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## Boko Haram Insecurity and Its Effects on the Economic Activities of Yobe State 2012 -2019, Nigeria

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### Abstract:

*North-eastern part of Nigeria has been devilled with the Boko Haram insurgency for more than ten years now. The effects of this catastrophe are grievous indeed. Among them are the serious destructions of political, economic and social institutions. This paper examines the economic consequences of Boko Haram insurgency in Yobe state, one of the states devastated by the crisis. Analysis of economic potentialities of the state have been discussed with clear example pointed in the tables showing volume of production and supply of both cash and food crops economy before the outbreak of the crisis. But with the level of damage done to the state, economic activities come to suffer wanton collapse in all its fiber. Through fieldwork and data collected, indications on how the economic activities in the state deteriorated are shown in another tabular form so as to compare the state of economy before and after the insurgency. Among the findings of the paper include: food crisis, displacement of people, agricultural crisis, poverty and high rate of crime among others. Suggestions were made to alleviate the situation by encouraging government to look at the statistic and come up with alternative to the problem in order to curtail the situation.*

**Keywords:** Insurgency, economy, food crisis, production, underproduction

### 1. Introduction

This research paper examines the activities of Boko Haram insurgency in North-eastern Nigeria with emphasis on how it affects the economic activities of Yobe state. Boko Haram is a religious sect founded in Maiduguri around 2004 and carried their first attack in 2009. Recent world report reveals that more than 20,000 people were killed and over two million displaced by the insurgency. Although the crisis has bedeviled almost 60% of the country, Yobe states was one of the most affected of this terrible terrorist's act. The state has its commercial activities virtually relegated to the background, where more than two Billion naira was lost as a result of various attacks carried out. This situation led to the closure of many important commercial centers especially the three major cattle markets in the state. These were Potiskum cattle market, the biggest in West Africa, Garin Alkali cattle market in Bursari Local Government and Gaidam cattle market. Those markets were closed down for several years due to nefarious activities of the Boko Haram sect. Since then, commercial activities were frustrated and several investments continue to suffer setback because of insecurity and absent of proper intervention. The overall effects of this economic catastrophe have been a tremendous joblessness which within the period created abject poverty, increased rate of crime within the region, hunger and starvation as well as general psychological trauma and fear of the unknown. For clear illustration, this work examines the major attacks on the cattle market in the state like the Potiskum attack, which took place on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2012 that claimed hundreds of lives and destroyed thousands of cattle. This led to the closure of Garin Alkali cattle market and that of Gaidam and Kuka reta all in Yobe state. The development that followed was the intervention of federal government through the establishment of presidential committee on the North-East Initiative, and later North-East Development Commission which is of recent. In addition to that, not fewer than fifty International and National Non-Governmental Organizations including United Nations and European Union are currently operating in the state. Their focused is on assisting the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) with foods, medical, shelter and other Humanitarians assistance. State governments have also come into the situation several times to ease the hardship. However, what this research work aims at achieving is to fine the real solution which lies in the government pro-active measure to revamp the economy at the grassroots. This should be through people-oriented policies which shall pave way to social and economic development of the region, by putting physical structure on ground to support businesses. More importantly, attention and emphasis must be given to industrial growth in the state, small scale business which is mostly dominated by the greater part of the larger society. The research also comes up with the level of economic damage by studying the volume of supply in the three markets six months before Boko Haram attack, and the volume of supply after the attack to enable this work come up with the level of destruction and damage done to the commercial activities of the area.

## 2. Brief Economic Activities of the State before the Insurgency

Yobe State, whose name was derived from Kumadugu Yobe River, was carved out of present Borno State in 1991, by former military President Ibrahim Badamasa Babangida. It is one of the States out of the Six States of North-East geopolitical zone. Historically the State was known to have achieved greatness in terms of economic and social development particularly when one look at its position bordering with economically enterprising States such as Gombe, Bauchi, Borno as well as three different countries: Cameroun, Chad and republic of Niger. The population of the State as at 2006 preliminary census result was about 2,321,591. (Nigerian Population Commission: (NPC) Provisional Census Result: 2006). The State has Seventeen Local Government Areas.

According to M Boso, (2009) The climatic condition of Yobe State has very hot and dry climate particularly the northern part of the State for almost greater part of the whole year. The hottest temperature when the season is due usually reached about 30oc to 42oc. With regard to rainy season, the period varies as it lasts long in the southern part of the State compare to northern part. However, this shows the State was on the verge of development train. It was the abrupt appearance of Boko Haram that inevitably derailed the smooth running of the development opportunities of the State.

## 3. Economic Opportunities of Yobe State

Yobe State has been endowed with varieties of human and economic potentials. These opportunities include both agricultural as well as mineral resources. Among the agro-based raw material include:

### 3.1. Arabic Gum

This raw material is very abundant in the State, it is largely produced in large quantity. The most interesting part of the whole potentials is that, Arabic Gum is divided into two categories; Grade 1 and Grade 2. Yobe State produces both the two categories. However, it should be noted that this raw material is an export commodity and thus by 1992 National output was put at 8000 tons.

### 3.2. Groundnuts and Cotton

These agricultural cash crops economy had been in production since pre-colonial period. It has been produced in large quantity and has since been an export commodity for a very long period of time. A. G. Hopkins maintained that, 'it was when the surpluses in production of groundnuts was over and above subsistence level that exchange of goods became prominent in the whole northern Nigeria. In fact, it was as result of the increase in the marketing deal that railway was linked to Nguru since 1929 to facilitate easy movement of the goods by the colonial administration. These commitments in the volume of production of groundnuts and cotton in Yobe State led to the establishment of Nguru Oil Mills Limited.

### 3.3. Beans

This agricultural crop is also produced in large quantity in Yobe State. However, with the exception of few areas that are being encroached by desertification disaster, almost all Yobe State beans is being produce in large quantity which became one of the major centers of commercial activity to the southern part of the country.

### 3.4. Wheat and Rice

These are also another source of food that are cultivated in abundance as far as Yobe State is concern. Bade, Gaidam and Fika are having the largest farming area of these agro-based crop economy. So also, wheat is very much produced in the State. All these potentials if Government offered assistance to the farmers will definitely attract good investment opportunities.

### 3.5. Livestock

Yobe State is among the State that produces livestock in the country. In fact, it has been confirmed by many economic analysts that one of the cattle markets located in Potiskum is the largest and leading one in West Africa. (reference) It was as a result of the volume of production in the livestock that Nigerian Food Company Limited located in Nguru.

### 3.6. Sesame Seed

Another very important agricultural produce in Yobe State which attracts investors from far and near and which markets rotates throughout the year is Sesame seed. Its large market is in Nguru but production of the seed is almost all over the State. This produce is one of the global export seed with special emphasis given to it in Europe and Asia.

### 3.7. Source

*Yobe State Investment Opportunities*

## 4. Methodology

The area under this research work is limited to Yobe State, one of the states in the North-Eastern Nigeria affected by the activities of Boko Haram insurgency. Although the crisis started in Maiduguri the capital of Borno State, later it spread to other parts of the country with Damaturu, Yobe state capital as almost their second based. The crisis gained firm root in the state in 2012 and since then merciless killings, kidnappings and series of bomb blast became rampant in

one third of the state. The scope of this paper is centered around the impacts of this crisis on the economy and food security of the state. The method of data collection for this paper was based on the survey carried out through fieldwork in Damaturu the state capital, and some parts of the state. This was done through these research assistants who are well conversant with geography and roadmap of the state. With their assistance the researcher was able to reach out to the relevant informants, and by extension the work was able to meet all the economic stakeholders of the state that were directly affected by the activities of the insurgency. The methodology applied in the process of gathering the information of this work subsume in-depth interviews with the relevant informants such as the security agents, farmers, traders and religious leaders and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). A total number of 70 informants were interviewed. Most of the interviews were carried out confidentially because of the security situation since the insurgency is yet to be surmounted. All the data were collected and recorded in audio-tapes which were transcribed for the purpose of data analysis. There are also field notes collected from the environment through observation method based on the action of the general public in respect of the economic crisis of the state. Another method applied during the interview was the application of interpreters from the assistants employed in the research since majority of the interviewers could only speak in Kanuri and Hausa languages. The fieldwork lasted for a period of six weeks, and this was organized to access the three zone in the state for two weeks respectively. At the end secondary source such as information from Journals, internet, and relevant documents from government organization were used to compile this work.

### 5. Economic Development of Yobe State before the Insurgency

However, it may not be clear to understand the extent of damage the insurgency done to the economy of the state unless one look at the volume of production of both food and cash crops before the crisis. Historically, the area under study had attracted the attention of European activities in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This was due to so many factors. Among them is the geography of the area which favored agricultural activities as a result of conducive climate of more than one quarter of the annual rainfall. The agriculture was initially subsistence that is production was generally made for house hold consumption. But with the passage of time, and particularly with European intervention, the volume of production was increase beyond subsistence level. (L. T. Jafar: 2014:3)

Thus, it was when the surpluses in production were over and above subsistence level that exchange of goods became prominent ((A.G. Hopkins: 83). Ever since, all the seventeen Local Governments in the state have been producing most of the foodstuffs far beyond subsistence level. Crops such as millet, corns, maize and beans were produced at maximum capacity. But food crop like rice is being produce around Gaidam, Gashua and Nguru because of their location around the fringes of river Yobe. Equally cash crops like hide and skin, Groundnut, Sesame etc are produce in some areas and they have strategic market locations like Nguru, Macina, Babban Gida respectively. In addition to that, there are considerable developments in the irrigation farming in most parts of the areas of the state. Many vegetables are being produced throughout the years in large quantity beyond subsistence level. Another factor that boasted the production capacity of Yobe state is the development of markets. All the Local Government districts including villages in the state have the tradition of weekly marketing which was part of the economic system since colonial period. ((S. Garba: 1996). The Below table indicates the volume of quantity of different food and cash crops produced in 2008, one year before the kicked off of the Boko Haram insurgency.

S/N	Type of Crops	Volume of Quantity	Year of Production	Period
1	Millet	1400 Tons	2008	Annually
2	G/Corn	500tons	2008	Annually
3	Maize	700tons	2008	Annually
4	Rice	550tons	2008	Annually
5	Beans	480tons	2008	Annually
6	Sesame	850tons	2008	Annually
7	Wheat	680tons	2008	Annually

*Table 1: Volume of Foodstuffs Production in Yobe State before the Insurgency*

*Source: Author's Fieldwork (2020)*

S/N	Type of Vegetable	Volume of Quantity	Year of Production	Period
1	Tomatoes	Unquantified (But Enough To Feed The State And Export To Neighboring Towns)	2008	Annually
2	Pepper	*****	2008	Annually
3	Red Pepper	*****	2008	Annually
4	Onion	*****	2008	Annually

*Table 2: Vegetables*

*Source: Author's Fieldwork (2020)*

Town	No of Cattles	No. of Livestocks	Period
Gaidam	20,000	24,000	Weekly
Garin Alkali	22,000	27000	Weekly
Potiskum	25,000	31,000	Weekly
Total	67,000	82,000	Weekly

Table 3: Cattle Production Volume of Supply of Cattles to the Southern/Eastern Parts of Nigeria before the Insurgency from Yobe State Three Major Cattle Markets (Potiskum, Gaidam and Garin Alkali) 2008

Source: Author's Fieldwork (2020)

The above analysis on the level of production and supply of both food and cash crops as well the cattle production in Yobe state before the Boko Haram insurgency is enough to buttress that the state was on the verge of development. Most of these produces apart from distribution to the various parts of the state, were all supply to other parts of the country. This explained that greater parts of the country depend on the supply of such foodstuffs from Yobe state. For instance, one single crops (Onion) which is produced in large quantity around Gaidam area as shown in the above table have been supplying both western and eastern states of the country. In 2014 and 15 the price of Onion in Southern part of the country was a hell. This was due to the absent of production of this crop by the activities of Boko Haram insurgency (M. Musa: 2019:)

It should be noted all the major markers in the state as well as the three cattle markets mentioned above was closed down by the security agents due to the series of attacks by the insurgents.

What appeared to have been the greater damage done to the economy of Yobe state in this crisis was the imposition of state of emergency by the federal government. This action has resulted in so many economic setbacks to the general people of the state particularly merchants. There was complete withdrawal of communication network, the major services providers like MTN, ZAIN, ETISALATE etc. had all suspended their network for security reason. People had to go outside the state to make calls. It was stated by the security that:

*'The shutdown demonstrated, among others, that while ICTs serve various desirable purposes for developing states, they will be jettisoned when their use challenges the state's legitimacy and raison d'être, but not without consequences.'*

This prompted the dispersal of people to other parts of the country as life became miserable in the state. In addition, markets were closed for several years, people abandoned their farmland for insecurity purpose and almost all those that patronize the state withdrew because of the danger posed by the insurgency. One of the most devastating factors that affected cattle market in Yobe state was the attacked carried out on Potiskum market on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2012, which resulted to the destruction of more than 500 Cattle and livestock. Also, an estimated amount of money worth 500 million naira was carted away by the insurgents. This single action was said to have caused more than 70% of the marketers their capital and thus indirectly brought an end to their long-invested business in the state.

The overall effects of all the above crisis was complete backwardness of economic activities in the state. Against this background, the research looked at the current volume of supply compare to the one above before the crisis. This shall enable us to come closer to the level of damage the Boko Haram insurgency done to the state and the sharp drop in the production capacity of both crops and cattle market in the state. Below table indicates how the volume of production in both the crops and cattle drastically was affected by the activities of the insurgents.

S/N	Type of Crops	Volume of Quantity	Year of Production	Period
1	Millet	600 Tons	2019	Annually
2	Guane Corn	200tons	2019	Annually
3	Maize	320tons	2019	Annually
4	Rice	240tons	2019	Annually
5	Beans	185tons	2019	Annually
6	Sesame	235tons	2019	Annually
7	Wheat	530tons	2019	Annually

Table 4: Volume of Foodstuffs Production in Yobe State Currently Due to the Insurgency

Source: Author's Fieldwork (2020)

S/N	Type of Vegetable	Volume of Quantity	Year of Production 2019	Annually
1	Tomatoes	Not Enough To Feed The State, Most Of The Time It Has To Be Brought From Neighboring Towns		Annually
2	Pepper	*****		Annually
3	Red Pepper	*****		Annually
4	Onion	*****		Annually

Table 5: Vegetables

Source: Author's Fieldwork (2020)

Towns	No of Cattles	No. of Livestocks	Period
Gaidam	8000	8,000	Weekly
Garin Alkali	2000	7000	Weekly
Potiskum	9000	11,000	Weekly
Total	19,000	26,000	Weekly

*Table 6: Cattle Production Volume of Supply of Cattles to the Southern/Eastern Part of Nigeria Currently Due to the Insurgency from yobe State Three Major Cattle Markets (Potiskum, Gaidam and Garin Alkali) 2019*

*Source: Author's Fieldwork (2020)*

From the above analysis in the table, it is clear to conclude how the Boko Haram insurgency woefully played a significant role in the present food crisis in Yobe state and how equally the crisis makes commercial activities and the general economic development of the state so disorganized and retrogressive in the last ten years. Through the fieldwork survey, it was discovered how the security agents imposed serious action on the movement of cattle in almost all the three most affected states of the North-East, Borno, Yobe State and Adamawa. Because of the gradual disappearance of market places due to low production and poor communication network, commercial activities became very challenging in the state. Most of the areas known as strategic economic location such as Nguru, Geidam, Potiskum, Gashua, etc. have now turned to a mere peripheral market place where only few things could be bought for house hold consumption. The level of production has been so low that most of the farmers have become so unproductive because of the factors highlighted above being caged in IDPs camp (F. Abubakar: 2019:34)

## 6. Findings

From the data collected and analyzed, this paper succeeded in finding the devastating effects of Boko Haram insurgency on the economic development of Yobe state:

- More than 50% of the farmers in the most productive areas of the state have been reduced to mere beggars depending on the goodwill of international donors and other Non-governmental organizations. In addition to that, there are increased number of street begging especially in the state capital where most of the displaced are now residing. It is discovered from the research, substantial hectares of land are now abandoned in the Gujba, Gaidam, Tarmuwa and Buni Yadi areas in the state as a result of Boko Haram activities. Many farmers were brutally slaughtered while working on their farm.
- Other issues related to the economic meltdown of the state is backwardness in marketing activities, according one informant only 15% of the cattle buyers now patronizes the state for fear of unknown as to insecurity situation. Apart from closure of the market for more than three years, many cattle dealers have lost their capital especially Potiskum. The 4<sup>th</sup> March 2012 attackers went away with more Five Hundred Million Naira cash (500,000,000,00). Also, the supply of cattle from the neighboring town of Niger republic which have been blocked by the security personnel with view to block the financial source of the insurgents has further aggravated the collapse of market in the state.
- Yobe state is endowed with soil fertility for the production of Sesame at maximum capacity. Despite the insurgency, farmer wasable to produce not less than 235tons of this cash crop economy. Tarmuwa market which has become the center of this booming commercial activity has now become the target of Boko Haram insurgency. Between the years of 2019 and 2020 not fewer than ten different attacks were carried out by the insurgents which had seriously affected the volume of supply to the market by the merchants.
- Another finding of this research work is the imposition of curfew which destabilized the market hours in the state. For several years, economic activities held for only six hour a day. Most of those farmers who has to travel to the center to sell their goods has to spend two days on a single supply instead of just a day transaction. This had affected the economic activities of the state with serious damage on the petty traders.
- Among the effect of this insurgency in Yobe State economic development is the collapse of small-scale businesses especially within the state capital and some major towns that were marred by the series of attacks. For instance, roadside traders, restaurants, mobile food ingredients sellers and other basic human needs were scattered. Even though this research discovered that Boko Haram used the opportunity to destroy mobile phone infrastructure, as a means of checkmating GSM companies because they were helping security agencies to arrest and kill many of their members, but despite that it was discovered that Boko Haram was using alternative means of communication, at least within the areas where mobile telephone infrastructure had been targeted. It is curious, therefore, that the Nigerian security forces saw the mobile phone blackout, as a usual Boko Haram tactic, as a means to further extend their target of the insurgency.
- The most devastating effect of this insecurity, is the review of commercial banks operation hours from 9am to 12pm against the normal period of 8am to 4pm. This single development had created serious vacuum in the business cycle of the state because there was serious challenge in the process of depositing cash in the bank which unwillingly forced people to be keeping money at home or shops. What followed this was rising cases of shop breaking and night attacks by suspected book Haram members to further reaffirm their financial strength. The outcome of this stress was the dispersal of many businessmen to other parts of the country abandoning most of their investment in the state.

## 7. Implications of the Economic Collapse

- All the above repercussions of Boko Haram insurgency in Yobe state are not without its implication to the very survival of the society. Among them include joblessness among the teeming youth of the state. According to this research an average age between 18-30yrs have been rendered jobless because of the above impacts. There is therefore serious rise in criminal activities in the state couple with the general insecurity and that unfortunately make things difficult for the general public.
- The worse part of this crisis is the present food insecurity created by the economic downfall. The absent of enough production of foodstuffs by the farmer have put the state in a serious shortage of food as highlighted in the table 4 and 5 of this paper. The price of foodstuff has skyrocketed in the last five years more than ever before. For instance, below table shows clear example of few foodstuffs prices and they shoot in the last few years.

Types of Foodstuff	Prices in Naira As Of 2012	Prices in Naira As of 2019	Production Period
G/Corn	5000	17,000	Annually
Maize	4,500	9000	Annually
Beans	7,500	18,000	Annually
Millet	2,200	40,000	Annually
Rice 40 Bowls	22,000	45,000	Annually
Wheat	7,500	15,000	Annually
Groundnut	7000	35,000	Annually
Sesame	9000	38,000	Annually
Sweet Potato	1,500	7000	Annually

Table 7

Source: Author's Fieldwork (2020)

Some Vegetables	Prices in Naira as of 2012	Prices in 2019	Production Period
Onion	7000	24,000	Annually
Pepper	2,500	8000	Several Period In A Year
Tomato	5000	12,000	Several Period In A Year
Red Pepper	2,500	8000	Several Period In A Year

Table 8

Source: Author's Fieldwork (2020)

It is very clear from the above table to perceive the economic condition of Yobe state in the situation which is the product of Boko Haram insurgency. The situation has warranted the establishment of different Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in various locations of the state to ease the tension of people rooming about without shelter. According to this research about 40% of the farmers that annually produce foods to the state and even neighboring states are now at the mercy of Non-Governmental Organizations who provides food and shelter to them. This has rollback the state to an economic ebb which is being currently the major challenges of many citizens.

- This research discovered another serious challenge facing both the state and federal governments. This has to do with the heavy task of resettling the displaced people back to their normal life, and the possibility of rehabilitating their economic potentialities in a short moment to address the economic meltdown as explained above. Most of these abandoned places are still being control by Boko Haram militants which makes it difficult for people to go back to their normal businesses. Unless the fight comes to an end, full commercial activities may be an issue of not a near future.
- A lot of people have lost their capital and other investment as a result of the crisis, what and how the government or any other humanitarian group shall revitalize and reactivate them is another major challenge. Even if there is the plan and will, the question of corruption in all the scenario is entirely another complicated issue to address in order to overcome and succeed in this arduous task.

## 8. Recommendations of This Research

- There has to be a strong coordinated security measure to fight this fight. The current style, approach, tactics by the Nigeria military has failed. Their inability to bring an end to this crisis in Yobe state is a clear indication that they need a new way out.
- What should follow the above success is economic empowerment of people particularly farmers and traders. They should be ginger with capital to enable them bridge the gap created by the insurgency for almost a decade in the state. The assistance must go to them not the way round.
- It is also paramount to demilitarize the society completely. The presence of security personnel especially men of the Nigeria army in almost all the length and breadth of the state is send a bad omen to the general public. Psychologically their presence means the war is still around.

- It is necessary for both the State and Federal Governments to vigorously engage in networking the dilapidated and abandoned roads for easy access to transportation and communication system to enable the marketers move with their goods from one market to another. From the fieldwork data collected, 80% of northern Yobe have been abandoned as a result of the insurgency. Most of the public institutions are still operating in the State capital.
- Among the recommendation of this work is the rehabilitation of various dilapidated buildings or shops within and outside the markets affected by the insurgency. Potiskum cattle market which was burnt down, Gaidam market, Babban Gida, Gujba, Gulani, and Buni Yadi are all victims of Boko Haram attack. For people to go back to their business fully, there must be rehabilitation of commercial centers.
- Lastly, in this academic suggestion is also for the authority to rekindle the state economic relations with outside investors who left because of the insurgency. Government should and must provide security and safety within their business cycle. Otherwise, absent of outside investors or buyers of state produced goods shall not auger well for the economic growth and development of the state, especially at a time when economic recovery has become some of paramount importance to the entire state.

## 9. Conclusion

From so far what have been obtained through this research, Yobe state which is the central theme of discussion was economically crippled by the activities of Boko Haram militants since 2012. Series of attacks carried out by the insurgents at different locations especially commercial centers have created a serious problem for both the state merchants and outside investors for the past eight years. The result of this insecurity has been economic collapse, poverty, food crisis and general fear of unknown that beclouded the state. Important markets were closed down for many years, farmland abandoned and major roads that link the state for easy communication and transportations were all blocked which makes it difficult for people to move. The effect of this crisis has affected the volume of production of both food and cash crop economy as well as the production and supply of cattle to other parts of the country. However various tables in this work have indicated the differences in volume of production and supply before and after the insurgency. What then is the alternative to this crisis? Recommendations have been forwarded such as revitalization of commercial centers, provision of capital incentives to the traders and farmers, establish security wise environment for commercial activities and sanitization of the civil society from military intervention in the general affairs of the people. When all these are done, this research believes something tangible shall be achieve in the effort to revive the economic potentialities of Yobe State.

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