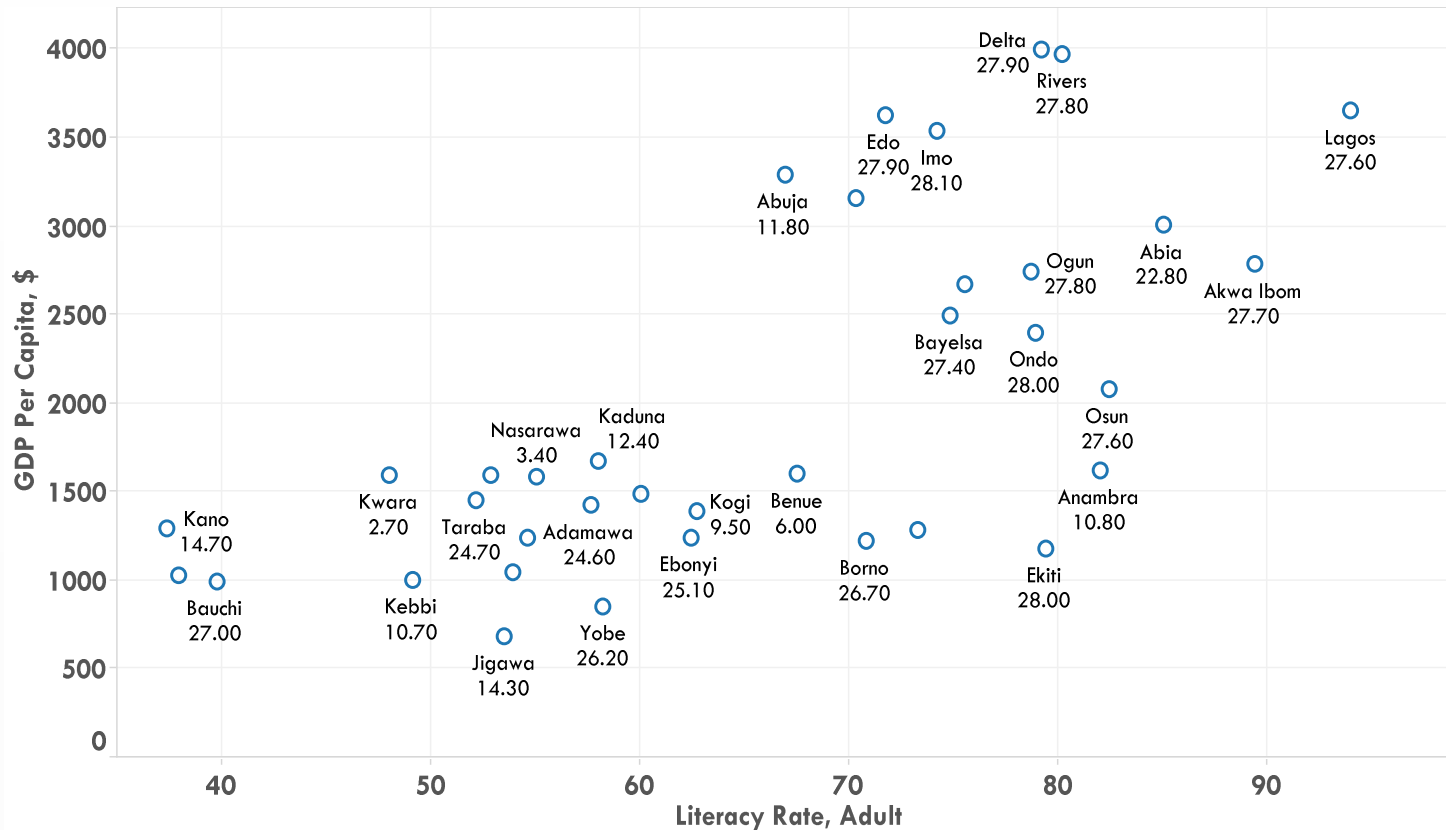


Poverty-illiteracy Angle to Insecurity in the North



Data Source: CBN, World Bank

It is a view held by many (myself inclusive) that poverty and illiteracy are major causal factors driving the insecurity situation in the northern parts of the country. First as I mentioned in one of these series, a hungry man is an angry man and will do anything to survive the day. But Karl Marx brings it home through his assertion that religion is the opium of the poor which is no less true in this case.

The scatterplot on the left shows the comparative level of average earnings (or poverty) and literacy between the north and the south (Nigeria). The figures below the State labels in the chart are the corresponding unemployment rates. What do you see? A major divide based on income and literacy.

The summary is that when poverty is garnished with illiteracy alone, it becomes chronic and sustainable. But when it is further garnished with religion, it can only produce something like Boko Haram which by its actions show that it is filled with the spirit of opium.

- Martin Oluba | PhD, DBA