

# **VULNERABILITY OF NORTH EAST NIGERIA TO VIOLENCE AND EMERGENCE OF BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY**

**By**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Boko Haram insurgency has led to high rate of human casualties and thousands of deaths. It has turned majority of women into widows and children into orphans and increasing cases of rape and gender based violence in the region. The vulnerability of the north east region is linked to high prevalence of youth poverty and unemployment. This has made many youth to become skeptical about Nigeria's democratic system that has brought them little benefit but more of hopelessness, frustrations, joblessness and poverty. This has lured many youths to embrace the Boko Haram sect. The study also established that there is socio-cultural nexus with the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency in the North East. This implies that the polygamous orientation of the people of the region has led to rapid increase in the number of children which could not be adequately catered for by their biological parents thereby encouraging the practice of Almajiri system of Islamic education. The Almajiris live in a very appalling condition roaming and begging for arms in major cities in Nigeria, homeless, without parents or guardians. Denied of parental care, they form the majority of recruits for religious extremists, desperate politicians and disreputable cleric teachers. The study recommends that the ways to addressing political, ideological and socio-cultural vulnerabilities of the region is to create more jobs and the practice of good governance. As matter of policy, intensive Peace Education should be vigorously pursued in the area at both formal and informal level. Incorporating peace education in the curricula of Almajiri schools or Tsangaya across the states in the zone should be encouraged and promoted by the government through the relevant ministries, agencies and departments.*

## **Introduction**

North East region is one of the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. It is located on Latitudes 6°29' 0"N and 13°40' 0"N, Longitudes 8°50' 0"E and 14°35' 0"E. It has six states which comprises of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe State. The area is located in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria with a total population of 18.9 million inhabitants based on

the 2006 national census report. The breakdown of the population are as follows:

**Table 1: Population of the Six States in North-Eastern Nigeria**

STATES	POPULATION
Adamawa	3,168,101
Bauchi	4,676,464
Borno	4,151,193
Gombe	2,353,879
Taraba	2,300,736
Yobe	2,321,591
GRAND TOTAL	18,971,965

*Source: Nigeria Population data based on census 2006*

Table 1 shows that Bauchi state has the highest population closely followed by Borno state while Taraba state has the least population. The projected annual growth rate of 3.5% of the North-East states put the estimated population of 26,263,866 million in 2016 (NBS, 2016). The total area covered by the six states in the zone is about 284,646 sq km which constitutes about 30.8 per cent of the total land mass in Nigeria (Dlakwa, 2004). The six states also have a total of 112 statutorily recognized local government areas which is about 14.47% of the 774 local government areas in Nigeria. The North-East states cover six states which hitherto were within what was called North-East State between 1967 and 1976. According to the Human Rights Watch (2014), Boko Haram insurgency has led to high rate of human casualties and thousands of deaths. It has turned majority of women into widows and children into orphans and increasing cases of rape and gender based violence in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states. Some of these cases is depicted in the table below:

**Table 2: Human Casualties as a result of Boko Haram Insurgency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa state**

Year	Human Casualties	Remarks
2009	2,320.00	Mostly women & Children that lost their lives & cases of rape & Gender Based Violence
2010	3,000.00	"
2011	3,560.00	"
2012	3,700.00	"
2013	4,420.00	"
2014	5,000.00	"
2015	5,220.00	"
2016	5,350.00	"
2009-2016	Over 600	School Teachers lost their lives

Source: Field work, 2017

Similarly, the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally displaced persons (NCREMIDS), in 2014 revealed the increasing number of Internally Displaced Persons(IDPs) in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. For example, in 2014 the total number of registered IDPs in Adamawa State was 102,560, Borno State, 257,694 and in Yobe State, 76,354. In Borno state alone in 2015, there were about one million five hundred internally displaced persons in Borno state (NEMA, 2015). The increasing number of IDPs in registered camps of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa state is presented below:

**Table 3: Internally Displaced Persons in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa State**

Year	Number of IDPs	Remarks
2009	100,000.00	Women becoming widows, Children becoming orphans & increasing cases of rape & Gender Based Violence
2010	130,000.00	"
2011	150,000.00	"
2012	200,000.00	"
2013	290,000.00	"
2014	436,608	"
2015	Over 1.5 million	"
2016	1,687,703	"

Source: Field work, 2017

From the table, it is clear that Boko Haram insurgency has caused serious humanitarian crises. In 2016 about 1,687,703 were displaced in various camps in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa state. The large percentage are women and children. Conflict is the biggest threat to global peace and stability in the contemporary times. Conflict is not only a causative factor to displacement but also affect the management of IDPs. The emergence of conflict of such a proportion on the global scene is a dangerous trajectory because it poses a serious threat to human existence, collective peace and global society.

From the foregoing tables, the North-east geo-political zone of Nigeria has been worst hit by the Boko Haram terrorism group. This geo-political zone has been most prone and most vulnerable to various scales of terrorist attacks, with States like Borno, Yobe and Adamawa as critical flashpoints. Borno State is the worst affected in the region, hence has the largest number of IDPs. There are about one million five hundred internally displaced persons in the state (Sidi, 2015). These IDPs live in easily identifiable camps; others seek shelter in spontaneously created camps or in churches, schools, and other public building. while others move into the homes of family or relatives in Maiduguri, the state capital.

The above discussions indicate that there are factors facilitating the vulnerabilities of the North East Region of Nigeria to conflict, violence and the emergence of Boko Haram Insurgency. It is therefore the concern of this paper to assess these factors to determine their impact on the emergence of Boko Haram Insurgency in the region. This is with a view to proffer policy options and recommendations to government of the six states to collectively address them for the overall development of the region. The paper made use of content analysis in the use of its secondary data. The secondary data was obtained from published materials and official government documents.

Before discussing these factors, the paper will first of all operationalized violent conflict, insurgency, boko haram insurgency, conceptual models of understanding the vulnerabilities of the North East, followed by conclusions, policy options and recommendations

### **The Concept of Violent Conflict**

Conflict is “a condition in which one identifiable group of human beings whether tribal, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, socio-economic, political or others is engaged in conscious opposition to one or more other identifiable groups because these groups are pursuing what are or appear to

be incompatible goals” (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraf cited in Adedeji 2005:1). This definition means conflict arises due to clash of interests between two or more groups in pursuit of certain goals. Oche (2009:2) said “conflict can be taken to mean an open clash between two opposing groups or individuals”. Usually, the disagreement may be as a result of incompatibility of views, opinion, values or access to shared resources. Although conflicts may sometimes turn violent, violence itself is not an inherent aspect of conflict but rather a potential form that conflict may assume. violent conflict therefore refer to an open contention between two or more groups or parties over certain goals which results in injury and destruction of lives and properties in a given space or area.

### **The Concept of Insurgency**

It is conceived as an armed rebellion against a constituted authority i.e authority so recognized by the United Nations (Umaru, 2015). Insurgency is an attack on a recognized government, its people and resources. Ajayi (2011) defined insurgency as a protracted political, military activity directed towards completely or partially controlling the resources of country through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organizations. According to him, this include: guerrilla warfare, terrorism and political mobilization. It is a violent anti-government activity that seeks to take over the power of a sovereign state through terrorism, ware, guerilla attacks, propaganda in order to achieve the goal of the perpetrates. The *Boko Haram* insurgency which degenerated into an open violence in the year 2009 in the North east Nigeria was characterized with high spate of killings, abductions, bombings, destruction of homes, properties as well as displacement of people.

### **Boko Haram Insurgency**

Book Haram means western education is sacrilege or western education is sin. Founded by Mohammed Yusuf in Maiduguri, Borno State in 2002. The organization is a Muslim sec that seeks to abolish the secular system and establish an Islamic State and Sharia system of government in Nigeria (Atim, 2014).The members of the group do not interact with the local Muslim population and have carried out assassination on anyone who criticizes it including Muslim clerics. The sect is against scientific explanation of natural phenomena such as evaporation being the cause of rain, the theory of evolution and the earth being in sphere because they run

against the teachings of Allah. The leader, Muhammad Yusuf says that it is blasphemous for a believer to accept the logic that the world is sphere or that rain comes from water evaporation as a result of interaction with the sun. He was of the view that this position is mere evil machination of western education philosophy in their bid to malign Islam (Yusuf ,2009). The fundamental ideology of Boko Haram is “Western Education is forbidden and therefore should not be accepted”. The phrase Boko Haram is derived from a combination of both a Hausa word Boko (book) and Arabic word, Haram (forbidden) meaning “Western education is forbidden”. According to Yusuf, he perceived that the system of government based on ‘Western values’ has resulted in the increase in corruption, poverty, unemployment and continued suppression of true Islam (Bartolotta, 2012).

### **Conceptual Models**

There are several models that explain the vulnerabilities of North East region to violence. However, for the purpose of this paper only five will be reviewed and the Relational Theory is adopted as the theoretical framework for the paper

### **The State Fragility Theory**

A Fragile state connotes failed, weak or collapsed state in relation to its constitutional role to the people. This means that fragile states are in need of development in order to be able to provide security and basic services to its citizens, decreasing vulnerability and increasing resilience to internal and external shocks. The theory stresses the fundamental failure of a state to perform functions necessary to meet citizen’s basic needs and expectations. It also shows the incapability of government in assuring basic security, maintaining rules of law and justice, or providing basic services and economic opportunities for their citizens. The centrality of state fragility theory posits weak and ineffective central government with little practical control over much of its territory, non-provision of public services, widespread corruption and criminality, refugees and involuntary movement of populations. The theory illustrates the weakness and failure of North East States to bring about genuine development to the region. (Collier, 2003).

### **The Social Contract Theory**

The theory is saying that the state came about as a result of an agreement entered into by men who originally had no governmental organization. Men lived in the state of nature in which they were subject only to such regulations as nature was supposed to prescribe. But there was no human authority to formulate these rules precisely or to enforce them after sometime; they decided to set up a government. Thereby, they parted with their natural liberty and agreed to obey the law prescribed by the government. But they agree on its essentials idea, viz, that the state is a human creation, the result of contract (Appadorai, 1975). According to Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) a state of nature, makes life solitary, brutish, nasty poor and short. The theory explains the relationship between the state and the citizens. The State has the responsibility of providing essential services to the citizens. This implies that the authority of the state will no longer be respected if it fails to provide services to the people. The failure of government to honour the social contract entered into will facilitate extremist groups to fight for their rights

### **Needs/Socio-Economic Perspective**

The theory is saying that all humans have basic needs which they seek to fulfil and failure caused by other individuals or groups to meet these needs could lead to conflict. This implies that the socio-cultural, economic and political environments of the North East characterized by unemployment, especially among the youth, poverty, large size of family among the masses, Almajeris roaming about to beg and a deteriorating standard of living, makes the region more vulnerable to violence( Alozieuwa,2015).

### **The Political Feud Theory**

This theory is saying that Nigerian politicians and their supporters are so desperate to win by all means. In the effort to win election they engage the services of political thugs, rigging election, political assassination of opponents and manipulating the ethnic and religious diversity of the people for political gains. In this process they become intoxicated with politics and cause the over politicization of social life. They take the most extreme measures to win and to maintain political power. For example, Nigeria was soaked in the pre-2011 general elections period over the victory of President Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian and southerner( Alozieuwa,2015). In this

situation the emergence of Boko Haram and violence becomes easier and a ready instrument to be use by desperate politicians for political mobilization.

### **Relational Theory**

Relational theories attempt to provide explanations for violent conflicts between groups by exploring socio-cultural, sociological, political, ideological, economic and historical relationships between such groups. Thus, the belief here is that cultural and value differences as well as group interest all influence relationships between individuals and groups in different ways. At sociological level, differences between cultural values is a challenge to individual or group identity formation processes and creates the tendency to see others as intruders who have to be prevented from encroaching upon established cultural boundaries (Faleti 2007). Thus, the historical relationship between and among the ethnic groups in the North-East states in different facets of life has led to the development of negative stereotypes, intolerance, negative exchanges and discrimination which make it difficult for efforts to integrate different ethnic and religious groups to succeed. Consequently, it has result in violent confrontations in the zone.

This study adopts the relational theory because it triangulates the inputs of several theories discussed above to adequately explain the emergence of Boko Haram. From the perspective of the theory, it is clear that the administration of the region has been characterized with bad governance, poor service delivery, embezzlement, corruption, no genuine development but deception, which has widened the gap between the haves and have not. This implies that the Social Contract Agreement between the people and the government has not been respected by the administration of the region. This is to say that the significance of the state is to avoid what Thomas Hobbes described as State of Nature characterized by solitary, brutish, nasty, poor and short is still happening in the region and therefore the legitimacy of the state has been questioned and rejected by some extremist groups.

### **Vulnerabilities of North East Region to Boko Haram Insurgency**

The vulnerabilities consist of the ethnic composition of the region, the North East environment, socio-cultural factors, religion, ideological, governance , political and economic factors.



### **Ethnic Composition**

The North-East States is inhabited by people with diverse ethnic compositions each with distinct language. However, Hausa is a common language in all the six states and Fulfulde (the language of the Fulani) is spoken in many parts of all the states. The ethnic composition of the North-East states is depicted below:

Table 4: Ethnic Compositions of North-East states

States	Ethnic Groups
Adamawa	Bacharna, Chamba, Lunguda, Bulachi,, Bare, Kono, Kanakuru, Hunawa, Kilba, Hausa-Fulani, Ganda, Marghi. Higghi etc.
Bauchi	Hausa-Fulani, Karai-karai. Sayawa jarawa, Warji etc.
Borno	Kanuri, Shuwa, Babur-Bura, Marghi, Gwoza, Higghi, Kanakuru, Kibabku, Hausa-Fulani
Gombe	Tangale, Terawa, Hausa-Fulani, Bolewa etc.
Taraba	Jukun Tiv, Mumuye, Kuteb, Hausa- Fulani etc
Yobe	Karai-karai, Ngamo, Mangawa, Ngizimawa, Badawa, Bolewa, Kanuri, Hausa-Fulani, Bura, etc.

Source: Adapted from Abubakar, 2003:46)

Table 4 depict the diversity of ethnic groups among the North-East states. For instance, it could be noted that Adamawa and Taraba states which hitherto formed Gongola State until 1991 have several ethnic nationalities. It is estimated that there are more than 100 different ethnic groups in the two states. The search for ethnic identity, religious difference, political difference and competition for economic resources among the ethnic groups are potential sources of violent conflict in the North-East area (Abubakar,2003). The North-Eastern Region of Nigeria is a territory that extends from Lake Chad in the North to the Mambilla Plateau in the South and bordered by the Nigeria-Cameroon boundary to the East. It shares state boundary with the following states: Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna, Plateau and Benue (**Fig.1**)

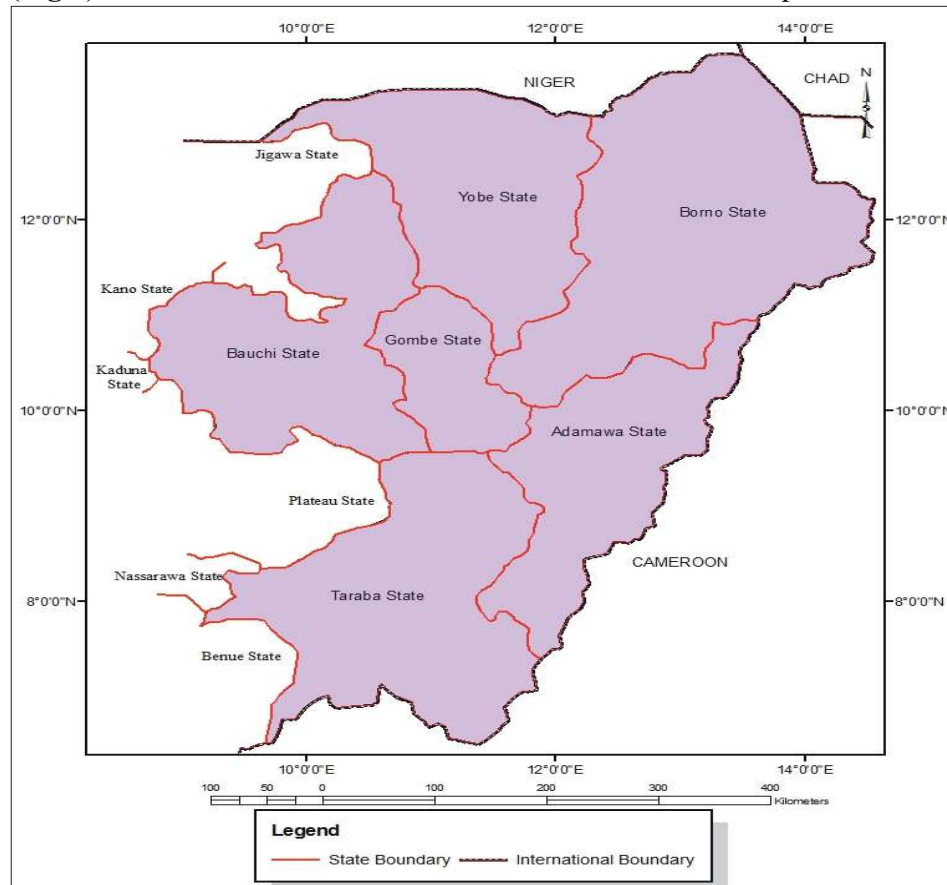


Fig.1: Map of Nigeria showing North East Region

The North-Eastern region is very heterogeneous in the Nigerian Federation in terms of ethnic, religious and cultural diversity. The politics of Nigerian civil war and the perceived dominance of the Hausa-Fulani hegemonic culture over other minority tribes in the north forced the then Colonel Yakubu Gowon to make both a strategic and political move in dissolving the colonial constructed three regions of north, east and west of Nigeria and dividing the country into twelve states. This was contained in the States Creation and Transitional Provision Decree No. 14 of 1967 of May 27, 1967. It was a military decree that created six states each in the north and southern parts of the country respectively. The six states in the northern region included, Benue-Plateau state, Kano state, Kwara State, North-central state, North-western state and North-eastern state. Consequently, the North-Eastern state became an amalgamation of the Borno province, the Adamawa emirate taken from Sokoto caliphate and the northern Cameroon province initially a German colony, but administered as a UN trust territory after the

defeat of the Germans in World War II, with the capital located in Maiduguri.

Similarly, on 3rd February 1976, the North-Eastern state was further divided into three states, Bauchi, Borno and Gongola states. Later on, military politics led to the creation of Gombe state out of Bauchi, Yobe state out of Borno while Gongola was split into Taraba and Adamawa states. Currently, the North-Eastern region is made up of six states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe, with 112 local government areas (**Fig.2**) It has a total area of 277,314sq kilometers.



**Fig.2: North East Nigeria showing the six states**

### **Porosity of the International Borders**

The north east geopolitical zone consists of 6 states with distinct socio-cultural and historical background. The region shares international boundary with Niger, Chad and Cameroon along the states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe. With over 200 ethnic groups spread across six states, the zone is one of the most culturally diverse regions of the country. It harbours some of the poorest human development indicators: almost 70% of the region lives below the poverty line, one of the worst maternal mortality rates in the country, and high levels of illiteracy (NDHS 2013). It is not surprising that it is currently the most insecure region in the country. The region is going through one of the worst spells of violence since the Nigerian Civil War. Kashim (2012) asserts that the proliferation of arms and ammunitions coupled with the peculiar geo-political setting of Borno state neighbouring three countries of Chad, Cameroon and Niger – a sub-region generally known for political upheaval, insecurity, religious extremism and terrorism is one of the factors that aided the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency. The relatively higher level of arms and ammunition in the North-East axis can be attributed to the instability and armed conflict experienced in some African countries, including Chad, Cameroon and Niger, Sudan, DR Congo, Central Africa Republic, and Libya. Being the gateway to Nigeria from North and Central Africa and given the porosity of the international borders with Chad, Cameroon and Niger, Borno and Yobe state have served as a natural route for the passage of illegal persons, arms and ammunitions into Nigeria. This situation has greatly assisted the cause of the Boko Haram insurgency and other forms of violent crimes being perpetrated in Damaturu, Maiduguri and the country at large.

As result of the differing socio-cultural background of the region which has led to mutual distrust and contestations, the northeast has one of the worst cases of small arms and light weapons proliferation, and also a huge presence of military assault weapons in the hands of the militant groups. Closeness to international borders, especially the Sahel region, has made access to these weapons relatively easier. The zone has in the last ten years produced militant youth groups, the Boko Haram and Ansaru being the extreme ones. Others are ECOMOG in Borno State, *Yan'Kalare* and *Sarasuka* in Gombe and Bauchi states respectively.

### **Socio-Cultural Factors**

One important dimensions of the socio-cultural aspects of the region is religion. In all the states of the region, there is unanimity that ignorance of the religious teaching is the leading factor influencing the adoption of extreme religious views especially by the youth. The lack of deep knowledge of the true religious teaching may not be unconnected to three mutually-related dangerous ubiquitous trends in the practice of religion in the very recent times in Nigeria, namely, the proliferation of sects, both in Islam and Christianity; the proliferation of independent preachers in both religions; and the increasing reliance on preachers rather than on the text or scriptures (Holy Books). The lack of deep knowledge of the true religious teaching makes young people very vulnerable to recruitment and radicalisation by independent (roaming) preachers, extremist groups and religious ideologues.

The manipulation of religious sentiments in political mobilization has been partially responsible for the deaths of more than 20, 000 people in violent clashes, and more than one-third of these have been due to the recent Boko Haram uprising in the north east. On the second hand, the religious composition of the north east reflects in sectarianism within Islam. Before the 19th century Jihad of Othman Dan Fodio, Islam had already been established, in some measure in north-eastern Nigeria through the Kanem Borno Empire (Crowder, 1962). Around the 12<sup>th</sup> century, scholars and merchants from North Africa made inroads through the trade routes of the Sahara desert into the then Kanem Borno Empire. According to Morgan (1958) the rulers of Kanem not only established Islam within their empire but also embarked upon an extensive process of the Islamization of their subjects and intensified diplomatic contacts with the Muslim world. That was why they were able to establish the Maliki Madrasa, an Islamic college in Cairo together with a hostel for Borno Scholars. Furthermore, the leaders were aware of the prominent doctrinal schools of Islam that were available but chose to align themselves with the Sunni Mazhab (school) of Ibn Malik. This choice gave rise to the degree of sectarian rivalry that later emerged between the Kanem Borno Empire and the Sokoto Caliphate. It also indicated the nature of Islamic sects that eventually emerged from the north-east (Alkali, Monguno, and Mustapha, 2012). Sometimes defined by conservative and fanatical ideological leanings.

The North East is a region with a predominantly Muslim population. It has a well-documented history of religious extremist dating back to the jihad war fought by Sheik Uthman dan Fodio in the early 19th century

(Hickey, 1984). It was a jihad launched against what he described as un-Islamic and corrupt Hausa ruling elite and established the sharia-governed Sokoto Caliphate. In this regard Joel (2014) subscribed to the above historical fact by saying that the spread of Hausa-Fulani across the zone (all the North-East states) is traced to the 19th Century Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio which not only led to forceful spread of Islam amongst minorities in the Zone but their incorporation into the Caliphate and the institutionalization of Emirate (and later Native Authority) ruler ship. Through this process of incorporation and its consolidation by the colonialist via the ideology of “Indirect Rule” the seed of discord within and between the diverse ethnic and cultural groups was entrenched especially between Islam and Christianity.

The explosion of ethnic and religious violence in Northern Nigeria during the 1980s and 1990s could partly be attributed to the Jihadist legacy and its articulation within the framework of the hegemonic colonial state (Kukah cited in Abubakar, 2003). Joel further stated that most of the religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria is to strengthen Hausa-Fulani hegemony through the Islamization policy of the Caliphate over minority ethnic groups. However, according to him this premise cannot be used to explain some ethnic conflicts in the North-East states such as the Jukun-Tiv, Kuteb-Chamba in Taraba state. The case of Taraba is mostly the search for identity competition for resources and power (Joel, 2014).

The Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio was regarded as a war for religious purification and later became a search for a political kingdom (Crowder, 1978; ICG, 2010). The outcome being that Islam has remained fundamental for the legitimacy of the northern ruling class and consequently its politicians have always used it as an instrument to mobilize people for political support (Udoidem, 1997). They saw British conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate in 1903, and its subsequent dealings with colonial and post-colonial states, brought about the corrupting influence of secular political power (Agbibo, 2013; Falola, 1998). Ever since, there has been resistance among some Muslims to western education (Marchal, 2012). For instance, following Nigeria’s independence in October 1960, northern Nigeria in December 1980 experienced a violent confrontation between a radical Islamist sect known as Maitatsine and the Nigerian Police Force in Kano and extended to Maiduguri in October 1982, to Yola 1984, Gombe in 1985, Potiskum riots in 1994 and Jalingo 1992 (Abubakar, 2003)

Many scholars such as Hickey (1984), argues that the Maitatsine uprisings had their roots in the deeply conservative practice of Islam which

has been dominant in the region since Usman Dan Fodio's holy war. Muhammed Marwa the leader of Maitatsine, was an Islamic scholar who believed that Islam had come under the corrupting influence of westernization and the formation of the modern state ([Agbiboa, 2013](#)). The Maitatsine extremists had gone to the extent of rejecting Muslims who had, in their eyes, gone astray, lived in secluded areas to avoid mixing with mainstream Muslims and rejected material wealth on the grounds that it was associated with western values. A tribunal of inquiry that was set up by the federal government in 1981 found out that 4,177 people were killed in the violence, excluding members of the police force who also lost their lives ([Agbiboa, 2013](#)).

Similarly, Sheik Abubaka Mahmoud Gumi (1922–1992) was another Islamic scholar that promoted militant Islam during the 1980s ([Agbiboa, 2013](#); [Falola, 1998](#)). He further promoted the implementation of Sharia courts in Nigeria's Christian south, arguing that Nigeria should be brought under sharia law ([Agbiboa, 2013](#)). He once openly declared that 'once you are a Muslim, you cannot accept to choose a non-Muslim as a leader' ([Aguwa 1997](#)). Sheik's speeches and ideas radicalized many Muslims in Nigeria and led to increased tensions between Muslims and Christians, especially in northern Nigeria. The burning of eight prominent churches in Kano by Muslims in October 1982 accelerated religious tension and manipulation.

Moreso, the Iranian revolution of 1979 resulted in growing demand for sharia law to be adopted across Nigeria. In addition, Saudi-sponsored missionaries from Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Pakistan, and other countries were sent to Nigeria to promote *Wahhabi* doctrine and orthodoxy beginning in the 1990s. This accelerated the adoption of sharia law in twelve northern states between 1999 and 2001, beginning with Zamfara State. The then-Zamfara governor, Ahmed Sani, once said, 'Whoever administers or governs any society not based on Sharia is an unbeliever' ([Agbiboa, 2013](#)). Following his example, many northern governors also introduced Sharia, reinforcing the movement of restoration pioneered by Usman dan Fodio's Sokoto Caliphate two centuries earlier. From the foregoing, it became easier for the emergence of boko haram and violence to continue as a movement of restoration since their overriding goal continues to be the enforcement of Sharia in the spirit of earlier times as inspired by Usman dan Fodio and the sharia-governed Sokoto Caliphate.

Similarly, European intervention in Africa and subsequent colonization of Nigeria brought about resistance especially education among the dominated Muslim areas (This is why the region is the least educationally which makes it easier to brain washed the youth to join extremist group to fight for Allah). This is why in Nigeria, over 10 million children are not receiving formal education, and a majority of these children are in the Muslim dominated areas like Borno state (Okafor,2015). In this respect, the early generation of *'yan boko* in northern Nigeria were not totally uprooted from their Muslim traditional background which included Islamic education. They were to provide the manpower for the civil service and all other modern professions including the political leadership in northern Nigeria. In fact, they were to establish the legacies of meritorious service and exemplary life for the region. However, the later generation of the western education in the north did not have the demeanour and opportunities of the pioneers. More so, political instability and economic hardship since the 1980s coupled with other problems including the appalling incapacity of government have resulted in frustration. Unlike the initial stage when *boko* was suspect because of its evangelization credential it is now despised for its failure to meet the expectations of many in terms of the prospects for better education and employment, and, more fundamentally, the wanton corruption and culpability of its products are related directly to the problems of the country (Salihi, 2012). This is a background that is relevant to the emergence of *Boko Haram*, besides its identity as an Islamist group (Isa 2010, Egwu 2011).

Furthermore, the emergence of Boko Haram benefitted immensely from the immediate post- Tuesday September 11,2001 terrorist attacks, which was characterized by al Qaeda's anti-western campaigns calling for universal jihad. In spite of widespread condemnation against the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States (US), there were celebrations in Maiduguri and Kano for instance, among numerous young Muslims which drew inspiration from the ideology Osama bin Laden demonstrated as the reason for the attack. In Kano State, after the September 11 attacks, seven out of ten babies in a particular hospital were reported to have been given the name Osama by their parents. The effect saw a rapid increase in the number of babies bearing the name Osama in northern Nigeria. In addition, the military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, which commenced in 2001 and 2003 respectively, coincided with diffuse events in Nigeria that inadvertently created the ideal environment for Boko Haram to capitalize on. In line with this, there are several conspiracy theories that linked Boko-Haram with



external forces like Al Qaeda and as a symptom of Nigeria being a failed state ( Atim, 2014).

Over the years, there has been the issue of unhealthy rivalry between Islamic movements whose sponsors can be linked to transnational bodies, especially in the Middle East and Asia. A lot of Muslims have been brain washed and believe that dying in the course of defending Islam would make them earn the status of Matyr. Therefore, they are inclined to sacrifice their lives through violent means. There is also, the “Almajeri Syndrome”. A large army of vagabonds roam round the streets begging and scavenging. These are group of people ready to perpetuate violence for a token (Danjibo, 2011).

#### **Economic Factor**

Many scholars and commentators attempted to link Boko Haram insurgency to unemployment and injustice. Madunagu (2011:15) revealed that “the incessant violent attacks in the north are functions of the economic injustice where more than 80 percent of the populace are not sure of three meals a day”. The gap between the rich and the poor is widening and “unemployed youths have resorted to violence in expressing their grievances”. Accusing the political class of not being sensitive to the plight of the people he estimated that “less than 20 per cent of the country’s population control the nation’s wealth, while the other 80 percent are wallowing in abject poverty”. It was adduced that poverty and youth unemployment have engendered Boko Haram insurgency.

Youth unemployment is not just about lack of basic needs, it is also exclusion from the goods, services, rights, and activities which constitute the basis of citizenship; hence, the eradication of poverty is not separated from the promotion of social inclusion. Poverty leads to frustration, ignorance, inferiority complex, aggression and violence, when the majority is poor, it inevitably leads to uprising and tension in a society. The combined effects of all these is the aggravation of poverty, neglect and deprivation. It is therefore not surprising that the north east zone, of which Borno state is an integral part, is one of the poorest sub-regions in the world.

According to Kashim (2012) long years of neglect and structural violence on the people by successive governments, which had failed to address their deplorable existential conditions, the retreating state, dwindling economic resources, visionless ruling class steeped a fertile conspicuous consumption, in the midst of abundant poverty created a fertile environment for Boko Haram to strive. In the words of Adeyemi (2006), one of the facilitators of crisis like the Boko Haram in the North East is that the political

class lacks legitimacy. He attributed most of these crises to their inability to bring about genuine development that will respond adequately to the needs and aspirations of the masses. He opined that the political class use tribalism and manipulation of religious sentiments and regionalism to justify unequal development. The feeling of being unequally treated by the government leads to frustration which may further lead to rebellion (Nwagu, 2014). This is to say that the effect of these frustration, rebellion and apathy among the majority of the citizenry brings about insurgency, restiveness, terrorism, violence and anti-social activities.

Adetiloye (2014), opined that where there is a wide gap between the rich and the poor it will always bring about class conflicts. A country like Nigeria which is blessed with abundant wealth but only the privileged few benefit from the wealth brings all sort of anti-social activities. In many countries where insurgency has gained ground there is pronounced gap between the haves and have not. For instance, the genesis of Arab spring which originated from Tunisia and Boko Haram in the North East Nigeria were as a result of socio-economic and political deprivation. In addition to the root causes of insurgency, Adetiloye (2014), opined that arrogant display of ostentatious lifestyle by the elitist class which is regarded as illegally acquired wealth create hatred especially among the poor. This line of thought was presented by Nwagu (2014) who attribute the cause of insurgency to control of valuable resources by powerful people thereby denying the less privilege access. The disadvantaged segments of the society thus resort to fighting to what they believed belonged to them. Thus, insurgency arises when a group decides that the gap between their political expectation and the opportunities afforded them is unacceptable and can only be remedied by force (Metz, 2007).

### **Ideological Factors**

The role of religion is significant due to its specific position in Nigerian society and politics as many Boko Haram Sect's demands are Islam oriented in its character and contents. They believe that modern government based on democracy and its principles is at variance with core Islamic principles as such it is prohibitive to support and work under the government and its institutions (Joel, 2014). Concurring to the above view, Tukur and Fausat (2015), says the fundamental ideology of Boko Haram is Western Education is forbidden and therefore should not be allowed to prevail among nations; particularly, Muslim dominated states. Initially, they

attack churches and law enforcement agents. As they increase in number and apparent slow response from the government, anybody, institutions in Nigeria irrespective of whom and where is subject to attack by the sect.

### **Political and Bad Governance**

Over the years the expectation of Nigerians has been frustrated by bad governance characterized by embezzlement, corruption and poor service delivery. In this respect, bad leadership and governance is also attributed to be one of the causes of Boko Haram insurgency. Yakubu (2012) in his open address to Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) in Kaduna opined that impunity in government and corruption are the bane of insecurity in the north. Indeed, lack of good governance contributed to the violence in the region. Take for example, Nigeria is the 5th largest producer of oil in the world but the bulk of the population live below poverty line of 1\$ a day. Northern Nigeria is the worst hit by poverty. According to National Bureau of Statistics (2012), the relative poverty rate in Nigeria has increased from 54.4% in 2004 to 69% in 2010. At the geopolitical level, the North, West and North-east had the highest with 77.7% and 76.3% respectively, while the South west had the least with 59.1%. Similarly, absolute poverty rate has increased from 54.7% in 2004 to 60.9% in 2012. Geo-politically again, the North West and North East had the highest with 70% and 69% respectively. South West maintained its position as the least with 49.8%. By implication, the Nigerians have been denied good governance for long. The youths that are mostly serve as an army of this sectarian violence are the first victims of this bad governance and acute corruption.

Atim (2014), says that those engaged in the Boko Haram violence are mostly jobless, no skills, no trade and no sources of livelihood. They hate western education that will empower them to be employable. So, it became easier for Muhammed Yusuf the leader to brain washed them that even the certificates they acquired through the western education is a sin. As a result, most of his followers destroyed or burnt their school certificates as a sign of condemnation of western education. Commenting further, he said the youths constitute over 70% of the population of Nigeria and yet over 60% of this category lack jobs and better opportunities. To him there is a relationship between mass poverty as a result of bad governance on one hand and frustration and violence on the other hand.

## **Conclusions**

The vulnerability of the north east region is linked to the high prevalence of youth poverty and unemployment. This has made many youth to become skeptical about a democratic system that has brought them little benefit and has served well the interests of the established political elite. Hopelessness and frustrations as a result of joblessness and poverty has lured many youths to embrace the Boko Haram sect. It has been established that there is socio-cultural nexus with the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency in the North East. This implies that the polygamous orientation of the people of the region has led to rapid increase in the number of children which could not be adequately catered for by their biological parents thereby encouraging the practice of *Almajiri* system of Islamic education. This is a practice where children are sent far away from their biological parents and place of birth to where there can acquire Quoranic education. The *Almajiris* (street children or child beggars) live in a very appalling condition roaming and begging for arms in major cities in Nigeria, homeless, without parents or guardians. Denied of parental care, they form the majority of recruits for religious extremists, desperate politicians and disreputable cleric teachers

## **Policy options and recommendations**

The ways to addressing political, ideological and socio-cultural vulnerabilities of the region is to create more jobs and the practice of good governance. As matter of policy, intensive Peace Education should be vigorously pursued in the area at both formal and informal level. Incorporating peace education in the curricula of *Almajiri* schools or *Tsangaya* across the states in the zone should be encouraged and promoted by the government through the relevant ministries, agencies and departments. There should be regulation on the number of children a poor man should have in the north east giving the rate of poverty in the region. Therefore, government should stop sponsoring wedding among the poor. This is encouraging large size of families among the masses without sources of livelihood, thereby encouraging the practice of *Almajiri* system providing ready army for Boko Haram insurgency

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