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SUICIDE INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA'S NORTH EAST GEO-POLITICAL ZONE OF NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Suicide insurgency in Nigeria is clearly rooted in a varied range of perceived threats to human kind. With the wanton display of weapons of death by blood thirsty insurgents in the Northeast Geopolitical zone, human lives can be imperiled by a range of issues that borders on the socio-economic development of Nigeria. This is even more pronounced in the area of capacity building such as human capital development. The task of the article is to critically appraise the impact of suicide insurgency on human capital developing in Northeast Nigeria. In doing this, it considered the elite theory as a precursor to critically examine the phenomenon and its manifestation in modern times. The article believes very strongly and also observes that intellectual inquiry of this subject is highly germane to living a life devoid of hostility and acrimony. It concludes by concurring without any equivocation that suicide insurgency is indeed a crime against humanity. The article recommends the use of dialogue, public education and enlightenment as well as training of special task forces to stem the tide of suicide insurgency. It additionally recommends that rule of law be upheld always to avoid the resort by individuals to insurgency as response mechanism to perceived alienation, marginalization and injustice.

Keywords: *Suicide, Insurgency, Human Capital, Development, Geopolitical Zone.*

Introduction

Suicide insurgency in Nigeria is obviously the result of government ignorance, lack of appropriate response to

citizens and the use of political determination by the state against select ethnic or political groups of individual citizens. Consequently, this unpalatable

development has adversely affected human capital development as no rational individual invest in a crisis ridden environment and expect to see result. The situation in Nigeria's North East geopolitical zone is as bad because the emerging insurgents maim, kill, kidnap, rape, rob and waste lives and properties of individuals and organized groups that reside and operate in that zone.

It must be established that what marks them as terrorists is that they direct violence against persons and property with the goal of creating fear in a wider audience than the immediate victims, thereby, attempting to gain political influence over the larger audience (Adeoye, 2005).

Corroborating the above assertion, (Chioma, 2011) recognized that terrorism started in the country as a form of state backed violence but today, it is usually linked with political violence perpetrated by groups without the power of the state. Apart from the civil war of 1967-70 that exposed her to some level of violent destruction of human lives and property, never has Nigeria witnessed such unprecedented magnitude of waste of human lives and wanton destruction of property as is currently the case in the Northeast.

It is a combination of the inherent danger in various dimensions of terrorism that compelled the wonder whether African democracy

encourages violence or terrorism or it is compatible with violence (Adebanmi, 2004).

The postulations by Adebanmi is not unconnected with the incessant and frequent recurrence of violence in various parts of Nigeria since independence in 1960. In Nigeria, particularly in the South-South and very recently, the North East geopolitical zones, suicide insurgency is best demonstrated in the form of militia vigilantes which are defined as all non state actors who resort to violence in order to achieve their political objectives. At a time when peace building through dialogue, conflict resolution and conflict management strategies should be emphasized to avert state failure, acts of terrorism have become a leading national concern, thereby, aggravating the already tensed political, social and economic problems.

It is no longer an issue for triviality to say that Nigeria has now graduated from a nation with minor act of terrorism into the anachronic league of nations affected by terrorism. Michael (2006), argues that:

The use of terror tactics is common in international relations and the state has been and remains a more likely employer of terrorism within the international system than insurgents.

Common targets of terrorists are areas of high population concentration, such as mass transit vehicles, office buildings, churches and crowded restaurants and this linkage largely explains the poor socio-

economic activities in the North East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The desire to go into personal business and promote skills has gone into moribund. Consequently, human capital development suffers retrogression and failure. Suicide insurgency is a dynamic phenomenon and a persistent societal problem ravaging the country. It is tied to the stability, survival, growth and development of any country.

Nigeria is experiencing an adversarial impact of insurgency which is inimical to human capital development. With the existing records in the North East geopolitical zone, hundreds of able bodied youths, with the initiative and motivation to drive the economy to enviable heights have been murdered, property worth billions of naira destroyed, hundreds of people kidnapped, including the Chibok Secondary School girls. It is known that internal violence continues to scare away investors and retard human capital development, particularly, in Nigeria's North East geopolitical zone. Without any modicum of bias, the gravity of the act of suicide insurgency in Nigeria Northeast geopolitical zone has trivialize any articulation and initiation of human capital development.

Conceptual Issues

Suicide: This is an extreme means of taking one's life, usually as a result of some level of degree of frustration by the person involved. It is an act of terminating ones life either by hanging, shooting or with self induced substance. In recent times, suicide has become a common phenomenon among most Nigerians to end their live as a result of frustration and unending challenges. It is

defined as violent attack perpetuated by a self aware individual who actively and purposely causes his own death (Abolurin, 2011).

Insurgency: This is an armed informal uprising or rebellion by a minority group or movement within a state against a constituted authority. The basic intent of an insurgent group is to force political change by the use of subversion, propaganda, violence and or military pressure aimed at persuading, forcing or intimidating people to accept such a change. The primary aim of insurgents is to forcefully change or overthrow an existing authority and replace it with their own ideological, socio-economic, political, cultural or religious philosophical goals. Boko Haram insurgence is aimed at the eradication of vestiges of Westernization in its various forms and the establishment of an Islamic State governed by the Sharia legal system. An insurgent is one who rebels against constituted authority and belongs to a group involved in an uprising.

Human Capital: This is a form of resources as well as potentials that are capable of driving the economy on the path of growth and, thereby, contributing to economic development. According to Fitzgerald (1992), training is designed to provide human capital with the knowledge and skills needed for their present job. It is the idea, skills and knowledge possessed by man to assist in harnessing resources that are naturally endowed with a particular community or society. It is as a result of this that there has become the compelling need for human capital development in every existing society. As a process, they are

continuum by which knowledge, including the moral and cultural values among others, associated with a given society is transmitted to individuals and groups as well as the manner by which such values are harnessed to promote and advance societal growth and development (Yesufu, 2000).

Development: Development could mean the transformation of a people geared towards improving their quality of life within a specified period of time. Okowa (1999), sees it as that which comes from hard-work, discipline, commitment, skills and the intelligent utilization of the above faculties of man in a sustained manner over a fairly long period of time. Development can equally be seen as a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced into a social system in order to produce higher per capita income and levels of living through more modern production methods and improved social organization, (Obi 2006). It is against this background that some development scholars have come to equate development with westernization which implies that any country that is desirous of development must struggle to be like the western capitalist societies.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical approach of this paper is built on the existing harmony and interaction of people within their environment. It calls for interdependence and harmonious living anchored on egalitarian type society with the perception to understanding peaceful co-existence, tolerance, patience, as well as establishing a solid foundation for both the present and the succeeding generations. The political party in power must as a matter of fact,

accommodate and tolerate the opposition. This is because it is constitutional that no individual or group is superior to the other in Nigeria. The principle of rule of law should be germane for effective governance. Political leaders must be accountable and responsive to the people they are ruling. Insensitivity of the leadership to the game of politics and also total disregard for the views of the weak serve as means of nurturing belligerent and questionable behaviour. This consequently results to suicide insurgency.

Given the background of the research, therefore, this paper is anchored on the structural conflict theory. This theory has two main subordinations. The first is the radical structural theory represented by the Marxist dialectical school with exponents like Marx, Engels and Lenin to mention a few. The second is the liberal structuralism represented by Rose (1993) Scarborough (1998) and the famous work of Johan Galtung (1990) on structural violence. It is, also, similar to transformative theory which addresses the reactions of individuals, groups, cultures, institutions and societies to change. Theories like Marxism, in its thesis on historical materialism presents conflict as mostly tied to economic structures and social institutions.

However, the basic thrust of the structural conflict theory is that conflict is built into the particular way societies are structured and organized. The theory looks at social problems like political and economic exclusion, injustice, poverty, diseases, exploitation, inequality etc as sources of conflict. Structuralists maintain that conflict occur because of the

exploitative and unjust nature of human society and the domination of one class by another among others. This case is made by radical scholars like Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx, Josef Stalin, Vladimir Lenin and Mao Tse -Tung who blamed capitalism for being an exploitative system based on its relations of production and the division of society into the proletariat and the bourgeoisie classes. Exploitation of the proletariat and lower classes by the bourgeoisie under capitalism creates conflict. Thus, capitalist societies are accused of being exploitative and as such exploitation is a cause of conflict. It is a cause of violence such as the situation in the conflictive, tension soaked and unstable North East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

According to the Marxists, capitalist conflict will be resolved through a revolution where the bourgeois will be overthrown in a socialist revolution led by the worker who will also establish a socialist order.

Brown, (1996) for instance acknowledged that; Structural conflict theory is remarkably strong on the immediate and underlying factors that lead to conflict. It presents a large number of such factors that make the emergence and escalation of internal conflict possible.

Part of the reasons why insurgency is still a thorny issue in the North East geographical zone of Nigeria from the stand point of this theory is that in situations where existing structures are tilted in favour of one group while putting the other at a

disadvantage such as is the situation in Nigeria's North East, the chances are that conflict will emerge and escalate if nothing is done to correct such anomalies.

Impact of Suicide Insurgency on Human Capital Development in North East Nigeria

The negative perception as well as damaging reputation of suicide insurgency has impacted on the economy of the North East zone of Nigeria in the following ways. Persito (n.d.) submits that "...wars, terrorism and political instability have a significant negative effect on the economies in which they take place. Insurgency is one of the greatest dangers to any society. It poses a threat to international, national and human security. Nigeria in the last few years has been witnessing a rising wave of suicide insurgency that is gradually becoming a permanent feature in the country's political landscape, particularly in the North East geopolitical zone.

Suicide insurgency which started in the North East as a form of state backed violence gradually metamorphosed into destruction of lives and property which consequently, posed a serious threat to human capital development. Another negative impact of the activities of suicide insurgents is the inability of the state governments of the North East zone where these suicide insurgents operate to curb the menace of internal violence which has weakened efforts at achieving human capital development. Suicide insurgents particularly in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states continued to frustrate the initiatives of the young, enterprising and viable youths who have the burning desire to promote a

self-reliant and sustaining economy.

The Northeast Nigeria presents and knowledge required for human capital development.

The activities of suicide insurgents have caused investment to decrease immensely and income and consumption have equally declined considerably. The researchers have empirically observed that violent activities of suicide insurgents have had a negative but significant effect on the GDP, investment and exports of Nigeria's Northeast geopolitical zone. The incessant bombing through the use of explosives have affected zonal exports while scaring away investors.

A variety of cross national studies have suggested that insurgency profoundly affects individuals and government(s). At the individual level, research indicates that suicide insurgency has a dampening psychological effect on people who lives in the area as well as on those who live far away from their relatives. Leuchinger and Stulzer (2009) provide evidence that suicide insurgency negatively affects an individual's assessment of life satisfaction.

Corroborating the above assertion, Abolurin (2011) opines that;

Insurgency is a negating process and a threat to security. It impedes development and consumes life, it retards growth and destroys property and infrastructure meant for the benefit of the masses. Insurgency causes untold damages to humanity and the environment and is a

menace that has to be totally eradicated.

Suicide form of insurgency is even much more devastating. Consider the series of suicide attacks by members of the Boko Haram suicide mission, particularly, in the North East geopolitical zone. Such attacks, targeted at both the high and low places have seen the destruction of mosques and churches, schools, public buildings, markets, motor parks, factories and skill acquisition centres among others. Even more painful is the loss of innocent lives that generates, galvanizes and replenishes the human capital of the Northeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria. These destructions, no doubt, runs into billions of naira in loss equivalent and degrade the Northeast human capital development capacity.

Numerous studies have shown some cyclical links between extreme poverty in Nigeria's North East geopolitical zone, suicide insurgency and dearth of human capital development. Standard of living in Nigeria's North East zone remains pathetic and this, combined with the religious practice of the people has thrown-up mass poverty and a culture of suicide insurgency. This in turn has more than other factors become an impediment against learning, skill acquisition, entrepreneurship training, knowledge economy and general human capital development in this all important geopolitical zone.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is evident that the impact of suicide insurgency wherever it has existed is unquantifiably devastating. The consequences of suicide insurgency on

human life, property and the environment, particularly in the North East Nigeria are far reaching. This is because it has severe economic, social and political implications. Suicide insurgency remains a threat which has to be countered by every available means in order for human capital development and other socio-economic progresses to rob off on human society. Suicide insurgency in Nigeria's Northeast is a criminal act that consciously violate the laws within the jurisdiction of any state. In Nigeria's Northeast geopolitical zone, the act appears to be intended to intimidate or coerce the civilian population. It also appears to seek to influence the policy of government by intimidation and coercion through assassination, kidnapping, maiming and wanton destruction of property. The implication of this is that zonal development in particular is in jeopardy. Ojude and Shuaib (2013), in their study described insurgent groups as radicalized groups involved in militant ethnic movements in Nigeria. According to them, the radicalized groups consist of irregular or paramilitary personnel made up of civilians (both young and adult), who might have received a form of military training and are armed with small arms and light weapons (SALWs) which they use illegally. Again, the immediate implication of this is that insurgent act will cause human capital development to decrease in the immediate while income and consumption will decline in the long run, thus justifying the postulations of Persito (n.d.) that "wars, terrorism and political instability have a significantly negative impact on the economies in which they take place.

Nonetheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that "every nation desires national development... no responsible national government can afford to ignore national development and hope to have any meaningful target to which her governance efforts are directed". All said and done, it is, the quality of the existing human capital that can be adequately relied upon to be able to conveniently move a nation forward and nothing more (Nwosu 2013).

Recommendations

Suicide insurgency is a global phenomenon and a major threat to national and international security. Suicide insurgency poses severe threat to the stability of the state system, the pace of economic development as well as human capital development. In order to be able to contain these problems and achieve the anticipated goals of the varied and diverse communities in Nigeria's Northeast, the following recommendations are suggested.

The security and human capital development challenges of Nigeria's Northeast geopolitical zone should be holistically diagnosed and clearly understood by both the Federal government and zonal stake holders. All issues capable of triggering crises in the region should be avoided through conflict prevention and management strategies. This is because the security and human capital development questions in the Northeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria cannot be separated and a relatively stable region is critical to economic development in general and poverty reduction in particular.

Again, governance vis a vis election of representatives into various offices should

and must reflect the wishes of the people. This is because insecurity of lives and property in Nigeria often times, is borne out of the emergence of unpopular candidates and those who do not know what to do with power. People who may not have what it takes to be in charge of their family often times find themselves at the corridor of power because of the politics of maneuvering. Consequently, there are bound to be issues that may create the type of quagmire currently experienced in Nigeria's Northeast geopolitical zone. Good governance borne out of better and reliable representation is an antidote against social instability. Good governance is defined by its relationship to some key prerequisites including accountability, transparency, participation and predictability just to mention a few.

Drawing on his studies of relative deprivation and conflict in Northern Ireland, Birrel (1972) contended that group tension developed from a discrepancy between the "ought" and the "is" of collective value satisfaction. In his article titled "Towards a Theory of Revolution", Davies (1962), argues that "the occasion of political violence was due to the insurmountable gap between what people wanted and what they could get; the difference between expectations and gratifications; this discrepancy is a frustrating experience that is sufficiently intense and focused to result in either rebellion or revolution". Thus, the logical derivation of what this postulation implies is good and effective governance from the political elites.

More importantly, the principle of

rule of law should be strictly adhered to. Anybody, irrespective of his/her position in the society must be seen to be operating within the ambits of the law. A situation where some persons violate the law and go unpunished may not serve as good precedent to other law abiding citizens. The doctrine of rule of law is intimately bound with the practice of democracy. As suggested by Sagay (1996) "there can be no democracy without the rule of law and vice versa".

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