

PERCEPTIONS OF CHRISTIANS ON BOKO HARAM: IMPLICATIONS ON MUSLIMS IN RIVERS STATE

Isa Sulaiman

Department of Islamic Studies and Shari'a, Bayero University, Kano
Isasulaimam225@gmail.com, Gsm: 08063887555

Yusuf Isa Sawaba

Department of Religious Studies Federal University Wukari,
Taraba state
sawabayusuf@gmail.com, Gsm: 07039703242

Biliyaminu Yusuf

Department of Religious Studies, Federal University Wukari,
Yusufbilyaminu51@gmail.com, 07039703242

Abstract

Large numbers of Christians globally misinterpret the teachings of Islam, and Boko Haram therefore, raised additional misconceptions and hatred against Islam and Muslims as result of the ways in which the group mercilessly killing innocents, it was observed that, the Christians spread many misconceptions against Islam through utterances on social Medias, radios and etc, among of it include; the insurgents target Christians only, some claim that, it is a set-up by Muslims against Good Luck administration, some even think that it is a process of Islamizing the Nation. These misinterpretation and perceptions affect Islam and Muslims in River State, socially, economically, politically and Da'awah activities. These problems are the factors which this paper wills Inshaⁱ Allah look upon. The aim of the work is to determine real teaching of Islam and clear the wrong perception from the Christians' mind, the objectives of the work are; to narrate the Conspiracy theory on the insurgents, to refresh Da'awah activities in Rivers state, to identify the extents that image of Islam was distorted, Scholastic respond to the perceptions etc. the researchers use three methods for gathering the facts which are; questionnaires, interviews, and discussions. The paper finds out that the insurgents' activities created more disunity among Nigerians, the fact is, the insurgents is set-up by foreign influence through Nigeria politicians for their daily foods, it was discovered that not only Muslims are the member of the group but even Christians are involved

Keywords: Boko Haram, Islam, Muslims, Christians, Christianity, Rivers State

INTRODUCTION

Boko Haram' mercilessness activities divert attention of non-Muslims to bad comment against Islam and Muslims which is not before, the comments affected social, economic, Da'awah and political aspect of Muslims. Some perception of the Christian derived motivation of the researchers toward the work in which at end the effect of the perceptions is discovered. Based on the objectives of the work, the researcher

spilt the topic in to contents, which are; Emergency of Boko Haram, Conspiracies theories concerning Boko Haram, Boko Haram in side barracks, South-East and Boko Haram, Additional Packages, Cordial Relationship between Muslim and Christian before Boko Haram, The State of Da'awah Activities before Boko Haram, Perceptions of Christian on Boko Haram In River State, Christian Perception on Boko Haram in River State, Implications of the Perceptions

on the Muslims, Da'awah activities during Boko Haram in River State, The position of terrorism in Islam, Recommendation and Conclusion

History of Boko Haram

The words (Boko Haram) constituted two words (Boko and Haram). Boko is a Hausa word and Haram is an Arabic word, Boko in Hausa term simply means; cheating, deception, deceit, fraudulence, gyp, delusion etc. Haram literary means forbiddance, and prohibition, it means forbidding to eat or do something because of its effects. Technically, Boko Haram simple means prohibition of western Education or civilization, those who initiate the idea are called Boko Haram, that name was given to them by people, but the real name is *Jama'at Ahlu-Sunnah walda'awatuwal jihad* (the people of prophetic Sunnah, and evangelist and struggle). There are many theories on the emergence of Boko Haram. Usman Sulaiman Sarki and Babangida Abba opined that the history of Boko Haram can be traced back to 1995 as Ahlus Sunnah Waljama'atul Hijra, the group was emerged by Abu-Bakar Lawal, and Muhammad Yusuf later became leader of the group, when Abu-Bakar Lawal left for further Education in Saudi Arabia. The group at time called by different names, such as Taliban, Yusifiyya, Jama'at Muhajuruna etc. According to Babangida Abba, the insurgents emerged in three stages. Firstly: by Abu Bara'a, (Ibrahim bin Haruna) Nigerian but Saudi Arabia by birth, he was among mujahidin who migrated to Eritrea 1996, later he indented to initiate the idea in Nigeria, he trained youth up to 2004. Second stage is a practical stage in which Muhammad Ali became a leader of the movement as a result of misunderstanding between him and Abu Bara'a, as result of that he called Muhammad Yusuf to his movement. In the Kanamma event, Muhammad Ali called for retaliation but

Muhammad Yusuf disapproves the call, the last stage was when Muhammad Yusuf started calling people to shun western Education, etc.

Conspiracies theories concerning Boko Haram

Concerning the insurgents, there are many allegations but the researchers further more investigate on the insurgents and found more allegations as follows.

Boko Haram in side barracks

A high number of Boko Haram ideologies were perceived and accepted by some Nigeria army mostly, for economic benefits and religious zeal. Asma'u Rabi'u who lived in Shadawanka Barracks Bauchi and a wife to an army who knew Muhammad Yusuf by physical contact within 2002 to 2003 said; some army used to attend Muhammad Yusuf preaching in the bush, she added, his preaching focused on the Islamizing the nation, establishment of Islamic state, destroying un-Islamic government, working under un-Islamic government and Western education are prohibited. Among the Nigeria army that accepted the ideology includes, Habibu, Ibrahim, and Bana, unfortunately she forgot their Surnames, according to her; Habibu used to teach in the Islamiyah section of the barrack and she was invited to join the movement, all of them later retired and followed Muhammad Yusuf. Asma'u Rabi'u stated that, in 2004, Shadawanka armies were redeployed to Bama Barrack at Maiduguri state, on their way, an army (Colgate by nickname) cried out that this redeployment was set up by Nigerian government in order to kill Muslims army, due to his habitual used of high drugs and alcohol, he was given a deaf ear. An army called Abu-Bakr was intercepted at Owere with an allegation of been an informant to Boko Haram. Nigeria army fighter whom attended Sambisa told researchers that, there are many allegations on contortion of Boko-Haram activities, it

was discovered that when the leader of Shi'ite (Azkzaky) was detained, many radical Shi'its' group from Iraq and Iran entered Nigeria and collaborated with the insurgents.

South-East and Boko Haram

There were many allegations that the insurgents are not only Muslims, due to the information, the allegations is true, because, an Engineer Igbo man from Owerre Capital of Imo state who constructed Omudioga Mosque told the researchers that an Igbo boy from Owerre who is a friend to him was joined Boko Haram, and he came back with a bag of money. In other way, Mallam Salisu in Hausa Quarter Elele told the researchers that a lady (Esther) from Jos who was selling food in Yanagua (Bayelsa state) told them that a group of people asked her to find female that can explode bomb, she reported the matter to Muslims in Yanagua, while, they advised her to leave the town if she cannot do so, then she ran to Elele. Another Vital source, from who posted to Maiduguri to fight Boko Haram said, a Christian Boko Haram from Kogi and Igala clan was intercepted, the insurgent revealed the way he became Boko Haram, he said, he applied police recruitment on the net and invited to logos for interview, from there to Abuja, from Abuja to Sambisa in helicopter, the boy vomited politicians' names those who are involved in the activities, this is a reason that politicians and foreign influence are behind the bar engineering all the atrocities.

Additional Packages

A Mopol told researchers that some governors use advantages of insecurity to earn additional packages from federal government, also, some security personal engaged in kidnapping, robbery, or destroy villages for gold which is dory for Maiduguri women.

Cordial Relationship between Muslim and Christian before Boko Haram

The indigenous and non-indigenous Muslims haven't any problem with Ikwere and Ogoni people, they like Muslims because of their humanity system; they trust Muslims more than their brothers. Emanuel and the English teacher at Okey memorial school Elele explained the reason why he like Muslims as, Muslims always tells the truth. Proprietor of okay memorial said that he like Muslims because Islam is the religion of humanity. Muhammad Akilu stated: Before Boko Haram, Muslims and Christians in the state live Peacefully way, no any conflicts between, the Christians respect the Muslims to the extent that they don't suspect a Muslims with lie or unwanted behavior, in fact, intermarriage began between both parties, Christians in the state preferred to give house rent to Muslims than Igbo or Christians. Uzo stated that the reasons why river state Christians like Muslims is that they saw real humanity from Nigerians' Army during civil war, Malam Rufa'i said that Muslims have freedom of worship in the state, for political view. The rivers' state people have zeal to be under Nigeria than Before Boko. Proprietor of okay memorial said that if Buhari gave Biafra country definitely he must give Niger Delta country because we cannot go with Igbo. The researchers contacted some Muslims living in the State such as civil servant, traders, such as Imam of trailer pack in Ogoni land who sells electronic devices, Malam Salisu at Elele who sells onions and pepper and Umar the Jbwis sectary Elele Branch who sells cloth, as well as other peoples. But the simultaneously opined market transaction between the two parties was excellent.

The State of Da'awah Activities before Boko Haram

Da'awah is Arabic word means propagation, in technical way, it is processes of spread teaching of in the state,

or processes calling people to Islam in order to make them to understand what is Allah about. Before Boko Haram, the activities face no attack, Muslims have freedom of Da'awah, they use to enter villages for and generate huge numbers of Muslims, they have free mind to give their children to Muslims, for Example, more than ten children from Omudioga are studying in Katsina under the scholarship, some are in Kaduna, such as, Anas Usman Did, Ali Yakub, Sulaiman Alfred, in Katsina, they are Muhammad Colin, Ahmad Colin, etc. Muhammad Akilu Stated: We enter villages for the propagation without any interruption, Reverts used to call them if long time was took without visiting. There is nothing like hatred between Muslims and the Christians in the state. We followed due process in Da'awah, such as seeking permission before entering any village. Christians in the state have never suspected Muslims with bad behaviors, while Muslims that are in the State recommended that before Boko Haram; the State was a place of Religious tolerance

Perceptions of Christian on Boko Haram in River State

The researchers had understood the relationship between Muslims and Christians in the state before Boko Haram insurgents, in this episode, the researchers will explain how Islam spread in the state and the implications of the perceptions.

Christian Perception on Boko Haram in River State

The understanding of the inevitability of human living in the midst of other people and their religious and cultural differences is the fundamental reason why Muslims and Christians co-exist in Nigeria and elsewhere. Since the sovereign existence of modern Nigeria, the two faiths have been existed as the predominant religions in the country. In spite of their differences, there is political background and the inevitability of global

change and integration make the two religions to repress many of their fundamental differences. The religious conflicts which however ensue between them are always managed, but in recent time the emergence of the Boko Haram attached to carrying out bloody insurgence and wanton destruction of properties in the country has become a clog in the wheel of relations between the two religions heading toward permanent damage that obstructs co-existence.

Some Christian in River State views Boko Haram as group of Muslims who intend to kill all Christians in order to take over governmental Power in Nigeria. Other affirmed that Boko Haram is terrorist which attack Christians in northern Nigeria while other says, the group main goal is to establish an Islamic government within the country which would allow implementation of Shari'a as they forbid western civilization, they are kind of people who misinterpret the teachings of the Holy Books especially Qur'an, and they are kind of people killing other people without any reason but for selfish interest, they are implementing the Qur'an injunctions and kill Christians and Muslims they are Islamic group that kill Christians at any given opportunity. They are Islamic terrorists who kill innocent Christians. Similar to above responses, Konye Obaji Ori. Said;

Boko Haram are willing to redeem non-Muslims from perdition and the nation, and they are attempting to wipe out Christian from the North, whereas the Muslims in south-south were giving lands to build mosque with freedom of worship, e.g., Nsukka and Calaba university, but Bayero and Dan Fodio university doesn't

Another contending goal of this faction is the Islamization of the country as well as Jihad against non-Muslims. .

Implications of the Perceptions on the Muslims

The insurgency affected every angle of the Nation, economically, socially, politically, and Security, some of the implications are: Ethnic and religious hatred, Food scarcity, Health, Shelter, and Education, peace backward, example of that are;

Niger Delta youth pointed finger to north elders that if they fail to check the insurgents activities, that will lead to the ungovernable, so they should take necessary measurement to protect Non-indigenes, Christians, Churches, with their properties especially Niger Deltas. While Buhari replied that Northern elders did not keep silent as others are saying, but they don't own police, soldiers, or central bank. Northern youth and Arewa defense claimed that the insurgency is planning to destroy north. If Boko Haram kills Christians and bomb down churches, we will slay Muslims and raze down mosques. We want to warn them that we, the Niger Delta youth, in this 21st century will not accept the killing of innocent Christians or the burning of churches. That if they try it in the north or any part of Nigeria, we the Niger Delta youth will not see any Muslims or mosque in the Niger Delta”

Many Muslims in the State complain on how Christians associate them with insurgency when the insurgents were at its pick. According to the interviewees; In the Elele barrack, the barracks’ Mosque and the churches are opposite, when Muslim are passing through the churches to the Islamiyah School, they were stigmatized as Boko Haram, in another source, if anything mistakenly happened in the barrack, the barracks’ Christians used to attach it to the Muslims. According to a cobbler, who spend more than eight years in Omudioga, he said; the issue is very bitter, our friends ran away from us thinking we are Boko Haram and when they see any Muslims, his name is Boko Haram, even the reverts did not left. The perceptions also affected Muslims

economy. Ali and a cobbler told researcher how the perceptions affected the Muslim traders. They reject the traders’ goods and their incomes reduce seriously, even their core costumers ran from them. According to Mallam Rufa’i, some even think the Muslims can poison them through rice and beans.

Da'awah activities During Boko Haram in River State

Despite the fact that Boko Haram polluted the mind of the Christians in the state, they didn't attack any member of Islamic organizations but stigmatizations, it also affected the reverts, for example, many of the children whose taken to north under the scholarship return back, such as Musa Azubike, Ali, Muhammad, Nuh, Dauwda Omagye, Isma’il chamberlain Ahmad chamberlain and etc, majority of them came back to their community. They were discouraged by their parent fearing for the insecurity in the north. One of the members of association of Muslims professional of Rivers state told the researchers that, one day, they went to Abiya state for Da’awah activities as usual, the Okada drivers circulated the information that Boko Haram arrived in the town, immediately; people surrounded them, such events reduced Da’awah activities in the states. The proprietor of Okay memorial School told the researcher that Boko Haram polluted his mind, he thought that Muslims are unite unlike Christians as they used to pray together without segregations, but I still belief that Islam is a religion of humanity.

The Position of Terrorism in Islam

Terrorism is not act of Islam and it doesn’t represent it, terrorist groups in any religion totally misinterpret the Holy Books. Allah says in the Qur’an.

Quran as well as Bible, Hadith and Islamic response to the perception, first, Allah says

Boko Haram but after the group, the paper indicates that the aforementioned perceptions are null avoid based on the researchers' rejoinders

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