

Socio-Economic Development and Insecurity in Nigeria: A Study of Boko Haram

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Abstract

This paper explores the connection between socio-economic development and insecurity in Nigeria. Of particular significance to this paper is the link between economic decline (characterized by high rates of unemployment, low wages and income, corruption and injustice) and the proliferation of conflict particularly in the north-east. The data presented in this study show a relationship between insecurity challenges in the north-east and rates of poverty and unemployment in the zone. Furthermore, the study shows that despite increased spending by the government, the number of attacks and resulting casualties continued to rise between 2009 and 2017. In the final analysis, it is here argued that for proposed long term solutions to the insecurity situation in Nigeria to be effective, they must be predicated on the rule of law, protective of personal and political freedoms and equality, accountable and transparent and more importantly, in service of the common good.

Keywords: Insecurity, Socio-Economic Development, Boko Haram

1. Introduction

The relationship between poor socio-economic development and insecurity has been explored extensively in the literature. A school of thought maintains that socio-economic deprivation, particularly poverty, can fuel insecurity (Newman, 2006). This view has been criticised due to the difficulty in measuring poverty. Several scholars have, however, identified key factors in measuring poverty and these include social inequality, low levels of education and literacy and low GDP, population, unemployment and inflation among others (Akhmat, Zaman, & Shukui, 2014; Gunaratna, 2004; Pedahzur, Perliger, & Weinberg, 2003). Regardless, some scholars have found a strong link between poverty and adverse economic conditions to terrorism (Abadie, 2006). Also, research suggests on average a negative economic growth shock of 5% increases violent crises risks by about 50% (Collier & Hoeffler, 1998).

However, some empirical studies have faulted the link between poverty and conflict (especially terrorism) pointing rather to factors such as social segregation (Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Krueger & Laitin, 2007; Niang, 2010) and angst/alienation resulting from inability to realise political power despite having attained reasonable socio-economic success (Martin-Gorski, 2002). Specific research has shown only minimal correlation between economic conditions and terrorism at the macro-level. On the micro-level no direct link was established (Abadie, 2006; Krueger & Laitin, 2007; Krueger & Malečková, 2003). Some studies, however, have investigated and found a link between youth bulge and violent conflicts (Choucri, 1974; Fuller, 1995; Moller, 2009). This is especially true when young people are 'desperate for opportunities' (Goldstone's, 1991). Thus, where youth population is huge and employment opportunities are limited, the potential for conflict is equally high (Easterlin, 1987; Niang, 2010).

Other studies have also argued that pervasive social inequality could lead to or aggravate conflict situations such as obtained in certain parts of the Middle East where high levels of unemployment resulted in anger and disenchantment with government which precipitated violent conflicts and sometimes terrorism (Mohammad, 2005). In general, studies have pointed to the link between lack of economic opportunities and insecurity (Bueno de Mesquita, 2005).

Closely related to social inequality is the concept of vulnerability and its impact on security. The absence of social and economic opportunities and the resultant effects (such as poverty) creates a situation of vulnerability, which in combination with other factors, could produce an ideal situation for conflict to occur or thrive. Also, vulnerable and aggrieved individuals are more predisposed to extreme measures.

Another theory links insecurity to political leadership (Arendt, 1969; Couto, 2010; Gurr, 1970). Other political factors that can trigger violent conflicts is the repression of political rights and civil liberties (Berrebi & Ostwald, 2011). Thus, insecurity is likely to flourish in authoritarian or weak democracies where human rights violations and social injustice are widespread (Newman, 2006). Democracy deficits, weak institutions, violation of human

rights of the citizens and poor leadership are considered to be among the main causes of insecurity (American Political Science Association, 2012; International IDEA, 2006; Rotbert, 2003; United Nations & International IDEA, 2013). Within this context, therefore, democracy is considered pivotal for human security. This is due mainly to the fact that well-designed and comprehensive political institutions and processes are significant to both prevention of violence and conflict management (International IDEA, 2006). Protection of human rights and public participation are vital towards the achievement of development (Diamond, 1999) and bad/unresponsive government can precipitate public anger and aggrieved electorates manifest their grievances in varying ways especially through violent means (Dercon, 2008).

Nigeria has made three separate attempts at democracy prior to the return to civil rule in 1999 (Agbu, 2004; Okonta, 2007). All were truncated by the military. Expectations were high that civil rule would launch Nigeria into the path of prosperity and development. However, nearly two decades later, these expectations have remained largely unattained as evidenced by low levels of socio-economic development (as reflected in indicators such as life expectancy, levels of literacy, employment, etc.). Despite the fact that Nigeria has achieved high economic growth rates in the last five years (6.5 per cent annually), these growth has not been equitable. There is a widespread and an entrenched social exclusion engendered by bad governance. No fewer than 112 million Nigerians live below the poverty line as at 2016, representing 67.1 per cent of the country's total population. In 2017, Nigeria ranks 152 of 188 countries in Human Development Index with a score of 0.527. Also, as the population grows, so does the unemployment rate. Data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) shows that as at the 4th quarter of 2016, the population of unemployed Nigerians was close to 29 million persons (i.e. 14.2 %). The NBS report said the rate was highest for persons in the labour force between the ages of 15-24 and 25-34, which represents the youth population in Nigeria. Unemployment rate was highest for those within the ages of 15 to 24 which stands at 25.2 per cent. For the 25 to 34 age group, the unemployment rate was 15.4 per cent. The report also shows that unemployment is higher for women than men.

The UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report (EAGMR) says Nigeria holds the world record of having the highest number of its young people out of school. Approximately 10.5 million kids which translates to one out of every five Nigerian children are out of school. Similarly, according to UNESCO Nigeria is among the four nations that have experienced the highest increase of out-of-school children since 1999.

It is against this background that this paper explores the connection between socio-economic development and insecurity in Nigeria. Of particular significance to this paper is the link between economic decline (characterized by high rates of unemployment, low wages and income, corruption and injustice) and the proliferation of conflict particularly in the north-east.

2. Nigeria's Security Challenges: Boko Haram

Since the return to democratic governance in 1999, Nigeria has faced myriad security challenges including terrorism, insurgency, militancy and crime, among others. Domestic terrorism became entrenched in Nigeria with the emergence of the *Jama'atu Ahlissunnah Lidda'awati wal Jihad* (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad"), popularly known as Boko Haram, with sworn allegiance to the Islamic State. Though the sect has been in existence for some years (since 2002), its activities became a serious security challenge in 2009 when violence erupted between the police and the sect members in Borno state. Since then, the group has embarked on a deadly campaigns of terror including suicide bombing, invasion of police and military outputs, raids of villages and communities, and arson among others (Alozieuwa, 2012; Uzodike & Maiangwa, 2012).

North-Eastern states of Nigeria (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe) with a population of 18,971,965 inhabitants and other major northern cities such as Jos, Kaduna, Kano and Madalla and Suleja (in Niger State), became the epicentre of Nigeria's terrorism-related violence. The insurgency has resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of people, displaced millions of people from their homes and destroyed livelihoods and properties worth millions of Naira.

Determining the actual impact of insecurity on the economy and livelihoods in the north is extremely difficult given the absence of accurate data in this regard. However, the crisis has not only displaced people but also stalled and sometimes completely shut down commerce in the affected states (including Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Kano etc.). Investors have equally moved out of the region relocating to other parts of the country leading to a serious loss of revenue (Alozieuwa, 2012). Hitherto vibrant commercial centres have been seriously destabilized. Kano for instance serves as a commercial hub neighbouring countries such as Chad, Niger Republic, and of

northern Cameroon, but with current spate of violence rocking the town business concerns are being scared away and the foundation of economic and social well-being of that region is being threatened.

Several studies have ascribed various causes to the emergence of the sect, its metamorphosis from a recluse religious sect to a full blown terrorist organisation. These include: extremist religious ideology (Thurston, 2016); ethnic discrimination (Pieri & Zenn, 2016); poor economic conditions, reflected in poverty, unemployment, etc. (Harnischfeger, 2014); bad governance, particularly corruption and mismanagement (Egiegba Agbibo, 2013); limited political participation (Mohammed, 2014); and revolt against the ruling elite (Onuho, 2014).

3. Methodology

The bulk of the data in this study come from secondary sources. The choice of secondary data is useful in assessing changes that span a period of time. Secondly, there are already existing data-sets particularly on the socioeconomic variables and the attacks are also recorded in multiple outlets. More vital to this study, the use of secondary data allows for correlational analysis. In all, secondary data on number of attacks and casualties were collated from various sources including media reports, reports of international organisations and CSOs (including Institute for the Study of Violent Groups, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) etc., and the Nigerian Police Force. Data on socioeconomic variables (poverty and unemployment) in the North East, were sourced from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The data was collected for a seventeen (17) year period, i.e. 2000 to 2017. Correlational analysis on the data is used to determine the strength of the relationship between number of attacks and number of casualties and socio-economic variables.

Content analysis, trends, charts and correlation analysis were used to examine the data. Whereas trend analysis was used to discuss the relationship among the variables, findings from the trends were discussed within the context of existing literature. Furthermore, the statistical analysis of the relationship between insecurity challenges and the socio-economic variables were examined using three types of correlation measures. They are the Kendall's tau-b correlation, Pearson correlation and Spearman correlation. Although the results from all these measures are reported, the inference for the paper is based on Kendall's correlation.

According to laerd statistics, Kendall's tau-b is a nonparametric measure of the strength and direction of association that exists between two variables measured on at least an ordinal scale. It is considered a nonparametric alternative to the Pearson's product-moment correlation and Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient, when the sample size is small and has different ranks. Correlation analysis was necessary in order to deduce to direction of movement between variables of interest and the extent in which insecurity challenges in the North East is associated with unemployment and poverty in the region.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Trend and Correlation Analysis of Insecurity and Socio-economic Variables in Nigeria

Since the insurgency began in 2000, the government has taken diverse measures to suppress it and stop it from engulfing more parts of the north-east. Despite these efforts (which include increasing funding, hardware and training for the armed forces, fostering greater sub-regional collaboration with neighbouring countries include Chad and Niger Republic, declaring a State of Emergency in affected states, etc.) data shows that the spates of attacks on lives and properties have continued and in many instance have actually spiked. Table 1 presents data on number of insurgent and related insecurity attacks and number of casualties.

At the onset of the insurgency, scores of attacks were recorded mainly around the nerve centre of the militant Islamist in Borno. The 2009 uprising and the firm response of the security forces which resulted in the killing of the sect's founder, Mohammed Yusuf sparked further violence as militants launched several attacks in several states including Kano, Yobe and Borno. As the group became more organised and sophisticated, the number of attacks and resulting casualties increased steadily.

Secondly, following the growing influence and reach of the Sect across the north east and even to the Federal Capital city, Abuja, government spending has increased progressively since 2009 when the insurgency started. The data below shows that security budget increased from N261 billion in 2009 to over N900 billion at the height of the crisis in 2011/2012. By 2017, the security budget was over N1 trillion. These following sectors form the core of the security apparatus in Nigeria: Defence, Interior, Police, National Security Adviser, Navy, Army, Airforce, and State Security Service (SSS).

Table 1: Number of Boko Haram Attacks & Number of Casualties: 2009 – 2017

Year	Number of Attacks	Number of Casualties
2009	23	226
2010	57	234
2011	191	845
2012	151	973
2013	77	1007
2014	57	3329
2015	181	3006
2016	90	1098
2017	49	373

Source: author's compilation from police reports, newspapers and International Crises Group/Crisis Watch/Nigeria

Thus the increase does not seem to have had a positive impact on the crisis. On the other hand, it could be argued that the increase in spending was actually due to the surge in the number of attacks necessitating government to inject more money into security spending. Perhaps a point worth considering is the distribution of the total security budget between recurrent and capital. A sectoral breakdown reveals that the bulk of the security budget (around 90%) goes to recurrent (i.e. salaries and administrative costs) while 10% goes to capital expenditure (procurement of firearms, ammunition and security equipment).

Table 2: Boko Haram Attacks and Casualties relative to Security Budget: 2000 – 2017

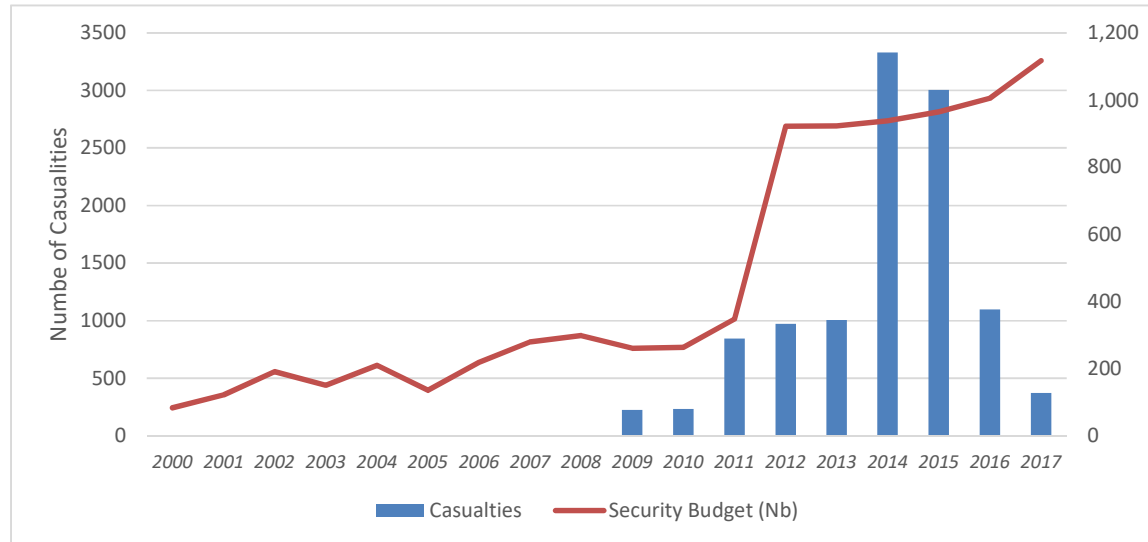
Year	Number of Attacks	Number of Casualties	Security Budget (N'bilion)
2000	-	-	84
2001	-	-	123
2002	-	-	191
2003	-	-	151
2004	-	-	210
2005	-	-	136
2006	-	-	219
2007	-	-	280
2008	-	-	298
2009	23	226	261
2010	57	234	264
2011	191	845	348
2012	151	973	921.91
2013	77	1007	923
2014	57	3329	937.8
2015	181	3006	964.7
2016	90	1098	1005
2017	49	373	1117

Source: author's compilation from police reports, newspapers and International Crises Group/Crisis Watch/Nigeria, Annual Appropriations

Thus, despite the increase in security budget over the years, capital spending has remained low. This in turn could account for why despite the apparent increase in security spending, the number of attacks have not abated. Instead, the sect has continued to carry attacks including suicide bombings, widespread sexual and gender based

violence (SGBV), kidnappings and forced recruitment, in north-eastern (Buchanan-Clarke & Knoope, 2016). The figure below shows the trend in the number of casualties arising from Boko Haram activities between 2009 and 2017 relative to security spending.

Figure 1: Number of Casualties and Security Spending in Nigeria: 2000 – 2017



Source: CBN, International Crisis Group, Nigerian Police

The number of casualties increased from around 200 in 20 attacks in 2009 to over 3000 in 2015 in over 180 attacks. The Sect became better structured and brazen in their attacks and even sacked and occupied several local governments in Yobe and Borno States. This was despite the increase in security spending and a declaration of state of emergency in three states (Yobe, Borno and Adamawa) in 2013. The data also shows that both the attacks and casualties increased during the election years (2011 and 2015 respectively) as the sect sought to destabilise the zone and scare away voters in the build up to the elections.

There have been several attempts to understand the underlining or remote causes and triggers for the Boko Haram uprising and the subsequent ease with which it was able to organise, recruit, carry out attacks and overrun the Nigerian security forces in many parts of the north-east. Some contributing factors have been found to include. However, this paper suggests that more than just religious ideology and political factors, the insurgency has been fuelled by deeper economic (unemployment and poverty) and governance issues. Data on these socio-economic variables such as unemployment, poverty and government spending are also presented. There appears to be positive relationship between number of attacks/casualties and rising unemployment and poverty incidence. Suffice it to say that the north-east has the worst socio-economic conditions in the country as shown below:

Table 4: Insecurity and Socio-economic Measures in Nigeria: 2000 – 2017

Year	Number of Attacks	Number of Casualties	Security Budget (N'bilion)	National Unemployment (% of total Labour Force)	Unemployment in the North East (%)	Poverty Incidence in Nigeria (%)	Poverty Incidence (North East) (%)
2000	-	-	84	13.1	15.28	65.60	76.53
2001	-	-	123	13.6	15.87	65.60	76.53
2002	-	-	191	12.6	14.70	67.50	78.75
2003	-	-	151	14.8	17.27	67.50	78.75
2004	-	-	210	13.4	15.63	67.50	78.75
2005	-	-	136	11.9	13.88	67.50	78.75
2006	-	-	219	12.3	14.35	66.00	77.00
2007	-	-	280	12.7	14.82	66.80	77.93
2008	-	-	298	14.9	17.38	68.20	79.57
2009	23	226	261	19.7	22.98	68.20	79.57
2010	57	234	264	21.1	24.62	69.00	80.50
2011	191	845	348	23.9	27.88	71.50	83.42
2012	151	973	921.91	23.9	27.88	72.20	84.23
2013	77	1007	923	23.9	27.88	72.20	84.23
2014	57	3329	937.8	31.7	36.93	72.20	84.23
2015	181	3006	964.7	32.9	38.38	73.80	86.10
2016	90	1098	1005	37.2	43.34	73.80	86.10
2017	49	373	1117	37.2	43.34	73.80	86.10

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), World Development Indicators (WDI), CBN, International Crises Group/Crisis Watch/Nigeria

Several studies have established a link between crime and unemployment (Cramer, 2011). The lack of opportunities and endemic poverty in the zone have served to fuel the insurgency by providing conditions for easy recruitment especially of young people, who have become disillusioned with the government's inability to either provide them with employment opportunities or to create the enabling environment for them to pursue any meaningful livelihood. In fact, the very name of the sect (which literally translates to "western education is forbidden") signifies this rejection of a system that is perceived to have failed.

Table 5: Other Socioeconomic Indicators from the North-East

Indicator	Performance	
	North East	Nigeria
Absolute Poverty—2010*	69.0%	60.9%
Income Inequality (Gini Coefficient)—2010*	0.4468	0.447
Out of School Children (Primary School)—2011#	44.8%	26.3%
Out of School Children (JSS)—2011#	49.6%	25.7%
% of Candidates with 5 credits and above including Mathematics and English (WAEC)—2012**	8.72%	30.9%

* National Bureau of Statistics

** West African Examination Council

UNICEF Study on Out-of-School Children

Findings from the correlation analysis are presented below.

Table 6: Correlation of Insecurity Variables with National Security Budget, Unemployment and Poverty

S/N	Variables Considered	Kendalls Correlation Coefficient	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Spearman Correlation Coefficient
1	Number of Attacks with Security Budget	2.8% ^(NSS)	8.6% ^(NSS)	10% ^(NSS)
2	Number of Casualties with Security Budget	50.0%	45.9% ^(NSS)	58.3%
3	Number of Attacks with North East Unemployment	14.9% ^(NSS)	3.8% ^(NSS)	20.5% ^(NSS)
4	Number of Attacks with North East Poverty Incidence	21.6% ^(NSS)	40.4% ^(NSS)	26.9% ^(NSS)

Source: Author's estimation using SPSS.

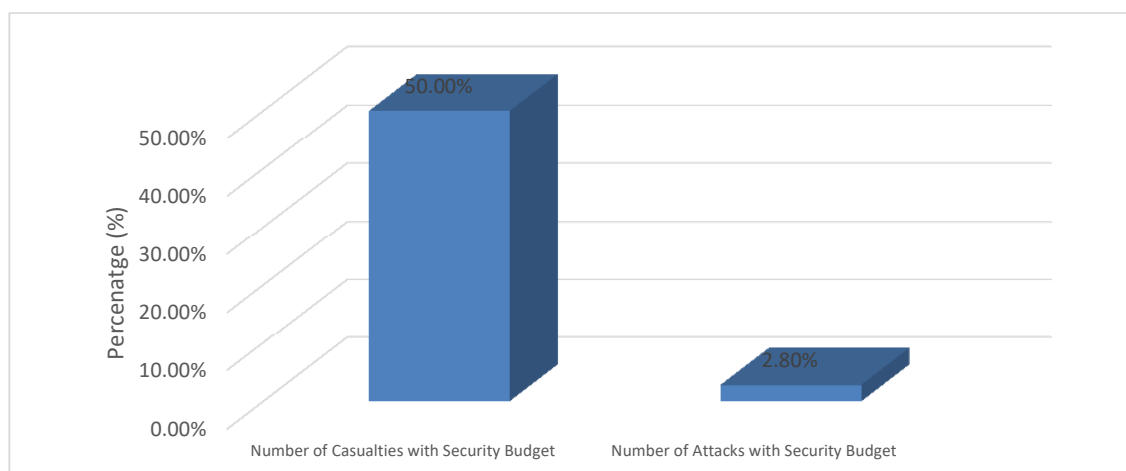
Note: (1) correlation coefficient of variables included are statistically significant at 10% critical value

(2) Analysis of the correlation result relies on Kendalls coefficient as it penalizes for data size and data type

(3) NSS means not statistically significant

There is a positive but not statistically significant association between National Security budgets with Number of Attacks. The association between the number of casualties security budget is, however, positive and statistically significant. The implication is that while a rising budget allocation to the security sector might have helped to curtail the number of casualties arising from Boko Haram attacks it has not resulted in a fewer attacks. It does appear that increased military spending and presence in the affected states meant that the sect could not carry out large scale attacks as they previously inflicting more damage and casualties. As military pressure increased, the sect changed its tactics and resorted more to suicide bombings. So whereas the number of attacks might not have reduced, the resulting casualties have declined significantly with increased security spending.

Figure 2: Correlation of Security budget with Selected Insecurity Indicators

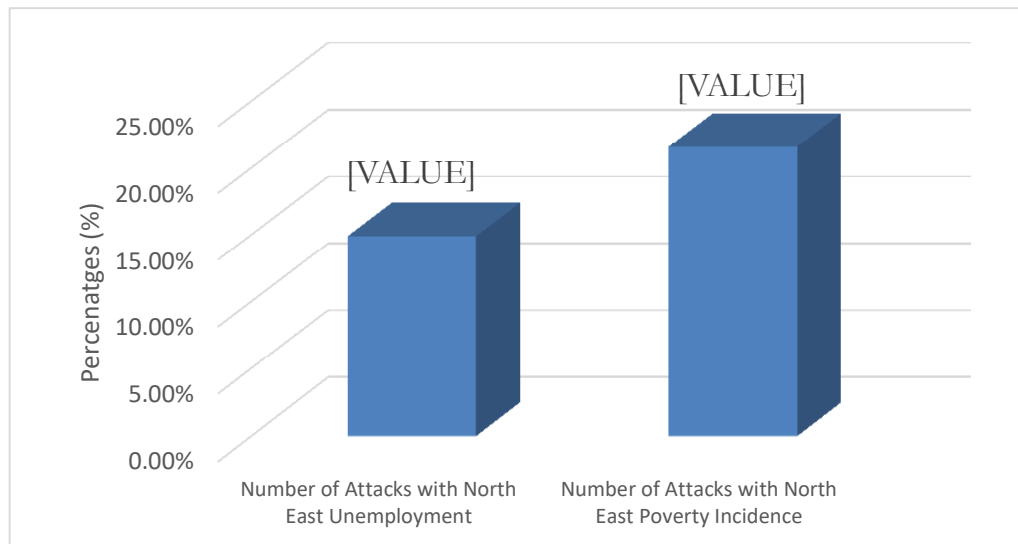


Source: Author's Estimation

Secondly, there is also a positive (but not statistically significant) association between number of attacks with unemployment in the north east. Using available data on poverty and unemployment for the North East, Kendal taus correlation coefficient was used to examine the association between attacks the selected socio-economic variables. The evidence shows that there is a positive association between number of attacks with unemployment and poverty in the North East (see Fig 3). This implies that unemployment and poverty have, to some extent,

contributed to insecurity in the zone particularly with regards the Boko Haram and its ability to easily recruit and propagate its ideology.

Figure 3: Correlation of Security budget with Selected Socio-economic Indicators



Source: Authors Estimation

5. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Democracy has always been advocated as security measure specifically because it gives people the right to determine their leaders and influence policy. More so, participation in the democratic process promotes inclusion. There is a growing body of literature pointing to democracy as a panacea to violent (Hoglund, 2006; Keane, 2010; Paris, 2004). Weak democratic systems, such as that which obtains in Nigeria can have indirect effects on economic growth and development and hence on security. In Nigeria, the weak democratic system has led to political instability and bad governance which in turn have resulted in or compounded problems of poverty, inequality and unemployment among others. These in turn have fuelled insecurity in different parts of the country as seen in the rise of the Boko Haram sect.

The data presented in this study show a relationship between insecurity challenges in the north-east and rates of poverty and unemployment in the zone. Furthermore, the study shows that despite increased spending by the government, the number of attacks and resulting casualties continued to rise between 2009 and 2017.

In the final analysis, it is here argued that for proposed long term solutions to the insecurity situation in Nigeria to be effective, they must be predicated on the rule of law, protective of personal and political freedoms and equality, accountable and transparent and more importantly, in service of the common good which impels government to “find ways to cultivate human development in its richest diversity” (Chomsky, 2014). Well-designed and inclusive political institutions and processes are fundamental to both preventing violence and managing crisis constructively. Furthermore, because respect for fundamental human rights of Nigerian citizens and active public participation in politics are essential for meeting human development objectives, it is imperative that Nigeria take steps to strengthen its democratic processes, structures and institutions.

The following concrete policy proposals are suggested as a way forward. *Promoting Even Development*: many of the serious crisis that have been experienced in Nigeria over the last few decades can be attributed to uneven development. These include the militancy in the South-South and recently the clamour for secession by IPOB in the South East. There are deep divergences between the geo-political zones and states in all spheres of social and economic life. This has often been worsened by a feeling of injustice arising from uneven distribution of benefits from proceeds of oil particularly in the south-south. The North-East of Nigeria is the most under-developed section of the country with unprecedented levels of poverty and unemployment. There is also a pervasive lack of lack of basic infrastructure such as electricity, transportation, water and sewage hampering economic development in the region. As a result, young, disenchanted and exasperated youths easily bought into the negative ideology of radical groups including Boko Haram and indeed became a ready pool for recruitment by such groups. In light of these challenges, government should speedily address issues relating to governance and

leadership deficit and consciously focus on promoting even development across the geo-political zones. Also important is the need for an inclusive socio-economic framework that makes sure no Nigerian or zone is left behind.

Better Economic Management: Sustained and rapid economic growth would create new jobs, business opportunities, higher incomes, and increased wealth. However, this requires capable and effective management of the macro-economy by the public sector and of industries by the private sector, as well as close rapport between the two. Export-oriented growth model has proved to be a rapid growth driver. A heterogeneous nation like Nigeria with wide and entrenched disparities of economic opportunities and incomes, needs government intervention in the market place and affirmative-action-type programs to ensure a fairer distribution of opportunities and incomes among all social groups. Failure to undertake such initiatives as argued above could lead to social unrest and violence.

Poverty Reduction and Job Creation: A decentralised and integrated approach to poverty reduction is strongly recommended to accelerate poverty eradication, rural growth, and social protection. Past development policies such as Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Vision 2010, and National Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (NEEDS) failed to improve the living conditions of Nigerians, reduce poverty, and improve social infrastructure significantly. Some of the factors responsible for their failure include: poor planning and monitoring of programmes; inadequate funding; poor implementation; budgetary indiscipline and corruption; poor accountability etc. A different approach is suggested. Rather than sinking scarce funds into a plethora of programmes that have not yielded results, such resources should be diverted to building new schools, reskilling teachers, providing meals at schools and books and uniforms to needy pupils.

In order to usefully engage the teeming population of young people, there is also the need for a creative approach to job creation. Nigeria can draw useful lessons from Korea where a three-year-plan of economic development was designed to cover regulatory reform; labour market reform; and the promotion of entrepreneurship service. Strategies of special job creation such as promotion of SMEs as well as establishing linkages between big industries and small subcontracting firms to produce and supply small parts were effective. The required critical success factors for a structure approach to job creation include good infrastructure and education system that can produce a skilled labour force relevant to entrepreneurship and research.

Youth entrepreneurial villages can be developed and piloted in each geo-political zone of the country to absorb the teeming unemployed youths. For instance, a pilot agricultural village will have: [a] a number of agricultural science graduates; [b] cleared farms; [c] solar power infrastructure for lighting; [d] tents or simple hostel and general bathrooms for housing; [e] bank loans guaranteed by government; basic farming equipment; and [f] assistance with marketing intelligence. Each farm village would be highly specialized and targeted (specific crops or animals). The youth would be organized into cooperatives and supported by experts as advisors or co-investors which could be local or international. A critical success factor is creating linkages among international and local producers.

Strengthening Democratic Institutions: The present electoral laws of Nigeria as it is composed will reduce tension during elections and produce results that will be accepted by all if well implemented. Aside the above addressing all the factors responsible for electoral malpractices and post-election violence in Nigeria such as the rave for power, poverty, lack of political education, bribery and corruption and inadequate planning engender peaceful elections and deepen democracy in Nigeria. This has to including ensuring that defaulters of electoral laws are adequately punished in accordance with the provisions of the law.

Religion, Ethnicity, National Security and Development: For Nigeria to achieve sustained and rapid economic development, inter-group strife and violence have been significantly curtailed. Any political solution to inter-group conflicts, through some formula of power- and wealth-sharing, has to be viable and enduring. Equity and justice should underpin any new vision of Nigeria. This was recognised as the basis for success in post-apartheid South-Africa's 1994 Constitution which included the idea of a non-discriminatory non-racial, non-sex and equitable society as called for in the Freedom Charter. Reconstruction efforts by the government should be all-inclusive and start with those that had been marginalised or on the periphery of society. Important lessons can be drawn from South Africa where government invested in social services such as houses, access to electricity, water, sanitation, pension grant, service delivery etc. disproportionately delivered along racial lines. Also government should deliberately de-emphasise the creation of dichotomy among Nigerians on the basis of religious identities, ethnic differences, 'indigeneship' and settlers in favour of a common Nigerian citizenship. Instead, inter-religious and inter-faith harmony should be encouraged and cultivated.

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