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Impact of Boko Haram Insurgency on Governance and Socio-Economic Development in Borno State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of Boko Haram insurgency on governance and socio-economic development in Borno State, Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey design, the study targeted 553 respondents comprising district heads, ward councillors, local government chairmen, and members of the State House of Assembly. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select 139 participants, and data was collected using a structured questionnaire and key informant interviews. Findings revealed that the insurgency significantly weakened state institutions, disrupted electoral processes, eroded public trust in governance, and fostered corruption and lawlessness. On the socio-economic front, the insurgency caused widespread destruction of infrastructure, disrupted trade and investment, hindered access to education and healthcare, displaced populations, and escalated poverty. The study concluded that the Boko Haram insurgency poses serious challenges to governance and socio-economic development in Borno State. Recommendations were made for strengthening state institutions, enhancing security operations, promoting economic recovery, supporting displaced persons, and initiating long-term peacebuilding programs to address the root causes of the conflict and foster sustainable development.

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Keywords: Boko Haram Insurgency, Governance, Socio-Economic Development, State Institutions, Displacement, Infrastructure Destruction, Poverty, Public Trust, Security Challenges

INTRODUCTION

More than any other time in the history of Nigeria, the nation is plagued with diverse and complex challenges; ranging from corruption, natural disasters, bad governance, adverse political and economic conditions, armed banditry, kidnapping, and other different forms of violent conflicts that blazed through the six geopolitical zones. However, the most worrisome in recent times particularly since the return of democracy in the year 1999 is Boko Haram insurgency. Since the emergence of Boko Haram insurgent group in the Northeast region of the country, the legitimate authority of the government at various levels have been undermined and armed criminality groups proliferated nationwide, such as herdsmen militants, bandits, kidnappers, resulting to a large-scale displacement and humanitarian crises in the northeast part of the country. According Human Right Watch (2020), after ten years of conflict with Boko Haram in the northeast, Nigeria continue to contend with violence from the insurgence group and its breakout factions, as well as violent banditry, kidnappings, and killings by armed groups in other parts of the country.

The Boko Haram insurgency has profoundly disrupted governance and development in Nigeria, particularly in the northeastern region. According to Thurston (2018), the group's frequent attacks on government facilities, security forces, and administrative offices have undermined the Nigerian government's capacity to maintain control and provide essential services in the affected areas. This situation has led to a crisis of legitimacy for local and regional governments. Their inability to ensure safety and deliver services has eroded public trust, further compounded by allegations of corruption and inefficacy (Oluwole & Odekunle, 2019). Additionally, Agbiboa and Maiangwa (2020) highlight that the shift in focus towards counter-insurgency operations has diverted resources away from critical governance functions such as education and healthcare, thereby weakening efforts to address the root causes of the conflict and build resilient governance structures. The insurgency has had a significant impact on development in the affected regions. As Bamidele (2020) notes, economic activities including agriculture, trade,

and industry have been disrupted due to the violence. The destruction of infrastructure, markets, and farmland has led to economic setbacks and heightened food insecurity. Duru (2021) further discusses how investment and development initiatives have been deterred by ongoing instability. The high risks associated with investing in conflict zones have led to reduced economic opportunities and exacerbated poverty. Educational and healthcare services have also suffered as a result of the conflict. UNICEF Nigeria (2017) reports that the targeting and destruction of schools and health facilities, coupled with the displacement of educators and healthcare workers, have long-term implications for human capital development and access to essential services. Moreover, Zenn (2020) highlights that the operational capacity of development agencies has been strained due to insecurity and logistical challenges, limiting the effectiveness of humanitarian aid and development projects.

In response to the crises exacerbated by Boko Haram, various international organizations and donors have mobilized resources for aid and development. According to MSF (2021), humanitarian assistance and support for rebuilding infrastructure and displaced populations have been central to these efforts. The formation of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), which includes troops from Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger, represents a significant international effort to address the security aspects of the crisis (International Crisis Group, 2021). This collaborative approach aims to enhance regional security and stabilize areas for development activities. However, IFRC (2021) notes that development programs have focused on infrastructure reconstruction, educational and health support, and economic recovery. Despite these initiatives, the persistent threat of Boko Haram and ongoing conflict have often limited the effectiveness and sustainability of these efforts. Agbiboa (2021) concludes that while international aid and development initiatives have made notable progress in addressing immediate needs and rebuilding affected regions, the continuing insecurity poses significant challenges to achieving sustainable development outcomes. Therefore, this study seeks to analyze the impact of Boko Haram Insurgency on Governance and Socio-Economic Development in Borno state.

Statement of the Problem

Since the emergence of Boko Haram Insurgency in the Northeast region and its subsequent spread to other parts of the country, the government of Nigeria have been

finding it increasingly difficult and almost failing in its effort to tackle the devastating impact of the Insurgency that has ravaged the country. The violent conflict which has a crippling devastating impact on almost all sectors, ranging from social, political, economy, governance, security and even geographical, resulted in a serious humanitarian crisis. However, its effects on both governance and socio-economic development are more worrisome, hindering progress in various aspects of society. In Borno state particularly, the violent conflict leads to instability, damages infrastructure, disrupts services, and undermines trust in institutions, making it more difficult for the state to achieve sustainable development. Zenn (2020) observed that as a result of the insurgency, the operational capacity of development agencies has been strained due to insecurity and logistical challenges, limiting the effectiveness of humanitarian aid and development projects. Over the years, the shelve have copious presence of publications on the effect of Boko Haram on security in Borno state. However, there is scanty authorship on grounded efforts to study the impact of the insurgency on governance and socio-economic development in the state. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to analyze the impact of Boko Haram Insurgency on governance and socio-economic development in Borno state, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the impact of Boko Haram Insurgency on governance and socio-economic development in Borno state. The specific objectives are to:

1. Determine the effect of the Boko Haram Insurgency on governance in Borno state.
2. Assess the consequences of the Boko Haram attacks on socio-economic development in Borno state.

Research Questions

Two research questions were generated to guide the study:

1. What is the effect of the Boko Haram Insurgency on governance in Borno state?
2. What are the consequences of the Boko Haram attacks on socio-economic development in Borno state?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Gall, Gall and Borg (2007) described a descriptive survey as a method of investigation using questionnaire or interview to collect data from a sample that has been selected to represent a population to which the findings of the data analysis can be generalized. This research design was considered appropriate for this study as it allows the respondents to tick options that represent their opinions on the impact of Boko Haram insurgency on governance and socio-economic development of Borno state, Nigeria. The population of the study is 553, consisting of 186 district heads, 312 ward counsellors, 27 local government chairmen and 28 members of the state house of Assembly. The study adopted purposive sampling technique to select the respondents for the study. The sample size was 139 which constituted 25.13% of the target population selected to represent the whole population. According to Nwana (1981), if the population of a study is few hundreds, a sample size of 20% or more is adequate. Therefore, 25.13% of the total population is considered adequate and appropriate for the study. The instruments for data collection was structured questionnaire and key informant interview. The structured questionnaire was developed by the researcher titled "Impact of Boko Haram Insurgency on Governance and Socio-Economic Development (IBHIGSED)". The responses on the questionnaire were structured on a 5-point Likert and rating scales of Strongly Agreed (SA) = 5; Agreed (A) = 4; Undecided (U) = 3; Disagreed (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1. The questionnaire was validated by three research experts from Modibbo Adama University, Yola, Adamawa State. A reliability co-efficient of 0.81 was obtained for the instrument using Cronbach Alpha reliability method after a trial test of the instrument was conducted on Yobe state, which was not part of the study area. Data for the study was collected by the researchers. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the two research questions of the study while the qualitative data were content analyzed. All items with mean score of 2.5 and above were considered "Agreed" and if less than 2.5 was also considered as "Disagreed".

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is effect of the Boko Haram Insurgency on governance in Borno state?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on the effect of Boko Haram Insurgency on governance in Borno State.

		Respondent N= 100		
S/N	**ITEM**	**X**	**D**	**Remark**
1	The insurgency in Borno state has weaken state institutions, hindering their ability to provide essential services.	3.25	0.74	Agree
2	The insurgent's activities of Boko Haram have caused disruption of elections in Borno state.	2.90	0.80	Agree
3	Boko Haram violent attacks in Borno state erode public trust in democratic institutions leading to further instability.	2.99	0.93	Agree
4	Boko Haram Insurgent attacks resulted in the collapse of some state institutions, hindering their ability to maintain order.	2.97	0.78	Agree
5	The insurgent attacks of Boko Haram in Borno state undermine the rule of law.	3.06	0.84	Agree
6	Boko Haram activities increase lack of accountability in the state.	2.75	0.82	Agree
8	Boko Haram attacks affected government structures in Borno state.	2.91	0.78	Agree
9	The activities of Boko Haram increase corruption in Borno state.	2.89	0.79	Agree
10	The insurgency in this state leads to weakening of state institutions, including the civil service.	2.87	0.88	Agree

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 1 showed the effect of Boko Haram Insurgency on governance in Borno State. The respondents indicated that the insurgency has weaken state institutions, hindering their ability to provide essential services with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.25), the insurgent's activities have caused disruption of elections in Borno state with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 2.90), it erode public trust in democratic institutions leading to further instability with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 2.99), the insurgent attacks resulted in the collapse of some state institutions, hindering their ability to maintain order with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 2.97

), it undermines the rule of law with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.06), Boko Haram activities increase lack of accountability in the state with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 2.75), the insurgent's attacks affected government structures with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ =2.91), activities of Boko Haram activities increase corruption in Borno state with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 2.89), it leads to weakening of state institutions, including the civil service with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 2.87).

In addition to the above, the key informant interview reported:

> "…*Since the emergence of this Boko haram in this state we have not experience a normal life, common essential services and basic amenities such as water, food, healthcare and education have become something else (District head of a community reported)."*

Also another key informant interview reported:

> *"…Now, it has become very difficult for the citizens to hold their government accountable because of the crisis, and corruption now is in the increase. Our people here are more concerned about their safety and what to eat; nobody is talking about what the politicians are doing in office, all we care for is the security of our people and communities (district head of a community)."*

Furthermore, a key informant interview reported that:

> *"…Another negative effect of this crisis in most of our communities is the collapse of some state institutions such as the judiciary and the police, if you go to most of our communities you will find out that the police stations are burned down, hindering their ability to maintain law and order (ward council member)."*

Research Question 2: What are the consequences of the Boko Haram Insurgency on socio-economic development in Borno state?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on the consequences of the Boko Haram Insurgency on socio-economic development in Borno state.

S/N	ITEM	Respondent N= 100		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
1	The insurgency of Boko Haram causes significant economic damage through the destruction of infrastructure in Borno state.	3.23	0.74	Agree
2	The insurgent group causes disruption of trade and investment in Borno state.	3.40	0.65	Agree
3	Boko Haram violent attacks in Borno state affected all parts of the state, hindering all socio-economic activities.	2.42	0.94	Disagree
4	Boko Haram Insurgent attacks hinder access to basic services like education in Borno state.	2.59	0.89	Agree
5	The insurgent attacks of Boko Haram in Borno state led to large-scale displacement, hindering development efforts.	3.27	0.70	Agree
6	Boko Haram insurgency increases environmental degradation through the destruction of natural resources.	3.28	0,70	Agree
8	Boko Haram insurgency in Borno state make it increasingly difficult for citizens to access basic services like healthcare in remote communities.	3.02	0.77	Agree
9	The insurgency destroys livelihoods further exacerbating poverty in Borno state.	3.25	0.74	Agree
10	Boko Haram insurgency discourages both foreign and local investors in the state.	3.06	0.84	Agree
11	Commercial activities have reduced drastically since the emergence of the insurgency in the state.	2.75	0.82	Agree

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 2 showed the consequences of the Boko Haram Insurgency on socio-economic development in Borno state. The respondents indicated that the insurgency of Boko Haram causes significant economic damage through the destruction of infrastructure in the state with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.23), the insurgent group causes disruption of trade and investment in the state with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.40), it affects all parts of the state, hindering all socio-economic activities with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ =

2.42), it hinders access to basic services like education in the state with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 2.59), it led to a large-scale displacement, hindering development efforts with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.27), it increased environmental degradation through the destruction of natural resources with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.28), it makes it increasingly difficult for citizens to access basic services like healthcare in remote communities with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ =2.39), it destroys livelihoods further exacerbating poverty in the state with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.25), it discouraged both foreign and local investors in the state with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ =3.06), commercial activities have reduced drastically since the emergence of the insurgency in the state with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ =2.75).

Furthermore, key informant interview reported:

> "… *The attacks on infrastructures like roads, brides and markets have affected commercial activities in this area, beside the everyday threat and fear in the hearts of our people, they cannot longer access some major markets because of the bridges that have been burned (District head of a community reported).*"

Also another key informant interview reported:

> *"…You see, most of our livelihoods have been completely destroyed as a result of this insurgency, our people now relied on aid for survival, we have lost almost everything including our farm lands (ward council member).*"

Additionally, a key informant interview reported that:

> *"…Before people used to come from all over the country and even neighboring countries like Chad, Niger and Cameroon to do business here, but since this insurgency started we have lost a lot of opportunities. Everybody is afraid to come down here and do business, the crisis has caused serious disruption of trade and investment (District head of a community reported).*"

DISCUSSION

The study found out that the effects of Boko Haram insurgency on governance in Borno state include: weakening of state institutions and hindering their ability to provide essential services, disruption of elections, erode public trust in democratic institutions leading to further instability, the collapse of some state institutions and hindering their ability to maintain order, undermine the rule of law, increase lack of accountability and corruption in the state. This is in line with the finding of Thurton (2017) who stated that the group's frequent attacks on government facilities, security forces, and administrative offices have undermined the Nigerian government's capacity to maintain control and provide essential services in the affected areas. This situation has led to a crisis of legitimacy for local and regional governments. Their inability to ensure safety and deliver services has eroded public trust, further compounded by allegations of corruption and inefficacy. Additionally, Agbiboa (2020) highlights that the shift in focus towards counter-insurgency operations has diverted resources away from critical governance functions such as education and healthcare.

The study further found out that the consequences of Boko Haram insurgency on Socio-Economic development in Borno state include: significant economic damage through the destruction of infrastructure, disruption of trade and investment, hindering access to basic services like education, large-scale displacement that is hindering development efforts, increase in environmental degradation through the destruction of natural resources, difficulty for citizens to access basic services like healthcare in remote communities, destruction of livelihoods further exacerbating poverty, discourages both foreign and local investors and drastic reduction in commercial activities in the state. This is in line with the findings of Bamidele (2020), economic activities including agriculture, trade, and industry have been disrupted due to the violence. The destruction of infrastructure, markets, and farmland has led to economic setbacks and heightened food insecurity. Duru (2021) further discusses how investment and development initiatives have been deterred by ongoing instability. The high risks associated with investing in conflict zones have led to reduced economic opportunities and exacerbated poverty. Educational and healthcare services have also suffered as a result of the conflict. Additionally, UNICEF Nigeria (2018) reports that the targeting and destruction of schools and health facilities, coupled with the displacement of educators and healthcare workers, have long-term implications for human capital development and access to essential services. Moreover,

Zenn (2020) also highlights that the operational capacity of development agencies has been strained due to insecurity and logistical challenges, limiting the effectiveness of humanitarian aid and development projects.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the Boko Haram insurgency has had severe negative impacts on governance and socio-economic development in Borno State. The insurgency weakened state institutions, disrupted elections, eroded public trust in democratic processes, and undermined the rule of law. It also led to increased corruption and a collapse in the ability of government institutions to provide essential services and maintain order. On the socio-economic front, the insurgency caused widespread destruction of infrastructure, disrupted trade and investment, and significantly hindered access to basic services such as education and healthcare. The conflict led to large-scale displacement, environmental degradation, loss of livelihoods, and increased poverty. Commercial activities drastically reduced, discouraging both local and foreign investors, while humanitarian and development efforts were severely constrained due to insecurity and logistical challenges.

Recommendations

1. **Strengthening State Institutions:** Efforts should be made to rebuild and reinforce state institutions to enable them to function effectively, provide essential services, and maintain law and order. Special focus should be given to improving transparency, accountability, and governance capacity.
2. **Enhancing Security Operations:** Security strategies should be reviewed and improved to ensure the safety of citizens and the protection of critical infrastructure. Community-based security initiatives can also be promoted to strengthen local cooperation and intelligence gathering.
3. **Economic Recovery and Investment Promotion:** A comprehensive economic recovery plan should be developed to rehabilitate infrastructure, revive commercial activities, and attract both local and foreign investments. Incentives could be offered to investors willing to operate in post-conflict areas.
4. **Support for Displaced Persons:** Sustainable programs should be implemented to resettle and empower internally displaced persons (IDPs), including access to housing, livelihood opportunities, education, and healthcare.

5. **Long-term Peacebuilding Programs:** Beyond military operations, there is a need for dialogue, reconciliation, and community engagement initiatives to address the root causes of insurgency, promote social cohesion, and prevent future conflicts.

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