

## **Religious Extremism in Nigeria: Boko Haram as Case Study**

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### **Abstract**

The world observed the transformation process of Continent Africa from Colonialism to independence with hopes and fears. In Cold War Era, the African states have been engaged by the superpowers, on strategic and economic fronts, with certain limitations. On the other hand, in Post-Cold War phase, the Continent Africa had been addressed with laudable objectives. Now, the wave of religious extremism, in Continent Africa, has been perceived as a serious security threat, compelled to the international community to pay serious attention to deal the African states. There is no doubt that the entire region has multidimensional challenges and opportunities and its picture has to be drawn at larger canvass. The objective of the present research paper is to analyze those factors, which given space to Boko Haram, a religious extremist organization, in Nigeria. No exaggeration in saying Boko Haram extremely disturbed the internal and external dynamic of the state. Now, it has become a burden on the political and economic life of Nigeria. The qualitative research methodology has been used to argue the issue of religious militancy in Nigeria, in the context of Boko Haram. Secondary source of data has been used by keeping in mind the theoretical nature of the research paper. The study determines that the military operations are not sole solution to counter the religious extremism of Boko Haram until the economic, social and political issues of the Nigerian society are not addressed. There is a dire need to establish strong commitment level of the common Nigerian over the political system otherwise the issue of Boko Haram will remain intact.

**Keywords:** Horn of Africa, Boko Haram, Religious Extremism, Violent Activities

### **Introduction**

The Continent Africa, despite of enjoying adequate human and natural resources, still it is missing the train of prosperity. The European Colonial forces exploited the Black Continent ruthlessly to be “Rich”. Even then after the decades of independence, the issues of the majority African states are as same as they were in the colonial rule. The colonial legacy based political leadership of the African states deprived of the common man to avail the political and economic benefits. Issaka briefed Continent Africa with religious extremism, insurgency, weak political institutions, corrupt leadership, ethno-lingual conflicts, socio-economic deprivation, incapability of the states’ institutions, and transnational crimes like human trafficking, drug smuggling, kidnapping and oil-thiefting. (Issaka: 2010)

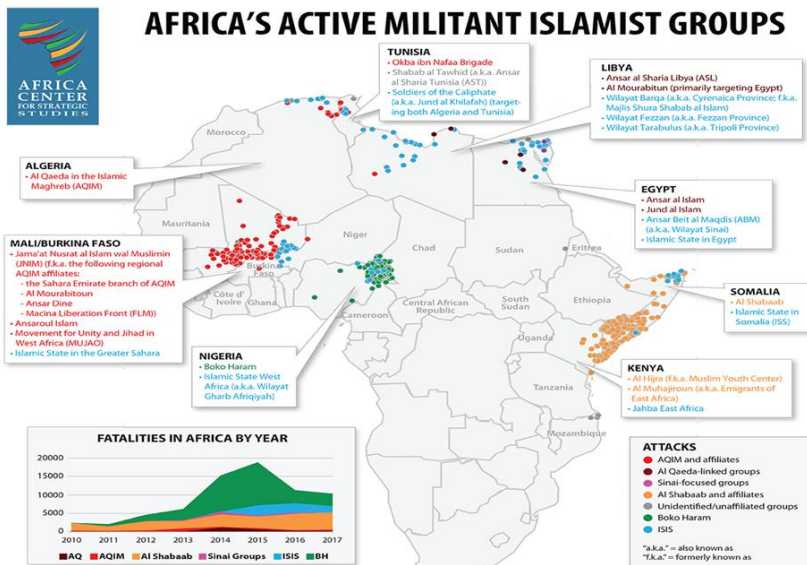
Wave of religious extremism, observed as serious security challenge, by the international community, restricted the growth of the majority of the African states. The process of religious radicalization is more active in North-Africa and West-Africa as compare to South-Africa and East-Africa. (Stephen & Rorisang: 2016). It has been

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perceived that the issue of the religious extremism has narrowed the scope of the political and economic participation of the African states in the world economy. The series of the violent activities like massive innocent killings, suicide bombings, kidnaping and terrorist attacks in Nigeria, Ethiopia, Somalia, Mali, Chad and Cameroon raised an alarming situation for the international community. In Nigeria, Boko Haram, a religious militant/extremist organization killed approximately 7711 people (IE & P: 2014). The Chibok incident the kidnaping of School Girls by Boko Haram in 2014 extremely shocked the international community. (Mantzikos: 2014). Al-SHAHBAB, a radical religious militant organization, known as a new version of Itihad al Islamia, challenged the writ of the government in Somalia. In Mali, the two Islamic Movements, Ansar al Din and Jama'at Tawhid Wal Jihad fi Garbi Afriqqiya are the burden over the economy of the state. In Niger, Chad and Cameroon, the political instability is just due to the religious militant organizations like Al-Shabab and Al-Qaida in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). The religious extremists in these organizations are engaged to provide logistical and financial support to the local militants to pressurize government. In Niger, the life of the common man is insecure because of the religious extremist activities of the Boko Haram and Ansar al Dine.

No exaggeration, in saying that Boko Haram has established its logistical and financial connections with the local, regional and international militants groups and now expanded its sphere of influence across the boundaries. In 2015, the leadership of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau announced its alliance with ISIS. In return, ISIS placed Abu Musab al-Barnawi, as its representative leader in West Africa. Now, the Horn of Africa is perceived a nursery of the religious extremist organizations for all over the world.



Updated: April 2018  
 Note: Compiled by the Africa Center this graphic shows violent events involving the listed groups over the 12-month period ending March 31, 2017. Data on attacks or fatalities does not attempt to distinguish the perpetrators of the events. Group listings are intended for informational purposes only and should not be considered official designations. Due to the fluid nature of many groups, the listed affiliations may change.  
 Sources: Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED); David Eby, Jane's Terrorism and Emergency Centre; Thomson Reuters; SITE Intelligence Group; The Southern Group Standard University's Mapping Militants Project; Statista; Terrorism Research & Analysis Center-Siam (TRAC); and Aaron Y. Zelin.

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### Internal Dynamics of Federal State of Nigeria:

In order to understand the Boko Haram in Nigeria, there is a dire need to look at the nature and features of the state. Nigeria, constitutionally named as Federal Republic of Nigeria, a secular state, which has a total area of 923,786 (Square Kilometers) and comprising 36 States. Its geographical location is in West Africa and boundaries are adjacent with Niger in North, Chad and Cameroon in the East and Republic of Benin in West. Categorically, it has Six Geo-political regions North-West, North-East, South-West, South-South, North-Central, and South-East, including Federal Capital Territory (Abuja). On the Atlantic Ocean, 853 Kilometers Coastal Line with Gulf of Guinea is also the physical beauty of Nigeria. The features of the state of Nigeria are explained as population in 2010 was approximately 158 (Million) and expected in 2020 is 204 (Million). Population Density is 172/Km<sup>2</sup> and in 2000 the Urban Population was 53 (Million). From 2005-2010, the Annual Growth of Nigeria had been remained approximately 2.5%. The population of the major cities in Nigeria is as following. (UNPP: 2010)

**Table 1**

Sr. No	Name of City	Population
1	Ibadan	3.1 (Million)
2	Kano	2.3 (Million)
3	Kaduna	1.4 (Million)
4	Benin City	1.2 (Million)
5	Port Harcourt	1.2 (Million)
6	Jos	01 (Million)

Nigeria stood at the 10th biggest oil producer country and member of OPEAC Organization. On military and economic fronts, it is enjoying cordial relations with France, Germany, U.S.A, Britain, Russia and China. Nigeria played vital role in the formation of Economic Community of West African States (ECWAS) and African Union (AU) to address the economic and security issues of Horn of Africa. The politically strong religious identities are Christian and Muslim respectively as 46.3% and 46%. The 7.4 % population has belief in traditional religion and 0.3% have others spiritual identities. (Brian: 2017).

The problems of Nigeria are associated with its ethnic and demographic composition. In North-Nigeria, the Muslim Community is in majority whereas the South-Nigeria is under the control of the Christian community. On ethnic basis, Nigeria has 56 ethnic groups, accordingly as Yoruba (21%), Hausa and Fulani (29 %), Igbo (18%) and Ijaw (10%) of the population. Interestingly, the entire ethnic groups have political hold in own respective areas. In North Nigeria, Hausa and Fulani have political domination. In South-West Nigeria, Yoruba has strong political influence. Igbo is in East-Nigeria and Ijaw is in Niger Delta (oil rich state). The civil and military governments have been failed to deliver, resulted socio-economic injustice, sense of insecurity and fear and frustration among youth due to deprivation. The resources are available but

majority of the Nigerians are living sub-standard life. Corruption has absolutely failed to monitor the institutions of the state. The non-responsive attitude of the state's institutions given space to the non-states actors, which now, has influential role. The group Jama'atu Ahlus-Sunnah Lidda'Awati Wal Jihad, known as Boko Haram, a religious militant organization, based on Sunni Sect, is one of the examples, cashed the gap between the individuals and the government, raised the economic opportunities for Nigerian Youth and highlighted the loopholes of the political and administrative infrastructure of the state. The said organization is actively engaged in North Nigeria and now is moving towards South Nigeria. The mobilization of the religious extremists of Boko Haram was happened due the military operations of the Nigerian government in 2009. It has been observed that except its radical ideas about religion, its objective to introduce good governance in Nigeria is acceptable not only in North Nigeria but also in South Nigeria where the majority of the population is Christian. (Uche, Rosemary & Chidoluge: 2015)

### **Boko Haram: A Security Threat to Nigeria:**

Today, the Nigerians are facing political victimization, economic inequalities, and social deprivation, frustrated them, given enough material to attract Boko Haram Organization. The objectives of Boko Haram, as following: (Adesoji: 2010)

- i. Implementation of the "True Islamic Sharia" in Nigeria.
- ii. Negation of the Western Secular Education.
- iii. Highlighted the corruption of the civil and military administration.

A Religious Movement has been launched in North Nigeria by Mohammed Ali, who was Imam at Alhaji Muhammadu Ndimi Mosque in Maiduguri, highlighted the grievances of the common Nigerian. In 2002, the students of Mohammed Ali, moved to Kanama, Yobe State, near to Niger from North Nigeria and preached the local natives. It was the two fold strategy e.g. religious preaching and highlighting the corruption of the political and military elites. The underlying message of the organization was to influence the common man and to dominate politically. In the beginning, the activities of the group were only to preach the Islamic teachings and to focus on the character-building of the youth Nigerians. Apart from this, the organization accessed to the common Nigerian irrespective of color and creed, to pinpoint the failures of the government. The deprived Nigerian is addressed through peaceful and pragmatic way but this sort of methodology was changed in 2009. The leadership of Boko Haram took up the weapons to challenge the writ of the government. It was happened when the option of the military operation was opted by the Nigerian Government against Boko Haram.

The leadership of Boko Haram exposed the failure of governance, poverty, economic deprivation, social injustice and political victimization. It was argued that the corrupt political and military leadership is responsible for the insecurity in Nigeria which

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declined the capacity of the state's institutions. They remained absolute failed to deliver public goods, security, human development resources like education, health, clean water, justice, essence of democracy and freedom, including blessings of a sovereign state and sovereign nation. Widely spreads of this opinion that the Nigerian political leadership has lost legitimacy, deeply affected state-building process. (ICG: 2014). Rotberg said that it is the responsibility of the government to deliver the high quality of governance to citizens by government in all means. The political governance stands for supremacy of law, commitment of the individual with the political system, equal chances of the economic opportunity, good indicators of the human development and financial resources through transparency and accountability in active and effective mood. (Rotberg: 2009). Awojobi (2014) and Onuoho (2013) opined that extreme poverty was the main factor which compelled the young Nigerian to join Boko Haram. (Awojobi: 2018). Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) stated that the living standards of the common Nigerian is 67.0% and 59.1% relatively in South-East and South-West Zone .The North-East Zone has 76.3% and North-West Zone has 77.7% in May 2013, approximately higher as compare to South Zones. Due to this factor, the dozen of the young Nigerians males and females have been released by the Federal Nigerian Government. (NBS: 2012).

According to Plouch, in North Nigeria, Boko Haram has influence among the youth community and with the passage of time this ratio is increasing. If the situation is analyzed and asked about the increasing influence of Boko Haram, the answer is concerned with the poor performance of the institutions of the state. The state is failed to introduce the development projects and economic opportunities to eradicate the poverty and unemployment. These are two factors which generated the attractive feelings among the Nigerian youth because Boko Haram highlighted the issues of the deprived people. In North Nigeria, the ratio of the unemployment and poverty is higher as compare to South Nigeria. The common Nigerian is facing extreme corruption, nepotism and despotism, neglected education facilities and disappointment from the authorities of the state. It has been observed that the widespread pessimist feelings paved the path to join Boko Haram. (Blanchard: 2014).

It has been observed that a country which has least economic development, the absence of the writ of government, extreme unemployment, considered as the best place for the recruitment of the terrorists and the militants. (Umar: 2013). The leadership of Boko Haram cashed the established the formal relationship between poverty and religious extremism. In 2009, the Federal Nigerian Government released the detainees, mostly teen agers and women, openly confessed that they had been financially assisted by Boko Haram. It is widely accepted phenomenon that persisting ratio of poverty will ultimately breed the seeds of radical change. (Olojo: 2013)

**Table 2**

Central/North	Unemployment Rate %	Revenue %	Personal Cost (N-Billion)	Overhead Cost (N-Billion)	Debt Charges (N-Billion)	IGR (N-Billion)
<b>Benue</b>	14.2	67.3	14.9	8.4	3.5	8.3
<b>FCT Abuja</b>	21.1	103.8	8.4	5.6	0.2	10.3
<b>Kwara</b>	7.1	60.4	8.5	16.4	11.6	11.7
<b>Niger</b>	39.4	62.6	19.5	18.2	4.9	3.2
<b>Nassarawa</b>	36.5	49.2	8.2	16.7	10.2	5.3
<b>Kogi</b>	14.4	68.2	20.2	8.7	1.8	16.5
<b>Plateau</b>	25.3	63.1	13.9	28.9	9.0	4.9
<b>Regional Total</b>		474.6	93.6	102.9	41.2	60.2
<b>Regional Average</b>	22.6	67.8	13.4	14.7	5.9	8.6

**Source:** Business Day (2012) Economic and Financial Indicators: P.51

Apart from the economic factor, religion factor is also important to generate religious extremism in Nigeria. Religion is a social reality and need of the human beings. It is widely accepted phenomenon, that religion, as an identity, has always been used to dominate the political spectrum not only in the third world but also in first world. In view of Enwerem, religion treated as an important part and from economic development to health, it is centrifugal force of Nigerian politics. Survey Report 2006, conducted by Pew, on ‘Religion and Public Life’ stated that 76% Christian people in Nigeria, always given importance, to their respective religious identity than to nationalistic approach likewise 91% Muslim community preferred to cast vote on own ethnic identity. It seemed that the secular identity of the Nigerian State has become question mark. The radical religious dogmatic approach of Boko Haram negated the basic constitutional feature of Federal Republic of Nigeria, explained as that there is no official religion of the Federal State of Nigeria. The Constitution of Nigeria, clause Section 38(2) stated that it is not mandatory for any person to attend or to receive any religious education or ceremony or activities. Any Nigerian Citizen, will not be, constitutionally bound to attend any religious ceremony or activities, directly not concerned to his or her own parents. Further, extended to this spirit, the Section 38(3) argued that not a single community is permitted to launch its religious activities across the board and beyond its permitted jurisdiction. (Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria: 1999)

Sectarian tension and radicalization have generated hardships for the North Nigerian Christian Nigerian. Since independence, Nigeria is the witness of the bulk of ethnic conflicts in various parts of the state. In 1980, due to Maitastisine-Nigerian Police conflict, hundred people killed. In 1991 Lingual Riots, more than 200 people were killed, majority among them were Christians. It was stated that the Muslims Nigerians attacked 20 churches in the reaction against the visit of Christian evangelist Reinhard

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Bonnke to Nigeria. (ICG: 2010). Increasing number of clashes between Christian and Muslims paved the path to flourish the leadership of Boko Haram which was highlighting the religious discrimination. In Nigeria, where society is multi-ethnic and multi-religious, clashes over religions identities drawn a line of demarcation within Nigerian society. It has been observed that while launching campaign, the political elites have been remained engaged to settle down their political commitments on ethnic and lingual basis. The Presidential Election of the Federal Republic Nigeria 2015 reflected the absolute political polarization of the Nigerian society on the ethnic and religious grounds.

No doubt, religions factors paralyzed Nigerian state but few scholars taken /examined religious clashes in Nigeria from different perspective. Jeffrey Seul one of them who said that religion is not the sole source of conflict, in fact seeds of conflicts were rooted already due to poverty, economic and social disparities, Boko Haram watered the tree to use religion' through misinterpretation of Islam and Christianity. Here, the thing which needed to be part of discussion should not be religion but the misinterpretation of religion. (Seul: 1999). Boko Haram used religion as forced tool to legitimize its existence. The other supporting elements are like declining of human development resources. Boko Haram used religion negatively and cashed the immoral, ineffective and corrupt state institutions to challenge writ of the government. The state authorities mismanaged the conflict and used state power to counter them, led to cause of extreme violence, painted through religious conflicting lines, finally, Boko Haram canvassed. Second thought opinion givers argued that only religious conflict is the main confliction point. Poverty and frustration were already there but they coined with violence when in North Nigeria, the Muslim demanded Shariah laws implementation replacement of democracy form Khilafat and banned western education. The secular lines of the Nigerian Constitution did not allow such sorts of demands and government ignored all of them deliberately. Book Haram leadership given assurance to the young Muslims for better political and economic life if their demands acknowledged. So these religious inspired and politically and economically deprived young Muslims youth attacked Christian community in Nigeria as they received shut up call from the Nigerian government.(Olojo: 2013).Insurgency is religious and has been painted through poverty, political and social alienation. Supporting this view, one scholar, Stuart Elden, in his book "Terror and Territory" (Elden: 2009) has quoted statement of Al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden. Through broadcast, Osama Bin Laden criticized "illegitimate" Muslim nations that have become 'apostate' and are in need of liberation through Jihad. Now in light of this statement, Boko Haram is struggling hard for liberating from the secular script of the Nigerian Constitution, as reflected in Section 10 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria, that state has no religion.(Constitution: 2011).

It is a notable feature that Boko Haram activities in terms of killing of Christian community (Individuals) for imposition of Islamic Shariah (Law) have been rejected by the renowned Islamic religious and political elites. According to them, Islamic law

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“conduct of War” do not allow the Muslims to kill the other religious persons and this act is extremely forbidden in the teaching of Islam. Boko Haram has no justified grounds over these brutal, un-ethical, immoral, and un-Islamic actions. Boko Haram has manipulated Islamic laws and introduced wrong interpretation of Islam only to justify their actions. Mulana Yousaf Inuwa, (late) Sheikh Abba Aji, Sheikh Ahmed Gumi, Sheikh Usman Dahiru Usman Bauchi and (late) Sheikh Jaffar Muhammad Adam are the Islamic scholars who openly condemned the objectives and actions of the Boko Haram. (Fisher & Wicker: 2010). The Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaj Sa’ad Abubakar-III (the Spiritual Head of Muslims in Nigeria) named Boko Haram ‘Evil’. (The Nation: 2011)

Another important factor, contributed to promote Boko Haram is victimized political thinking. In 2003 election, the leadership of Boko Haram, Muhammad Yusuf had been used politically by Mr. Ali Modi Sheriff, (Candidate for the post of Governor of Borno State.) According to it, Mr. Ali Modi Sheriff demanded political support from Boko Haram because the later had influence over local natives, including the youth’s voter; it was viewed that without political support of Boko Haram, Modi sheriff could not be in the position to win governors ship. (Christopher: 2014) In return, Muhammad Yusuf was aroused that his demand to implement Islamic Shariah would be accepted. The secret deal was turned over the false promise as Mr. Modi Sheriff took over the governorship and taken aback all his commitments. Not only he had taken aback but also he exposed Boko Haram as the terrorist organization involved in massive innocent killing and dreadful suicide blasts in churches. All these annoyed and betrayed the confidence and trust of Muhammad Yusuf over the Nigerian political leadership. Muhammad Yusuf exposed the corruption mal-administrative practices, nepotism and despotism of so-called democratic Nigerian leadership. (Solomon: 2013)

### **Response of the state to Boko Haram:**

These absurd developments caused of political frustration on both sides. Now question before the Nigerian government, how the tense situation could be escalated? In addition, how the mistrust relationship on both sides could be converted into trust building framework. It was depending over state leadership either to move for dialogue or the military operation against the Boko Haramian extremists. On one side, Boko Haram approached the local North Nigerians and South Nigerian for radical changes within Nigeria. On the other hand, the federal Nigerian Government showed zero tolerance against religious extremism of the Boko Haram leadership. The increasing gulf on both sides posed a serious security threat to political and social order of the Nigerian states. Finally, the government decided to permit security forces to neutralize Boko Haram. It has been observed that this strategy gained nothing, the basket got empty as following; (Montclos: 2014)

i- More than 700 Boko Haram religious extremist were killed, as well as Muhammad Yusuf were also when he was under trial.



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ii- Serious human rights violations have been observed and death met to the Nigerians everywhere.

iii- No home work was made by the military on ground realities before launching military operation. It affected the entire Nigerian society. It was not identified who is Boko Haram and who anti-Boko Haram is?

### **Impacts of Military Operations against Boko Haram:**

It was viewed that the military operations were treated as hard line decision of the government to counter religious extremism. Rather than attaining maximum benefits, it left negative impacts over the internal dynamics of the state. First, it exposed the capacity and capability of the Nigerian security forces. Military Operations changed the dynamics of the Boko Haram from peace to violence. From 2002 to 2009, Boko Haram attacks were less than 10 but this ratio was abruptly increased after the military operations. In 2001, it was approximately 590 attacks on the state's institutions, resulted massive innocent killing. (Solomon: 2013). Second, it has been observed that Boko Haram Movement moved from rural areas to urban areas. (Ovaga: 2017). Third, military operations had changed the strategy of the Boko Haram, preferred to use violence for political gains. Muhammad Yousaf, killed under police custody, was replaced by Abubkar Sheku. The former was known as "Dove" in Boko Haram Organization whereas the later was renowned as 'Hawks'. The massive killings had invoked hatred feelings among the Nigerians and it was publically perceived that the corrupt government is engaged to eliminate Boko Haram because it highlighted the corrupt practices of the political, military and bureaucratic elites. (Marc: 2014). Fourth, during military operations, the religious extremists of Boko Haram escaped and sheltered in the neighboring states, Niger, Cameroon, Benin, and Chad. It was reported by BBC News that while a military operations in Chad, the troops captured the Boko Haram militants. (BBC News: 2015). Fifth, Boko Haram established its logistical relations with transnational extremist groups links, strengthened its operational capacity level. (Donjilo: 2009). Sixth, Boko Haram established its relations with Al-Shahbab Militant Organization, believed in Suicide Bombing. (Ploch: 2014). Seventh, before launching the military operations, the government did not link 'military operation strategy' with 'population-centric-strategy'. (Jerome: 2016).

### **Economic Cost of Religious Extremism:**

It has been observed that the security challenges raised the military budgets of Nigeria. The issue of the religious extremism of Boko Haram added the economic burden over the Federal Nigerian Government which extremely hampered the economy of Nigeria. Dunne and Tian (2013) argued that military expenditure restricted the economic growth of the states. In few cases of states, the positive impacts have been observed whereas the massive economic expenditures over the Defense budget have been arranged. The rapid increase in military expenditures

changed the internal socio-political dynamics of the state. The military Operations against Boko Haram Organization, weakened the strength of the political institutions, lead to the cause of social and economic deprivation within Nigerian society. The case of Nigerian military was complicated because it was patronized on the colonial needs but the rising of the religious extremism of Boko Haram, justified the demands of the military because it has to change its front line strategy. To counter Boko Haram, there was dire need to upgrade military equipment. (Duruji, Idowu, Dibia & Favour: 2018) From (2008-17), the needs of the armed forces, increased rapidly to meet the need-based military expenditures. (IDEA: 2000)

**Table 3**

Sr. No	Year	Military Expenditure (2008-2012)				Total N (Billion)
		Personnel N (Billion)	Overhead N (Billion)	Recurrent N (Billion)	Capital N (Billion)	
1	2008	NA	NA	NA	NA	192*
2	2009	132.3	43.9	176.2	46.8	223
3	2010	155.3	37.3	192.6	39.4	232
4	2011	NA	NA	309.8	38.2	348
5	2012	254.8	41.6	296.4	35.9	332

**Source:** [www.budgetoffice.gov.ng](http://www.budgetoffice.gov.ng)

**Table 4**

Sr. No	Year	Military Expenditure (2013-2017)				Total N (Billion)
		Personnel N (Billion)	Overhead N (Billion)	Recurrent N (Billion)	Capital N (Billion)	
1	2013	300.4	NA	NA	64.0	364**
2	2014	273.8	40.5	314.3	35.4	350
3	2015	289.3	49.5	338.8	36.7	376
4	2016	278.4	33.8	312.2	130.9	443
5	2017	285.5	40	325.5	14.0	465

**Source:** [www.budgetoffice.gov.ng](http://www.budgetoffice.gov.ng)

Nigeria, seen a long period of military dictatorship after independence whereas a short while period of democratic governments. It has been observed that in closed political system, the political culture will not be flourished. The role of the common man will be restricted and the process of the political socialization will demise the strength of the institutions. In opened political system, the common man is given the access to the institutions of the state. This sort of thinking will reflect the thrust of a common man over the state's institutions. Due to the absence of the popular democratic government in Nigeria, the socio-political aspects of the Nigerian society have not been properly addressed, faded the economic prosperity of the state. The Nigerian Government

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responded to Boko Haram with force, consequently, raised the economic burden. In 2010, the defense budget was 100 (Billion) Naira, rose to 927 (Billion) Naira in 2011. In 2012, it was One (01) Trillion Naira, deeply affected the performance of the social sectors of the state. (IDEA: 2000)

Nigeria, is the 4th most populated state of Horn of Africa, which has approximately 162 (Million) population. It has been projected that in 2025, the population of Nigeria will be 239 (Million) and at the end of 2050, it will be up to the 440 (Million). (United Nations: 2009). The statistical observers calculated that the continuous rapid increasing in population will create serious hurdles in the economic growth of Nigeria. Although, it has potential natural and human resources yet the internal dynamics of the state are not the positive. In the case of Nigeria, it has been observed that population is rapidly increasing due to the traditional clan customs, the religious dogmatic thinking and superstitious mentality of the Nigerian society at rural side. In 2006, its population stood at 3.02 (Million), projected as double in next 22 Years. The resources will be restricted to grow national economy, ultimately, cause of generating unemployment, poverty, insecurity, sense of deprivation, and homelessness. These factors are enough to space to religious extremism. it is feared that the expected population of Nigeria, in future years, will be alarming situation for the overall economy of the state. It has been explained Boko Haram, became an economic-security burden for the Nigerian economy. (Etenbong: 2018)

Without stability and peace, the benefits of the resources of the states could not be utilized in effective manner. The Mo Ibrahim Governance Index reflected health sector in Nigeria, at 40th out of the 53th African States. (Ibrahim: 2013). UNECEF estimated that approximately 60% of the children in North Nigeria are deprived of the school education. (BBC News: 2017). Boko Haram really has become a serious threat to economy of Nigeria or still things are under control. While looking at map of Nigeria, the focus would be on oil rich Niger Delta Region. Lawlessness, illegal activities, and violence have marginalized the scope and future benefits of Niger Delta. Violent struggle for oil resources in Niger Delta has raised question of legitimacy of the states' institutions. Within region, it is interesting to note that MNCs and the local businessman are interested to do maximum business / trading activities but they are black mailed and exploited by the natives who are always ready to put up their demands before them. The incapacity of the states' institutions detracted the national economic life of Nigeria. It has also been noted that MNC staff has been kidnapped by the militants of Boko Haram, demanded money and share within profit. According to the Nigerian Business Community, the widespread violence in Nigeria has collapsed the business opportunities not only for the local business community but also for the foreigners'. In Niger Delta, the environment is not suitable for the healthy business activities. (Ibeanu: 2002).

The former Governor of Delta Region, James Abori said that local war lords and few greedy persons had indulged themselves to blackmail MNCs for making illegal

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money. (Okhomina: 2004). Second issue of Delta state is the theft and illegal trading of oil / refined petroleum. It was at small scale in 1980s but in late 80s it increased rapidly. It has been stated that the theft oil is smuggled. Two methods are used to thief oil. In the first method, distribution pipelines of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company are damaged by the local youth rebels. The theft oil is stored in wooden canons and then smuggled through trucks. In second option, the refined petroleum products, already purchased by the government are sold in black markets. The Nigerian National Petroleum Cooperation (NNPC) reported that approximately 114 oil supply lines have been damaged in the areas of Part Harcourt and Warri in between April to May 2000. To control, the oil theft activities, 589 persons had been arrested by the Nigerian Police Force. Related to this, the other one issue is the theft of crude oil at large scale, sold at the cheapest price in high seas and from 10 to 15% approximately production of Crude Oil is stolen. In 2001, the Shell Oil company had to face average lost of crude oil was approximately 30,000 bpd, later on increased to 100,000 in 2002. In keeping view of these facts, it is clearly argued that national economic life of Nigeria is deeply affected which raised the serious reservations in Niger Delta. No doubt, the Nigerian government did efforts and still is engaged to control illegal oil trade and oil theft activities but the required results are not met. Nigerian government deployed 4000 military personal in Niger Delta Region, named as Joint Task Force “OPERATION RESTORE HOPE”. (Ikelegbe: 2005). The Nigerian Navy had been given technologically advanced training and equipped sophisticated weapons. United States, as strategic partner provided coastal guard ships, modern weapons and Augusto helicopter. Naval operations and patrolling in sea are regular activities of the Nigerian army. The states’ efforts and actions are on stream line to control the illegal trade and business activities but remained almost ineffective because the local war lords and the foreigners’ connection have paralyzed the state’s institutions. It is reported that many foreigners like Beninious, Burkinabe, Romanians, Russians, Iranians and Georgians are facing prosecution in Nigerian federal courts. Majority of them are involved in illegal oil trading and oil business. Here it is noted that despite of various actions of Nigerian security forces, the said situation is worsening day by day, reasoned corruption. Security agencies have shown serious concerns regarding about the involvement of the security officers in theft oil and illegal trading. (Ikelegbe: 2005)

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**Table 5**

**Cases of Abductions/Kidnapping For Ransom (2002-2003)**

Nature of Offence	Affected	MNC/Oil Servicing	Responsibility Owned	Purpose	Results
Hostage	10 Workers April 2002	Shell	Militant Youth Gang. Ekeremor LGA, Ijaw/Balyesa State	Ransom 3.1 (M)	Resulted from failure to yield to alleged frivolous demands State
Kidnapping	MNCs Staff 29 <sup>th</sup> July 2003	Shell	Ijaw youth militants in Bomadi/Burutu LGAs/Delta State	Ransom 25.4(M)	Government Intervention/ Negotiated release after 14 Days
Kidnapping	04 Crew & Military Escorts 13-11-2013		Ijaw Militants	Ransom Demands	Released 2 days later after threats by State Government/ Security Agencies
Kidnapping	14 Workers 2003	Chevron Texaco	Militant Ijaw youths/Bayelsa State	Ransom Demands	Intervention of State Government
Kidnapping	19 Oil Workers	Nobel Drilling/ Prospecting.	Ijaw Militias/Delta State	Ransom Demands	Intervention of State Government
Kidnapping	07 Workers Nov/Dec 2003	Bredero Shaw / Shell	Militant Ijaw Youths/Delta State	Ransom 5(M) \$	State Government Intervention/ Negotiation
Killing	07 Workers, including Military Officers 2004 (April)	Chevron Texaco	Militant youths along Benin River area/Delta State	Ransom 5(M) \$	State Government Intervention/ Negotiation

**Source:** (Williams 2000; Agency France-Press 2003)

### **Findings**

- Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria was manageable for the local political elites and the local security forces but speeches were louder than action.
- Political, social, cultural and economic institutions politicized Boko Haram crisis. Corruption ruled out all chances of better possibilities. It seemed that issue has been made ‘conflict’ deliberately on both sides Boko Haram leadership and Nigerian federal government.
- Conspiracy theories exit, analyzing the actions and orientation of both Boko Haram and Nigerian government, moving towards, Division of Sudan’ episode, script written by the powerful international states. Many of the problems are structural, institutional and good governance related, whereas the attention is given to ideological barriers. Secularism is the beauty of the Nigerian constitution, it requires legitimate institutional, political and electorate process.

### **Conclusion**

Rapidly, changing circumstances of international politics replaced the conventional warfare phenomenon with irregular warfare activities. Today, the word ‘insurgency’ is not a “new” and “striking” word, it is coverage from East to West and North to South. The researchers are engaged to examine the root causes of the insurgency and do scholarly efforts to introduce solutions at maximum level. The respective governments chalk out the counter-insurgency operational and political actions to curb the network of the insurgents. Certain principles on both sides are settled, later on, viewed as successful and unsuccessful findings. As far as the issue of religious extremism is concerned, the timeline situation is not in favor of the Nigerian Government but still the “Tower Light” is blinking and “Lights” are not completely off. Need of time is to focus on the issues positivity.

No doubt Nigeria has been scratched but it is not broken, possibilities of positive and negative results are there but it depends upon the Nigerian government how it chooses the integrated path. Once military / security operation was mistakenly handled, expanded conflict in entire Nigeria but now the political landscape of the state has been changed. In the absence of in-depth understanding of Boko Haram crisis, no valuable solution could be grasped. Book Haram insurgency has multidimensional layers, each to be taken on ground realities. It will not be exaggerated in saying that Boko Haram Movement paralyzed state machinery but still the train in not missed. In fact, the government has to decide to take said crises either on ideological basis or grievance. Evidences show that on some occasions, poverty has overlapped religious identity whereas on some places the religious identity overlapped poverty. Now, it

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depends upon Nigerian government, how institutional arrangements are made to address all levels of insurgency. Few findings are as following.

### **Recommendations**

- Legitimacy is the core element of insurgency and counter-insurgency. The Nigerian federal government should avoid those actions which could provide popular support to Boko Haram.
- Nigerian federal government should approach continuous integrated military-civilian relationship. Trust in institutional working relationship is the prerequisite feature to demoralize the insurgents.
- The common Nigerian demands good governance. Economic development, effective accountability and legitimate political process are the ultimate key to counter insurgency. The federal Nigerian government should introduce sustainable economic development programmes, which could bridge North Nigeria and South Nigeria. Politics at the expense of national integration should be treated as zero tolerance
- The Nigerian federal government should approach lessons from Colombia to address Boko crisis. The theme line was policy of population-centric rather than military-centric.
- The Nigerian society needs political and social change. Normally it has been observed that in traditional status-quo societies, the change whenever occurs, resulted radical distortion. Radical change is here not recommended in the case of Nigeria. Positive change within Nigeria could be possible when states institutions are built on the basis of moderate social and cultural norms.

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