio-economic disparities and promoting inclusive development, these initiatives aim to undermine the appeal of extremist ideologies and foster resilience against future conflicts.

Conclusion

The humanitarian crisis caused by the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria has had a devastating impact on human development in the Northeast region. The response to the crisis has been multifaceted, involving various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international organizations. While significant progress has been made in providing humanitarian assistance and promoting stability, challenges persist in ensuring accountability, transparency, and effective governance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

The Nigerian government and other stakeholders should prioritize accountability and transparency in humanitarian response efforts to ensure that aid reaches those in need and is used effectively. Efforts should be made to address the underlying grievances fueling the conflict, including socio-economic disparities, marginalization, and radicalization. Initiatives aimed at promoting socio-economic development, education, and healthcare should be implemented to foster resilience against future conflicts and promote inclusive development. Stakeholders should work together to enhance collaboration and coordination in humanitarian response efforts to ensure a more effective and efficient response. The international community should provide sustained support to Nigeria's

recovery and development efforts to ensure lasting peace and stability in the conflict-affected regions.

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