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The journal places no restriction on the scope or dimensions that studies can cover but strongly expects prospective authors to show that their papers have academic and policy implications for peace, security and development in the world, in its microcosm or macrocosm. In essence, the articles of the Journal put issues, directly or indirectly connected with peace, security and development in perspectives in both theoretical and empirical models.

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Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies

The Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies was established through the approval of the Senate at its 193rd meeting of 20th June, 2008. The Centre, domiciled in the Faculty of Arts for the purpose of certification was established to contribute to the Postgraduate training of the much-needed manpower in the areas of Peace, Development, Security and Strategy. It has since been working assiduously to fulfill its mandate. The Centre operates from its permanent building along the Dam Site. It has as tenants, the Centre for International Education (CIE) and Unilorin Archives and Documentation Centre. The Centre, since its inception has had seven (7) Directors. These are:

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The Centre is indebted to Professor Is-haq O. Oloyede (OFR) during whose tenure as Vice-Chancellor the programme took off. His commitment to an intellectually led approach to the pursuit of Peace in a troubled country and world led to the smooth take-off of the programme and its first public convention of a stakeholders' forum to pledge to a non-adversarial pursuit of peace and reconciliation from warring communities in Kwara State in 2012, among other laudable Peace initiatives. Also, worthy of note is the unflinching support of the current Vice-Chancellor, Professor Wahab Olasupo Egbewole, SAN, who has consistently provided invaluable support to the Centre.

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- (3) train manpower in the field of Peace, Conflict, Security and Strategic Studies;
- (4) provide students with theoretical and practical skills in peace-making, peacebuilding, preventive diplomacy, strategic planning and management; and
- (5) contribute to security strategy and environmental sector management

SILENCING THE GUNS IN AFRICA: THE AFRICAN UNION'S RESPONSE

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Abstract

The proliferation of small and light weapons (SALW) in Africa has greatly affected the security and safety of the peoples, leading to thousands of deaths, displacement of populations, and economic losses. However, the African Union (AU) has responded to this situation through the initiative of silencing the guns and consolidation of peace in Africa. This paper examines the SALW challenges in Africa and the AU's Response. It adopts a qualitative method, relied on secondary source of data from the available literature, official documents and press releases on the SALW and AU Framework. The study reveals that to some extent the AU has recorded some progress in achieving successful conflict resolution and peace agreement in South Sudan, Central African Republic, and Ethiopia among others. The establishment of 'Africa Amnesty Month' also demonstrates the commitment to combat SALW in Africa. However, AU still faces some challenges with regard to the implementation of this initiative such as inadequate financial and human resources, reliance on external support, and lack of political will. The study recommends among others, that collaborative mechanism should be put in place among various stakeholders, with unified political commitment to achieve sustainable peace in Africa.

Keywords: African Union, Conflict, Proliferation, Responses, Small Arms and Light Weapons

Fostering growth, development and peace in Africa is hampered by the persistent nature of armed conflicts (Murshed, 2018). Escalating in several African states, such conflicts are driven by a multitude of factors such as bad governance, corruption, historical war precedents and the pursuit of significance by conflict stakeholders. However, the proliferation of arms and weapons plays a crucial role in intensifying these conflicts, which has led to the formation of political

economies and the collapse of vital social structures necessary for maintaining peace in diverse societies. The illicit arms trade in Africa is a complex and elusive phenomenon that contributes to the widespread illegal presence and accessibility of weapons throughout the continent. This covert nature of the trade poses a significant obstacle to societal progress, hindering development on various fronts. The intricate impacts of arms proliferation on African conflicts add complexity to resolution

efforts. This is further compounded by the indifference of certain political and state actors across the continent, among other contributing factors.

The surge of insurgency in the West African region is driven by a clandestine arms' trade, leading to the extensive proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs). Consequently, this phenomenon has detrimental impacts on economic and social progress, as well as on inter-communal and social unity. It further plays a role in the escalation of radicalisation, violent extremism, and tensions between different communities. Moreover, it nurtures a culture centered on firearms and sustains long-standing animosity across generations, owing to the destructive consequences and human suffering resulting from these violent conflicts. The history of armed conflicts in Africa, combined with porous borders, fragile state institutions, and cross-border criminal activities, remains a significant contributor to the proliferation and movement of arms across the continent. This complex situation involves various armed actors both within and beyond Africa, motivated by a mix of ideological and financial incentives. The vulnerability of numerous African borders, along with institutional corruption facilitates illicit arms trade and political economies (Vorath, 2017). Additionally, the ineffective implementation and assessment of regional arms trade regulations, as well as the inadequate operationalization of peace and security frameworks and other mechanisms for arms monitoring, are key factors perpetuating the continuous transfer of arms from one region of Africa to another.

The Africa Union's Agenda 2063 prioritizes a peaceful and secure Africa. The AU's commitment to silence the guns aimed to eliminate all illegal weapons in Africa, particularly addressing the proliferation of small arms trafficking. This proliferation significantly contributes to ongoing conflicts

on the continent, sustained by the production, sale and distribution of small arms and light weapons (Ehiane & Uwizeyimana, 2018). The objective of elimination of all illegal weapons in Africa has consistently faced skepticism due to factors such as Africa's vast geography, insufficient political support, porous borders and the fragmented nature of political and governance institutions on the continent. This paper examines the AU's responses to arms proliferation and evaluates the challenges facing the initiative, highlighting the complexity of achieving a peaceful and secure Africa as envisioned in the AU's Agenda 2063. It relies on secondary sources of data from the available literature, official documents, and press releases on small arms and light weapons (SALW) and the African Union (AU) Framework. The study adopts a content analysis to interpret these sources and provide a comprehensive understanding of the AU's responses to arms proliferation in Africa.

Literature review

The persistent nature of armed conflicts in Africa, driven by factors such as bad governance, corruption, historical war precedents, and the pursuit of significance by conflict stakeholders, is exacerbated by the proliferation of arms and weapons. This illicit arms trade leads to the widespread illegal presence and accessibility of weapons, contributing to the collapse of vital social structures and hindering societal progress. The surge in small arms and light weapons (SALWs) fuels insurgency, radicalization, and violent extremism, undermining economic and social progress and intercommunal unity. Despite the African Union's (AU) commitment to eliminating illegal weapons through initiatives like the "Silencing the Guns" framework, challenges such as porous borders, institutional corruption, insufficient political support, and inadequate implementation of arms trade regulations continue to perpetuate the problem.

Small Arms and Light Weapons refers to a personal weapons like light machine guns, pistols and rifles, are portable and concealable, making it prevalent globally (Ehiane & Uwizeyimana 2018: 70). During the colonial period in Africa, modern sophisticated weapons were mostly controlled by colonial governments. After attainment of independence, African countries inherited this strict control but faced challenges due to factors such as ethnicity and religion bigotry and the politicization of the military. These issues weakened arms restrictions, making them less rigid and enforceable in Africa (Reid, 2012).

In the earlier period of Africa's post-independence, SALWs witnessed a troubling proliferation trajectory, primarily originating from Europe, North America, the defunct Soviet Union and other Asian countries. These weapons permeated Africa through both legal and illicit channels, with persisted illicit transportation ways facilitates the movement across conflict zones. The affordability, portability and technical simplicity of SWALs favour criminals and rebel groups; it makes it preferred tools to cause widespread harm (Jekada, 2015). The proliferation of SALWs significantly contributes to the escalation, perpetuation and exacerbation of civil wars and complex emergencies. These issues are compounded by underlying triggers such as misunderstandings, mistrust, or existing tensions. The categorization of SALW proliferation in Africa identifies two distinct periods: those introduced during the Cold War tensions and those emerging after Cold War, marked by the Soviet Union's dissolution.

The Cold War geopolitical dynamics led to a substantial influx of automatic weapons as the USA and the Soviet Union engaged in proxy conflicts on the continent (Malam, 2014). This heightened the arms trade, created a lucrative market for manufacturers and importers in Africa. The Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970) exemplifies the early proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons

(SALWs) in Africa, fuelled by the Cold War. Triggered by an ethnically induced military coup, the conflict resulted in significant mistrust and tensions among major tribes in Nigeria. During the Nigerian Civil War, both the federal government and the Biafran secessionists openly acquired arms from foreign allies, marked a critical instance of SALW proliferation in Nigeria and potentially across Africa. The federal government's arms imports surged from an average of £250,000 between 1963 and 1966 to approximately £10,533,036 in 1967 due to the outbreak of the war (Fyanka, 2013: 2). The conflict, largely fought by well-armed foot soldiers, witnessed a massive influx of small and light weapons as war aid to support the opposing parties. The Cold War tensions influenced foreign involvement in the conflict. Initially reluctant to take sides, Britain, Nigeria's colonial master, eventually provided substantial weapons to the Federal Government due to concerns over potential Soviet intervention. Simultaneously, there was a clandestine inflow of weapons to the South-eastern part of Nigeria, supported the Biafrans. France and other Francophone African countries, including Ivory Coast and Gabon, played crucial roles in facilitated this secret supply, by recognized the autonomy of the Biafran secessionists (Fyanka, 2013).

It is worth noting that during the Nigerian civil war, local craftsmanship and small arms production also played an important role in supplement of the imported weapons. The Biafran Science group, established in 1967 in Enugu, evolved into the Research and Production Directorate (RAP), comprised scientists, engineers and technicians. This combined knowledge in multidisciplinary field, the team leveraged their expertise to invent various weapons. The chemical group focused on incendiaries, smoke signals, detonators and bombs, while engineers produced grenades, bullets, rocket casting and others even repurposed tractors and trucks into armored cars. Notably, the RAP's significant

creation was the “Ogbunigwe” (mass killer or destroyer) (Fyanka 2013). Despite their effectiveness in intensifying warfare, locally-made weapons had inherent limitations. Using Nigerian as a reference, delineates the substantial influx of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) into Africa during the Cold War. It highlights not only the mass importation but also the deliberate manufacture of small weapons designed specifically to exacerbate violent conflicts. Tragically, preceding the end of the Cold War, substantial quantities of weaponry fell into the hands of non-state actors and individuals during civil conflicts and complex emergencies. Furthermore, the post-conflict period witnessed a systemic failure in effectively implementing Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programs. This failure significantly contributed to the persistent proliferation of SALWs across the continent. These weapons continued to traverse porous African borders and were repurposed for various criminal activities long after the cessation of the initial civil wars (Malam, 2014).

The surge in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) proliferation in Africa reached unprecedented levels in the post-Cold War period. The collapse of the Soviet Union flooded Africa with surplus arms, as Eastern bloc countries sought markets in the “Third World”. These arms, often lost to illegal dealers, security entrepreneurs, ethnic militias and local smugglers, exacerbated civil wars and complex emergencies, even instigating new conflicts. Illicit networks facilitated the transfer of SALWs from current and past war zones, with instances of theft from government armories and corrupt security personnel. Several sources were identified for SALWs supply and proliferation in Africa (Osimen, et al., 2020). For instance, the diversion of legally acquired arms by African countries is a one of the major sources of uncontrolled and illicit arms. This includes corrupt officials illegally selling official arms to non-state actors. For

instance, in February 2016, Nigerian soldiers were arrested for selling arms to Boko Haram members (PM New, 2016).

Also, conflicts in Africa contribute to the thriving illicit arms trade. Civil wars in Africa, such as the one in South Sudan since December 2013, have heightened the demand for Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). Cross-border supplies from neighboring countries, originally legal arms exports from the US, Europe, and Israel, have fueled the illicit trade to conflict parties. The surge in jihadist groups in West Africa has further amplified SALW demand, saturated an already illicit arms market in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Libya, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Social and political instability in these regions creates a cycle of violence, prompted civilians, self-defense militias and vigilante groups to procure arms for protection (Conflict Armament Research 2018; International Centre for Counter-Terrorism 2020; Mangan & Nowak 2019).

Local arms production and diverted stocks are traded in parallel arms markets. Notably, in 2013, Cameroon intercepted a transport of 655 guns to Nigeria, and 5,400 AK-47 rifles were intercepted in Cameroon's northern region (Osimen, et al., 2020). Libya's illicit arms market, as assessed by the Small Arms Survey, shows the online availability of various weapons, such as machine guns, rocket launchers, anti-tank guided missile, man-portable air defence among others (Small Arms Survey, 2016). In addition to this, local arms production in Africa, which was initially used for hunting and traditional rites, has become a viable alternative to imported weapons. Limited regulation of local arms producers contributes to the ready availability of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). For example, in Ghana, local gunsmiths produce over 200,000 weapons annually. In Mali, locally made weapons are widespread and used to commit crimes, which led to the enactment of law to regulate the manufacture, use and

trade in locally made weapons.

The circulation of weapons occurs at all levels, from individual smuggling to large shipments, utilized well-established networks and channels. It is revealed that Mano River Union has increased illicit trade in small arms, especially during the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Smuggling routes within the Mano River Basin are the Guinea Forest and Parrot Beak regions. Poorly patrolled and numerous crossing points contribute to the smuggling of SALW. For instance, more than 150 illegal crossing points were found between Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, with less than 11 percent of customs, immigration and security officials oversees larger portion of these locations. The Sierra Leone Border Threat Assessment Report shows that there is a significant threat to stability in the Mano River Basin arising from the illicit smuggling of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) (Taylor, 2006).

During conflicts, peacekeepers' arms were frequently seized, as seen in the ambush of Guinean peacekeepers in 2002. Additionally, the unauthorized production of firearms by local craftsmen intensified arms proliferation. In Ghana, unlicensed producers manufactured over 200,000 firearms annually, some comparable to industrially produced ones. In Nigeria, the growth of local craft industries in places like Awka, Anambra State, contributed to the invention of various firearms. Figure 1 reflects the small arms production by AU members in Africa. The proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) has significantly and detrimentally impacted Africa, undermining safety, security, and stability. SALWs have been the primary instruments fuelling violence and human rights violations, including mass killings and forced displacements, during conflicts across the continent. Their widespread availability disrupts peace and security, exacerbates violence, and prolongs conflicts. The accessibility of these weapons has expanded

the arsenals of ethnic militias, insurgents, terrorists, and criminal groups, evident in conflicts in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Uganda, Sudan, and Libya. For instance, Niger Delta militants in Nigeria surrendered numerous arms during the 2009 Amnesty Program, and a 2013 incident in Kebbi State involved a truckload of weapons suspected for Boko Haram (Ethiane & Uwizeyiman, 2018).

The rise in armed conflicts and criminal activities, fuelled by SALW proliferation, has resulted in widespread victimisation and thousands of deaths, with significant financial resources expended to combat these threats. Between 2015 and 2020, 12 of the world's deadliest conflicts saw 176,095 civilian deaths, with small arms accounting for 60–90 percent of conflict-related fatalities in Africa (Pytlak, 2010; UN, 2021). By late 2022, an estimated five million illicit weapons were present among Sudan's population (France-Oresse, 2023). Such instances underscore the abundance and illicit use of SALWs in escalating violent conflicts, leading to unaccounted firearms across the continent.

Figure 1: Small Arms and Ammunition Production Capacities by the AU States

UN subregion*	AU member states with reported ongoing or recent production of small arms or ammunition	
	Small arms	Ammunition
Northern Africa	Algeria Egypt Sudan	Algeria Egypt Sudan
Western Africa	Nigeria	Cameroon Mali Nigeria
Middle Africa	Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**	Angola Chad** DRC Republic of Congo
Eastern Africa	Ethiopia** Kenya** Tanzania Uganda** Zimbabwe	Ethiopia Kenya Madagascar Tanzania Uganda Zimbabwe
Southern Africa	South Africa	Namibia South Africa

Source: Florquin et al., (2019).

This symbiotic relationship between violent conflicts and SALWs proliferation has ignited inter-communal tensions over scarce resources. Notably, highly destructive cattle rustling has plagued regions in Kenya and Uganda, causing numerous fatalities and displacements. In one incident in April 2003, over 2000 Pokot cattle rustlers from Kenya, armed with illicit firearms, killed 28 people and displaced thousands in Uganda. Furthermore, the menace of cattle rustling and armed banditry has afflicted North-West Nigeria since the closing years of the first decade of the twenty-first century, resulted to significant property losses, loss of life and widespread displacement of residents (Rufa'i, 2018).

The presence of small arms among civilians and non-state actors, combined with recurrent armed conflicts, has fostered a prevalent “gun culture” in several African nations. This phenomenon associate's ownership of small arms with identity and social status, notably observed in the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Somalia. Ultimately, the resulted overall insecurity further undermines the already fragile economic foundations of many African countries, impeding substantial development across the continent (Schroeder & Lamb 2006). In response to the pervasive issue of gun-related challenges and the widespread presence of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) across the African continent, the African Union has taken proactive measures. The framework for addressing this concern, known as the “Silencing the Gun” initiative, is elaborated upon in the subsequent section of this paper.

Examining the AU Silencing the Gun Framework

The increase occurrence of violence worldwide, particularly in Africa due to the widespread proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs), highlights the imperative for implementation of a robust arms

control programme. Such a programme is essential to enhance African security, fostering a safer and more peaceful environment. African Union has strategically focused on curbing the unlawful spread, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons as a central component to proactively prevent conflicts, minimise their detrimental consequences and foster peace consolidation. In recent times, substantial strides have been taken in address this challenge, through the adoption and implementation of crucial policy and legal frameworks at the continental level.

Following the year after the celebration of African Union 50th anniversary, AU in 2014 organised a high-level Retreat in Arusha, Tanzania, with a specific focus on advance Peace, Security and Stability in Africa. African leaders, in Addis Ababa, adopted the Silencing the Guns Framework; they recognised that conflicts posed a significant obstacle to Africa's development through the availability of SALWs. Therefore, the AU member state declared that:

....the commitment is to prevent future generations of Africans from inheriting the consequences of wars. The objective is to actively work towards concluding all conflicts on the African continent by the year 2020 (Mahlet & Vera, 2019).

The 'Silencing the Guns' (STG) initiative is actively implemented across various levels, including the AU Commission, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Member States and civil society actors. This comprehensive approach significantly contributes to the reduction of violent conflicts on the African continent (Mahlet & Vera, 2019). The participants included key figures such as the AU Commissioner for Peace, Special Envoys, the African Union Panel of the Wise, and Friends of the Panel of the Wise, senior representatives from Regional

Economic Communities (RECs), the United Nations, European Union, the League of Arab States and Civil Society Organisations. The central theme of the Retreat was 'Silencing the guns – owning the future'. The objective was to evaluate the paradoxical situation in Africa, where there has been notable increase in instability and insecurity. Acknowledged these challenges and building on the established agenda 2063 and the AU's 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration, which aimed to resolve all conflicts in Africa by 2020, the Retreat sought to facilitate collective, multi-stakeholder discussions on existing and emerging peace and security threats to the continent (Nicasius, nd). The programme enables civilians to surrender illegal weapons without fear of arrest or prosecution. Its primary objective is to eliminate the adverse impacts of gun violence and armed conflict in Africa (Nelson, 2022).

The principal aim was to identify necessary responses and strategies to achieve a conflict-free continent by 2020. It was believed the framework would achieve through combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Africa. AU identified conflicts as a major hindrance to the successful implementation of Agenda 2063. While identified other challenges such as poverty, inequality, unemployment, climate change, illegal financial flows and corruption, the leaders underscored the urgency of addressing the issue of conflicts and SALW in Africa. Emphasis was made on the importance of strengthening continental response frameworks and institutions and fostering increased collaboration with the United Nations to effectively tackle the security challenges faced by the continent. However, re-emphasising the importance of the framework, the president of Mozambique, Filipe Nyusi during the Council members meeting stated that:

The people of Africa are advocating for peace across the continent. Recognise that achieving peace

requires a collective belief from African leaders, we emphasise the crucial role of our nation's leaders. They bear the responsibility of mobilising various communities and utilising available means and resources to expedite the complete cessation of armed conflicts, thereby realising a continent free from the sound of gunfire (Africanews, 2023).

AU promoted the initiative of “Silencing the Gun in Africa by 2020”, through the continental awareness-raising campaign by African Union Commission. The campaign employed various measures to achieve its objectives. These measures encompass the creation and distribution of informative and outreach materials such as publications, brochures and videos. In addition, the campaign involves the planning and execution of workshops, events and roadshows. Interaction with the African population was facilitated through social media channels. To ensure that the perspectives of the population are taken into account, active engagement with civil society actors, Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the African Union Commission (AUC) is encouraged. In order to enhance the campaign's professionalism, an external communication company was contracted. This company collaborates closely with the AUC to develop communication products that were tailored to specific targets. Furthermore, the external communication company assists in monitoring the project's success, including the measurement of the audience reached by the awareness-raising campaign.

Since 2014, Africa has advanced in its pursuit of SAWL free through the enhancement of continental response frameworks and institutions, in collaboration with the UN and other organisations operating in the region. These collaborative efforts have yielded positive outcomes over the last two decades,

successfully resolving conflicts in former hotspots like Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Recently, notable progress has been achieved in challenging situations in Somalia in 2012 (Maluleke, 2012) and Sudan in January 2024 (Andrew, 2024), as reported by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) based in Addis Ababa. In line with this trend, the African Union (AU) has appointed a three-member team, led by Mohamed Ibn Chambas, to resolve the ongoing conflict in Sudan. This team, which includes Speciosa Wandira-Kazibwe and Francisco Madeira, is working with both civilian and military parties, as well as engaging regional and global stakeholders, to restore peace and stability.

However, despite multiple ceasefire attempts, fighting continues between the Sudanese army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) since April 2023, making cooperation from Sudanese parties and the international community essential for the team's success (Andrew, 2024). In addition, peace-building initiatives across the continent have effectively mitigated potential conflicts. Despite this achievement, instances of conflict persist in Libya, South Sudan, the Central African Republic (CAR), the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Lake Chad Basin (including Chad, parts of Nigeria, Niger, and Cameroon). The prevalence of violent extremism in the Sahel region and certain areas in the Horn and eastern Africa remains a significant challenge (Zipporah, 2019).

In January 2020, Sudan's transitional government successfully negotiated a preliminary peace agreement with one of the two primary rebel groups operating in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan regions. This development followed similar successful agreements between states and rebel groups in the Central African Republic (CAR) in February 2019 and in South Sudan in September 2018. In the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia and Eritrea recently reached a noteworthy milestone by signing a significant

peace accord. This agreement signifies the initiation of normalized relations between the two nations and the resolution of a long-standing border conflict that had remained unresolved for two decades. The authors interpret these peace agreements as tangible indicators of an increased level of collaboration between the African Union (AU) and its global partners. These achievements are not isolated incidents but rather they reflect a broader trend of successful partnerships for peace in Africa, which have been facilitated by the diplomatic efforts of the AU. Furthermore, advancements have been made in continental response frameworks, showcasing a collective commitment to addressing conflicts on the continent. Specific cases of conflict have seen notable progress, and there have been intensified efforts to control the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (Okumu et al., 2020). The overall landscape suggests a positive trajectory in fostering peace and stability in the region through coordinated efforts at both regional and international levels. African Union's "Silence the Guns in Africa" campaign initiative seeks broad support to address the smuggling of small arms and light weapons (SALW). The AU encourages its Member States to sustain the progress achieved by continuing the "Silencing the Guns" initiatives throughout (Sydney, 2022).

Additionally, Africa's Regional Economic Communities, other pan-African bodies and civil society organisations were urged to promote Africa Amnesty Month to boost citizen participation. In 2022, amnesty initiatives in Tanzania, Togo and Liberia will receive support from the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA). The Commission Nationale de lutte contre la prolifération, la circulation et le trafic illicites des armes légères et de petit calibre (CNLPAL) de Togo, Tanzania's National Focal Point Coordinator on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms (LiNCSA)

oversee coordination for public outreach and weapons collection activities in each nation (Sydney, 2022).

In the month of amnesty, those who willingly turn in illegal firearms and ammunition won't be detained or prosecuted. Nonetheless, in compliance with national laws, individuals who do not turn over such items within the allotted time may face legal consequences. Encouraging gun registration, this programme hopes to improve public safety by lowering the likelihood of gun violence. In September 2017, several countries participated in the first amnesty month, including Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Madagascar, Sudan, and Zambia. Additionally, South Africa held a six-month amnesty in December 2019, which led to the confiscation of over 46,000 firearms (Sydney, 2022).

Seven nations—Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, and Kenya—were involved in the 2020 implementation of the Africa Amnesty Month initiative with support from the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA). An individual can effectively avoid accusations, lawsuits, charges, and penalties by participating in the amnesty programme. Under the auspices of the Regional Centre on Small Arms Control in the Great Lakes Region, Horn of Africa, and Bordering States (RECSA), UNODA provided funding support for the initiative in Madagascar, Niger, and Uganda in 2021. By the time the programme ended, 1,497 weapons had been found and destroyed (Sydney, 2022). Despite, some of the record of success, Africa Union still faces some of the challenges in achieving the aim of silencing the gun in Africa, which discussed below.

Challenges in Achieving Silencing Gun in Africa

The effective implementation of established frameworks for Silencing the Gun in Africa faces significant challenges, primarily

due to inadequate financial and human resources. The African Union (AU) faces persistent challenges in securing adequate funds and manpower as demands on its operations increase. The AU relies heavily on external donors, such as the UN and EU, with 40 percent of its annual budget sourced externally in 2018. Efforts to establish a funding arrangement with the UN for AU-led peace operations, where the UN covers 75 percent of costs and the AU contributes 25 percent have stalled due to unresolved concerns about the AU's financial capabilities. AU member states consistently fall short on financial commitments, with an average of only 67 percent of annual assessed contributions paid until 2015 (Karssen, 2020).

In 2016, the AU introduced a compulsory 0.2 percent levy on eligible goods imported from non-members to fund contributions, but this faced resistance and was reframed as voluntary. By the end of 2018, only 45 percent of member states implemented the levy. Weak enforcement measures, including reminders and payment plans, have exacerbated the challenge. Despite the introduction of a more robust sanctions regime in 2018, non-contributing member states still have considerable flexibility if they demonstrate “conditions beyond their control”. The AU's dependence on unpredictable external financing jeopardizes its ability to sustain operations, as seen in the EU's 2016 funding cut to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Funding uncertainties have also contributed to the planned withdrawal of AMISOM in December 2021, despite ongoing security threats from Al Shabaab and uncertainties about the readiness of Somali security forces to take over (Karssen, 2020).

Many African states involved in SALW and ammunition manufacturing, such as Algeria, Angola, Namibia, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Egypt, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Uganda, have not signed or

ratified the Armed Trade Treaty (ATT). Furthermore, some African states have been implicated in unauthorized transfers of materiel to conflict zones, indicating a lack of adherence to broader arms control norms. While regional law enforcement focuses on transnational trafficking networks and porous borders to combat illicit weapon proliferation, the reluctance of many African Union member states to comply with broader arms control norms highlights a deficiency in political will. Without unified political commitment, a comprehensive cross-continental effort to stem the flow of arms remains unattainable (Karssen, 2020).

The slow progress in achieving the objective of silencing the guns in Africa, can also be attributed to the various implementation challenges. One major issue is the presence of institutional obstacles arising from a lack of alignment between existing structures and the pressing nature of the goal. Another factor is the lack of conceptual coherence, with differing interpretations of the “Silencing the Guns” initiative. The STG Unit views it as a campaign, AUC departments treat it as a set of projects and Agenda 2063 sees it as a program. This conceptual ambiguity creates uncertainty, even among key policy actors responsible for implementing the initiative (Okumu, Atta-Asamoah & Sharamo, 2020).

The absence of a clear definition for “silencing the guns” makes it difficult for policy actors to interpret the initiative consistently, and leads to divergent understandings among stakeholders. Furthermore, the initiative lacks a well-defined evaluation process. At a political level, there is a deficiency in strong institutions and national buy-in, hindering the anchor of an effective implementation process. In countries like Sudan, the Central African Republic (CAR), and Mali, the absence of robust institutions has impeded efforts to address violence, resulting in recurrent relapses into conflict. External challenges to the implementation of the

Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative include the ongoing export of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) into Africa by foreign governments. Additionally, foreign powers' interference in domestic insurgencies, exemplified by the situation in Libya, Niger and Burkina Faso further complicates efforts to achieve the objective (Okumu, Atta-Asamoah & Sharamo, 2020).

Conclusion

The African Union's “Silencing the Guns in Africa” initiative, launched to tackle the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs), responds decisively to escalating violence across the continent. The initiative emphasis on proactive conflict prevention, mitigation and peace consolidation, the initiative is underpinned by robust policy and legal frameworks at the continental level. Since its inception in 2014, the initiative aims to prevent future generations from inherit war's consequences and achieve a SALW-free Africa. This initiative implementation was through the AU Commission, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Member States and civil society, resulted to notable achievements such as conflict resolution and enhanced response frameworks. Also, the collaboration with international partners has bolstered outcomes, exemplified by peace agreements in South Sudan, Central African Republic, Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Despite the notable achievement, AU are still experiencing some persistence challenges, these includes resource constraints, reliance on external donors and slow SALW reduction. In addressing these challenges, A U requires sustained collaboration, stronger institutions, political commitment and ratification of international agreements on weapons trafficking. Also, there should be efforts that reflect a collective dedication to a conflict-free continent, that underscore the efforts towards silencing Africa's guns.

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NON-KINETIC COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATIONS AND THE DDR PROGRAMME IN THE NORTH EAST NIGERIA: INTERROGATING THE OPERATION SAFE CORRIDOR

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Abstract

Since 2009, Nigeria's counterterrorism and counterinsurgency (CTCOIN) operations have been largely kinetic. From 2014 however, a change in strategy was implemented by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) and the Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN) to incorporate non-kinetic operations as soft approach towards defeating the Radical Islamist Terrorist Groups (RITGs) such as Boko Haram (BH) and Islamic State in West African Province (ISWAP). One of the critical components of the operations is the Deradicalisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDR) programme instituted in 2016 at Mallam Sidi community in Kwami local government area of Gombe State. The programme, codenamed Operation Safe Corridor (OPSC), was designed to rehabilitate repentant BH and ISWAP terrorists and reintegrate them back into their respective communities as productive law-abiding citizens. However, the programme has continued to elicit concerns amongst stakeholders. Consequently, this paper leveraged both primary and secondary data to interrogate the design and implementation strategy of the OPSC programme vis a vis its performance. Thus, it was discovered, amongst other things, that the programme fell short of being comprehensive as its main focus was the clients, which covers only the deradicalisation and rehabilitation aspects, but failed to simultaneously address victims concerns and prepare the communities for the reintegration part. This has exposed the clients to resettlement difficulties in their communities after graduation. Therefore, the paper recommends, among others things, a full incorporation of the affected communities (victims) into the programme, and the establishment of Truth and Reconciliation Committees (TRCs) across senatorial districts in the North East for peaceful reintegration of the clients, victims' recovery and community acceptance.

Keywords: Non-Kinetic Operations, CTCOIN, RITGs, DDR, OPSC, North East-Nigeria.

Introduction

At the inception of Nigeria's counterterrorism and counterinsurgency (CTCOIN) in 2009, all efforts from both the civil and military components of the Nigerian society were channelled towards kinetic approach leveraging the Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN). By 2015, the Boko Haram (BH) had become

the world's most lethal terrorist group, controlling some territories in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States in the North East Nigeria and neighbouring countries of Niger, Chad and Cameroon (Glazzard, 2023). The BH and Islamic State in West African Province (ISWAP) have carried out more than 3,416

terror attacks between 2009 and 2023, leading to the killing of about 35,000 to 50,000 in Nigeria, displacement of over three million people from 501,785 households within the north eastern Nigeria, and contributed to the deaths of 350,000 people in the Lake Chad Basin (Abdullahi, 2023b; Glazzard, 2023). From OP FLUSH OUT to OP RESTORE ORDER, the fight against Radical Islamist Terrorist Groups (RITGs) was 98% kinetic with the remaining 2 % representing humanitarian activities rendered to innocent civilian casualties in the theatre environment by the military (Irabo in Kalambe, 2019). As the battle against BH continues and the negative consequences of asymmetric warfare started to manifest on the civil populace, the proposal on how to introduce non-kinetic approach in winning the hearts and minds of the population and deradicalize the captured and repented members of the RITGs was beginning to gain momentum. While the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) commenced consultations and planning for several civil-led non-kinetic CTCOIN instrumentations, programmes and initiative, the military on the other hand started the establishment and rejigging of the Civil-Military Relations (CMR) units across the Services to plan and launch series of non-kinetic operations in the North East and other troubled regions in the country (Abdullahi, 2023a).

With the establishment of Presidential Initiative for the North East (PINE) and official activation of OP ZAMAN LAFIYA in 2014, non-kinetic approach was fully mainstreamed into the country's CTCOIN operations to secure the support of the civil populace and transform repentant members of BH and ISWAP into responsible and law-abiding citizen of Nigeria. Thus, the Deradicalisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DRR) programme started in 2015 which eventually snowballed into Operation Safe Corridor (OPSC) in 2016 (Godwin, 2020). Since its inception, OPSC had being a subject of

concerns as critical stakeholders have continued to engage the FGN and the public on the observed shortcomings in the design, and execution of the 'Mallam Sidi Strategy' i.e OPSC. In this paper therefore, conceptual clarifications were made to underpin the key concepts upon which the paper is anchored. Afterwards, the non-kinetic counterterrorism operations in the northeast were discussed in general; and this was followed by the historical development of the OPSC programme, its design, objectives, operation, successes, and short comings from 2016 to 2023. Consequently, policy options were proposed as a way forward, and the paper was concluded with the author's submissions.

Conceptual Clarifications

In this paper, two concepts are very central i.e Non-Kinetic Counterterrorism Operations and Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR). A brief clarification about their operational usage in this research is subsequently presented.

Non-Kinetic Counterterrorism Operations

According to the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) of the Institute for Economics and Peace (2019), “counterterrorism operations generally consist of actions or strategies aimed at preventing terrorism from escalating, controlling the damage from terrorist attacks that do occur, and ultimately seeking to eradicate terrorism in a given context (IEP, 2019).” Non-Kinetic counterterrorism operations connotes actions, laws, strategies, institutions and interventions, other than coercive or kinetic, planned or implemented as a collective State's response to prevent or manage terrorism in a particular context or environment. It has been globally acknowledged that counterterrorism operations can be activated through both hard and soft approaches i.e. kinetic and non-kinetic respectively. Consequently, counterterrorism operations may not be successful using only the

kinetic approach, as the root causes of the crisis and other diplomatic and ideological premises can only be constructively addressed through non-kinetic approaches; one of which is Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR).

Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration

The concept of DDR has been described by UNITAR (2023: p.1) as “the process of demilitarizing both officials and unofficial armed groups by controlling and reducing the possession and use of arms, disbanding non-state armed groups, and reducing the size of state security services, and assisting former combatants to reintegrate into civilian life.” The DDR is a process that ensures members of state armed forces and those of Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) are supported to lay down their weapons so as to embrace civilian life. UNITAR further clarifies that, “as a complex process, it comprehends political, security, social and economic dimensions aimed at creating an environment where a peace process, political and social reconciliation, as well as sustainable development, can take place (UNITAR, 2023).” It has however been observed that “development and reconstruction of fragile and post-conflict states, most war-torn states in Africa usually concentrate on individual reintegration, with sparse or no involvement in community development (Oluwaniyi, 2018: p.5).” In the case of CTCOIN in the northeast Nigeria, a form of DDR programme was developed as Deradicalisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DRR) which was codenamed Operation Safe Corridor (OPSC) (Abdullahi, 2023a).

It is imperative to note here that the general DDR conception by the United Nations was developed as a guide and not as 'one size fits all' concept. This is because no two wars or conflicts are the same. Therefore, it is the responsibility of concerned State to develop a

form of DDR that best suits its own peculiar conflict situation. For instance, the UN DDR concept is particular about the disarmament of both state security officials and the Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs), which might not be possible in some contexts (UNITAR, 2023). In the Nigerian case for instance, the situation is an ongoing CTCOIN operations where the NSAGs are yet to officially and completely surrender to the state thereby continuing to perpetrate acts of terror in the country. In this kind of situation, the state forces cannot be disarmed in the name of executing a DDR programme. Hence, the development of a form of DDR i.e. DRR without the inclusion of disarmament component to suits the Nigerian context. Therefore, this paper discusses DDR within the context of DRR.

Non-Kinetic Counterterrorism Operations in Nigeria's North East

Non-kinetic counterterrorism operations in the northeast were instituted to reinforce the kinetic efforts in the theatre environment. This was to specifically win the hearts and minds of the population, address some of the root causes of the crisis, and transform the repentant and captured members of the RITGs in the region. Based on the array of initiatives by the FGN before the establishment of OPSC in 2016, Abdullahi (2023a) technically classified the non-kinetic operations in the northeast into two. The first is Civil-Led and Military Protected (CLMP) which comprises all the activities and programmes of the Federal and State Governments and their Ministries Department and Agencies (MDAs) as well as International and Local Non-Governmental Organisations (ILNGOs) that are geared towards countering terrorism and insurgency in the North East. The second is the Military-Led and Civilian Targeted (MLCT) that encompasses all soft CTCOIN approaches of the military.

The FGN have launched some CLMP non-kinetic initiatives which include

Presidential Initiative for the North East (PINE), the Victims Support Fund (VSF), the Safe Schools Initiative (SSI) all in 2014 (PCNI, 2016). It could be recalled that the BH terrorist activities have led to the destruction of more than 910 schools and closure of about 1,500 in the northeast between 2009 and 2015. By the opening of 2016, about 952,029 school-age children had fled their communities for safety (Yusuf, 2019). After the emergence of President Muhammadu Buhari in 2015, another northeast focused initiative was established called the Presidential Committee on the North East Initiatives (PCNI) in 2016 with more robust mandate. The PCNI was also to serve as the overall coordinating body for the relevant activities of the VSF, the SSI, as well as all existing Federal Government structures involved in northeast interventions (PCNI, 2016). The PCNI was to also guide the planning activities of the State Governments and the Federal Government.

Realising the magnitude of the devastating effects of the Boko Haram activities in the northeast and the long term socio-economic and stability plans required for the region to recover back to its hitherto vibrant state, the FGN, through the NASS, enacted the North East Development Commission (NEDC) Act in 2017 (Abdullahi, 2023a). Thus, the NEDC was established in 2017 as:

The focal organization charged with the responsibility to assess, coordinate, harmonies and report on all intervention programs, and initiatives by the Federal Government or any of its Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), States; and other Development Partners and for the implementation of all programmes and initiatives for the North East states (NEDC, 2022).

Given the steady increase in the number of victims of insecurity in the country, the FGN established the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (FMHDS) in 2019 as the overall coordinating ministry for all

humanitarian activities in Nigeria (FMHDS, 2022). The FMHDS also serves as the parent ministry for some agencies that have direct bearing with the non-kinetic efforts of the FGN in the northeast and other parts of the country.

With the outbreak of insurgency and terrorism by the BH in 2009 and subsequently by the ISWAP, the Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN) incorporated non-kinetic approaches to compliment the kinetic operations aimed at ending the crises (Abdullahi, 2023a). Thus, the MLCT non-kinetic counterterrorism operations evolved out of the realisation that the citizens are the Centre of Gravity (CoG) of the war against terrorism, and the centrality of winning their hearts and minds toward success, the Defence Headquarters and each Service of the AFN established the Department of Civil-Military Relations (CMR), Civil-Military Affairs (CMA) and Civil Military Cooperations (CIMIC) respectively. Each of these departments are principally engaging on non-kinetic activities representing the soft power component of the military operations in Nigeria.

The Nigerian Army (NA) for instance, established the Department of Civil Military Affairs (DCMA) in 2010. The DCMA has 3 directorates namely Civil-Military Legal Desk, Information Management and Psychological Warfare. A CMA Cells were also established in all Divisions of the NA and saddled with the task of interfacing and fostering Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) with the population in its Areas of Responsibility (AoR). In Operation HADIN KAI (OPHK), the 7 and 8 Divisions of the NA have been actively involved in the execution of humanitarian, behavioural and developmental activities towards winning hearts and minds under the supervision of the Theatre Commander (TC). Thus, the DCMA at the NA HQ is however responsible for coordination of the entire Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) activities and ensures that it contributes to the attainment of operational end states, win the loyalty of the

population in theatres of operation, create a conducive atmosphere for healthy post-conflict reconciliation and enduring future relations (Yusuf, 2019; Kangye, 2022; Abdullahi, 2023a). Basically, the DCMA serves as the interface between the military and all civilian stakeholders. Through these directorates, the DCMA has continued to leverage on the use of soft power to plan and execute numerous projects, schemes and programmes as the non-kinetic component of the CTCOIN operations in the country. Another critical component of the MLCT non-kinetic CTCOIN operations in the North East is the DRR codenamed OPSC. Deradicalisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration: The OPSC

The Deradicalisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DRR) programme which is codenamed Operation Safe Corridor (OPSC) is a critical component of the non-kinetic approaches to CTCOIN operations in the northeast Nigeria. It is a form of DDR that came up after some years of discussions within the Nigerian Government on how to create an enabling environment for voluntary defections by BH and ISWAP members. Consequently, four years into CTCOIN in the northeast, the FGN started to recognize that the kinetic response alone would be insufficient to dismantle the group (ICG, 2021). In September 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari set up a

committee led by the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) with the support of International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and other partners to develop, consider and adopt a strategic action plan for the De-radicalization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DRR) of willing and repentant members of the Boko Haram. Consequently, in April 2016, the FGN established OPSC as a military-led, multi-agency, non-kinetic and humanitarian operation with its facility located at Mallam Sidi community in Kwami LGA of Gombe State (Godwin, 2020).

Apart from the Mallam Sidi Camp with a capacity for 650 people, two rehabilitation centres in Maiduguri - Bulumkutu, for women and children, and Shokari for men were opened in September, 2020 (USAID OTI, 2021). Thus, the OPSC is a defectors programme for low-risk repentant BH and ISWAP combatants who were either captured in battle or voluntarily decide to hand in themselves. The programme's aim is to deradicalize and rehabilitate repentant BH and ISWAP militants and reintegrate them back into their respective communities as productive law-abiding citizens. The defecting members are to acquire vocation training, access de-radicalisation and civic programmes to become useful members of the Nigerian and Lake Chad Basin societies upon release from the program (CDD, 2016).



Fig. 1: Map of Nigeria indicating Mallam Sidi, Bulumkutu and Shokari Centres, Maiduguri and Mafa in the North East. Source: Glazzard (2023).

As a multi-agency arrangement, OPSC is made up of 13 MDAs and about 100 experts, including religious leaders, psychologists, social workers, educators, artisans, and de-radicalization specialists among others, that are directly involved in the implementation of the OSC (Bukarti, 2019). The experts drawn from various fields were recruited to 'help ex-combatants shed violent ideas, recover from trauma, acquire basic education, and learn crafts' (Bukarti, 2019; Ugwueze et al, 2021). The DRR process of the OPSC commences with the voluntary repentance of BH and ISWAP members who are subjected to vetting and cleared by the military at Giwa Barrack in Maiduguri and transferred to the OPSC facility in Mallam Sidi community for the DRR programme. The DRR is a 52 week programme that involves psycho-spiritual, psychotherapy, counselling, recreational and vocational training. The vocational training includes farming, woodwork and carpentry, barbing and fashion designing, among others. Visitation by families and prominent personalities are part of the programme, to promote rehabilitation, build confidence and ensure smooth integration (Godwin, 2020; Abdullahi (2023b). The Figure 2 below indicates the processes of the four phases of the OPSC

From Fig. 2 above, the DDR procedure is in four phases as subsequently explained. The phase 1 of DDDR starts with members of the BH and ISWAP disengaged, either voluntarily or involuntarily, and taken into custody by the military for profiling and registration (IOM, 2021). The phase 2 is the disassociation stage which is determined by a rigorous screening process by a dedicated Committee within a reasonable time frame. To this, the Nigerian military conducts preliminary screening of male detainees. Based on these screening procedures, victims or former affiliates of RITGs who are categorized with the lowest level of risk are released to a centre for rehabilitation services (USAID OTI, 2021). Former combatants categorized as high-risk are referred to Giwa military barracks and high-security prisons in Kuje and Kainji to await prosecution. Furthermore, USAID OTI (2021) observed that women that are considered to be low risk are often released directly back to their communities, many end up in IDP camps without the benefit of DDRR services. USAID OTI (2021) however opined that the recent completion of the Shokari Transit centre as a transition facility for male clients should allow the Bulumkutu centre to be exclusively

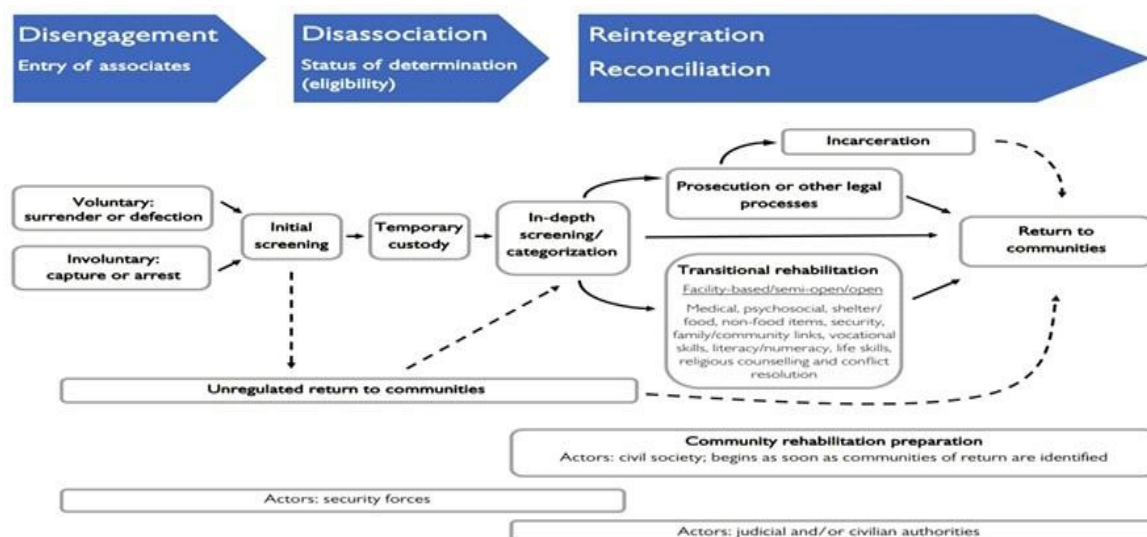


Fig. 2: Four Phases of DDR Process. Source: IOM (2021: p.viii).

designated for women and girl's rehabilitation services.

The phase 3 which is the transitional rehabilitation is designed for released former associates and those who are neither suspected of crimes requiring prosecution nor eligible for immediate release. While community-based reintegration may be possible for them, some national authorities have conditioned their release on participation in transitional rehabilitation programming (IOM, 2021).

Phase 4 focuses on reintegration, which continues to address the socio-economic needs of the individual while promoting the welfare of the community as a whole. The intervention can be integrated with support to reconciliation tailored to the local context and culture, which may involve restorative justice forums, community-based psychosocial recovery activities or other transitional justice initiatives to re-establish a foundation for longer-term recovery (IOM, 2021). It is imperative to state that, in the case of the OPSC programme, the 4th phase of integration has not been well planned and executed. As it is currently, graduates of the programme are yet to be properly reintegrated and the receptive communities have not been carried along in this regard.

Thus far, OPSC is yet to be a perfect institutional mechanism for DRR. It has, however, been serving the purpose for which it was hitherto created. From 2016 to 2020 for instance, the programme hosted about 800 ex-Boko Haram members and graduated about 300 of them (Godwin, 2020); and from 2020 to 2022, a total number of fully de-radicalized ex-Boko Haram members has increased to 559 while the number of clients has increased to about 1,000 (The Cable, 2022; Abdullahi, 2023b).

Abdullahi (2023a) reported that, apart from the ex-RITGs members that are the primary focus of the OPSC, the programme has also extended its non-kinetic efforts to the host community in order to secure the people's

maximum support and discourage the youth in the area from joining the terrorist group. To this effect, the OPSC has conducted and executed some CIMIC projects and programmes across Malam Sidi community. These include employment of 45 locals into the service of the OPSC, free medical outreach to more than 1500 people including the aged, children and pregnant women with the OPSC's clinic serving as the only medical facility that treats not less than 15 locals on daily basis (Shafa, 2020; Godwin, 2020). Also, the OPSC has delivered functional borehole water project and donated mattresses to the Government Secondary School in the community (Shafa, 2020). These have, in no small measure created a bond between the OPSC and the population as the people have continued to cooperate with and support the OPSC's programmes.

Interrogating the Operation Safe Corridor Programme

The Operation Safe Corridor has not been immune to some shortcomings and challenges which have elicited criticisms from stakeholders. Here, interrogation of the OPSC programme would be done looking at the public awareness and political buy-in, arrest and admission of wrong targets, horrible treatment of the clients, quality of training, as well as reintegration and non-inclusion of the receptive communities. These are subsequently discussed.

Public Awareness and Political Buy-in

In any CTCOIN, be it kinetic or non-kinetic, the population remains the Centre of Gravity (CoG). Thus, whichever side between the government and the terrorists wins the public support wins the war. That is why ensuring a robust public awareness on CTCOIN operations is extremely imperative. As it is, the Nigerian public is still in confusion as to why the OPSC and for what purpose? While some citizens are condemning it based on the belief that it is a form of amnesty for the terrorists who

This could be the reason why Littman et al. (2021) conclude that there is little awareness about the objectives and programmes of the OPSC and the supports being rendered by the international organisations, making public confidence on the programme and acceptance of its graduates difficult.

The OPSC is also facing opposition from critical political actors in the region who are yet to be convinced that ex-terrorists should benefit from government forgiveness and donor support, especially when they have caused the death of thousands of people, forced millions into becoming IDPs and destabilised socio-economic wellbeing of the North East region (ICG, 2021). Ugwueze et al. (2021) argue that rejection of the OPSC by vocal elected politicians from the North East is undermining public support and credibility for the DRR programme. Citing the case of Senator Ali Ndume, the senator representing Borno South Senatorial District in the National Assembly, who flayed the FGN, after the recent amnesty granted to some 601 Boko Haram insurgents,

alleging that 'a repentant sect member who was recently reintegrated into his community has returned to insurgency after killing his father and stealing his valuables' (Vanguard, 2020; Ugwueze et al, 2021).

In the same vein, USAID OTI (2021) reports that there is no codified programme, method or template in place for reintegration and reconciliation in the northeast; and further describes the activities as ad hoc and 'transactional' with parties 'bargaining' for (community) reintegration outcomes. USAID OTI (2021) quotes the Gwoza District Head thus: "The community looks at this as if the ex-combatants have been given the upper hand." A frequent request from communities was that they be given the same support as OPSC graduates. The communities are still very angry and pained over the atrocities being committed by the members of RITGs including the graduates of the OPSC programme. The data from USAID OTI (2021) in Fig 4 below shows the priority role the communities assigned to forgiveness in the reintegration process.

When you think of what it means for former affiliates to reintegrate into your community after going through the process of DRRR, which of the following would you say are the most important?

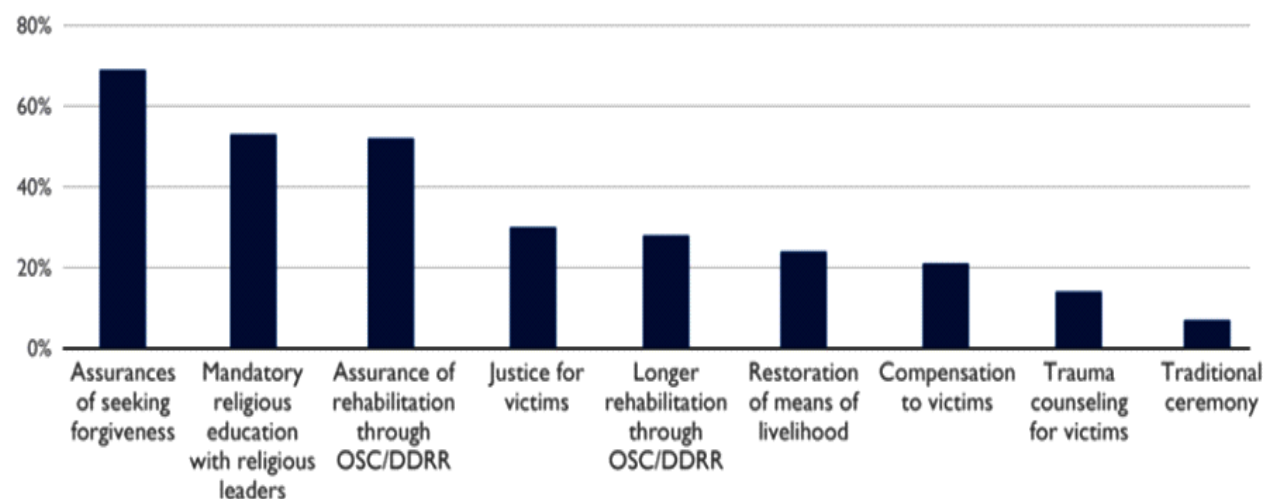


Fig. 4: Important Expectations from the OPSC Graduates by the Community. Source: USAID OTI (2021).

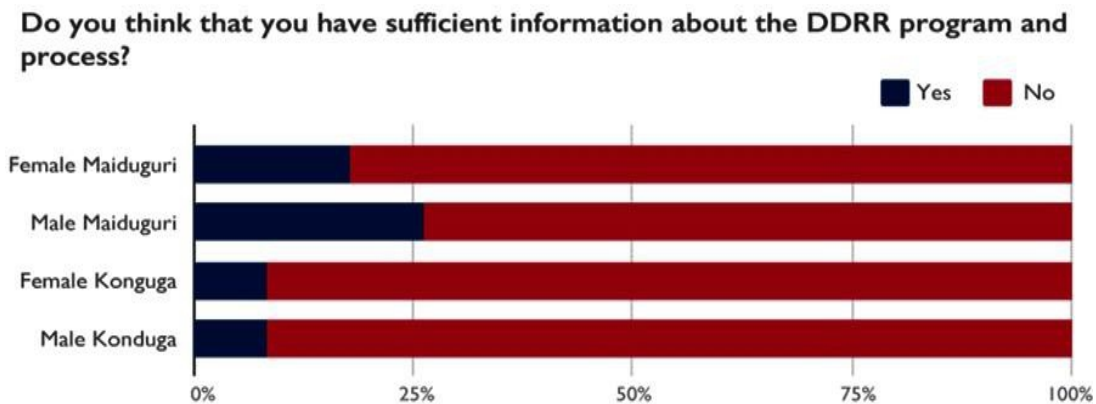


Fig. 3: Survey about people's knowledge about OPSC in the North East. Source: USAID OTI (2021).

The foregoing has serious adverse implications on the credibility and public acceptance of the OPSC programme. As observed by ICG (2021), the government and the management of the OPSC must work harder to persuade the public of the program's merits and clear the air about several misconception of the programme.

Arrest and Admission of Wrong Targets

One of the most unfortunate shortcomings of the OPSC is the arrest and admission of the wrong targets. It has been substantiated that of the hundreds of individuals who have gone through or are currently in the OPSC programme, a large number of them have nothing to do with BH and ISWAP. Rather, they are innocent civilians who were hitherto victims of Boko Haram and who, after detention by security forces, were mistakenly categorised as terrorists and programmed into OPSC (ICG, 2021). USAID OTI (2021) also reported that these barracks have a terrible reputation for human rights abuses, particularly Giwa that has been notorious for delayed processing of men through the centre, whether deemed low or high risk. As corollary, Anonymous (2022) confirmed that the majority of those in detention camps and Mallam Sidi are innocent but unfortunate Nigerians who ought to have been categorised as victims of

Boko Haram terrorism but mistakenly taken as insurgents. He presented the narrative of one of the victims thus:

After my father had been killed by Boko Haram and my siblings could not be found, I was arrested and brought to this place only to be labelled as Boko Haram. I am a young man with a bright future, that future has been damaged by the government who brought me here for years. For this I can never forgive the Nigerian government. Since my third years of being here, I just got a rumor that my twin brother is also here. Even if I will die here, my wish is to see him before they will end my life. Please, help me (Anonymous, 2022).

This buttressed the position of the ICG (2021) that the OPSC programme has also been raiding parade of short where individuals, amongst whom were minors suspected of being child soldiers, a few high-level jihadists and alleged terrorists whom the FGN have tried and failed to prosecute, and who say they were being sent for the OPSC programme against their will (ICG, 2021). Locals in BH controlled areas refer to these civilians as Awam, a word

derived from the Arabic for “commoners” while the real BH members are called Rijal. Therefore, the Aswans who were supposed to be sympathized with and supported by the government are now being taken as though they are Rijals. ICG (2021) reported that this has begun to generate concerns amongst some donors that are worried that Nigeria is not spending their money on the target group, which amounts to human rights violation, and therefore cautious about further investment in the OPSC programme.

Horrible Treatment of Clients

Concerns have also been generated on the allegations regarding the terrible treatment that many clients were being subjected to after surrendering to the Nigerian Government. ICG (2021) argue that many former OPSC clients have testified to horrific conditions, particularly in the network of detention centres where they were held prior to reaching Mallam Sidi camp. ICG (2021) further observes that some of those who voluntarily defected found themselves held in government facilities for as long as three years in total and often without any contact with family members for long periods of time. Some died in confinement. Similarly, Akum and Samuel (2020) report that “some of the repentant BH fighters who have passed through the Giwa Barracks detention centre regretted surrendering to the military given their experience.” This could be a major factor that discourages many of the fighters from considering the option of government amnesty (Ugwueze et al, 2021).

Quality of Training

Another point of interrogation is the training process of the OPSC programme. The training quality in terms of content, facilitators and availability of resources is very key in determining the success or otherwise of the training itself. Apart from the religious and psycho-social content of the training, the major skill focused areas are farming, woodwork and

carpentry, barbing, and fashion designing. These are too narrow given the unlimited sectors of the economy that can be exploited. Other areas of quick returns on investment like solar panel installation, branding and printing, online commodity marketing, transportation, amongst others, could be included. Aside from the civilian experts, Ugwueze et al. (2021) bemoan the fact that the military personnel involved in the training are neither constantly (re)trained nor adequately motivated to do their jobs; and “there are no insurance packages covering the trainers, their monthly emoluments are rarely paid on time, even the senior officers that undergo some forms of training were subject to being frequently transferred.” These could be demoralizing for the military facilitators with adverse effects on the training quality. It has also observed that there is weak post-release monitoring or follow-up mechanism, and the absence of robust risk assessment tools to mitigate recidivism (Ugwueze et al., 2021). Again, the absence of mechanisms for performance, monitoring and evaluation is inimical not only to the training curriculum but also the overall wellbeing of the OPSC graduates.

Reintegration and Non-Inclusion of Receptive Communities

The Federal Government has been receiving some accolades of sort in the areas of deradicalisation and rehabilitation segments of the OPSC. The reintegration aspect has, however, continued to be a subject of criticism from the majority of stakeholders. The OPSC graduates and the receptive communities are the two components of this segment. The duo must be thoroughly enlightened and made to be involved in the planning and implementation of the reintegration process. On the part of the returnees, the ICG (2021) observed that the process of reintegration was messy in the early days of OPSC. Citing the example of the Borno state government improvising the Umaru Shehu rehabilitation camp in Maiduguri for the

first batch of graduates, a facility run by the Borno State Women's Affairs Commission and hosting women and children formerly associated with Boko Haram. Mixing the male graduates with women and children in the same camp led to some sexual cases which forced the government to send the graduates to their communities or to IDP camps around Maiduguri with little or no preparation. The authorities had given little thought to this matter, leaving many former internees without a smooth path back into civilian life (ICG, 2021).

On the side of receptive communities, they were never involved in the planning as their minds were not prepared to welcome the graduates with both hands. The authority did next to little in appealing to the psyches of the communities who were the principal victims of the hitherto terrorist activities of the graduate returnees. Ideally, the OPSC programme supposed to train not only the clients, who are considered criminals, but more importantly the community people i.e the victims. This is because many of the victims themselves have become radicalized and hungry for vengeance on behalf of their loved ones that have been killed by the returnee's previous terrorist activities. Consequently, the communities are finding it difficult to cope with the current reintegration process. In the words of ICG (2021), some OPSC graduates still face suspicion from communities and local security forces: "The program also has yet to overcome continuing public hostility and opposition from some prominent politicians, who characterise the OPSC as providing amnesty and support to terrorists or criminals who should instead be punished."

In some cases, OPSC graduates encountered public hostility when they arrived. Citing the example of the government's movement of graduates from Gwoza local government area to a Maiduguri displaced persons' camp and then to their homes, ICG (2021) reports that residents in both places protested, forcing authorities to send the graduates again to Umaru Shehu rehabilitation

camp, until they could be relocated again. In the same vein, Ugwueze et al. (2021) assert that reintegration is a major setback in the OPSC programme. This was as a result of the failure to consult the local communities about the conception, design and delivery of the initiative. Another critical factor of the reintegration process is the economic survival of the returnees. As it is currently, the economic empowerment of the OPSC graduates is highly discouraging. ICG (2021) reports that the earlier batches of graduates received a small amount of money (20,000 naira, about \$60 at the December 2018 rate) from OPSC upon exiting Mallam Sidi, and a bit more from the Borno state government (5,000 naira, about \$15) upon exiting Umaru Shehu rehabilitation camp, as well as foodstuff and basic necessities (clothes, cooking utensils, a mat and a tarpaulin). Borno state authorities also gave a sewing machine to each of three graduate groups to help them earn a living, which many sold and split the money, as it was often impractical for them to start a business with such arrangement. By the end of 2019, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) begun giving graduates individual business kits to help them set up retail booths, shoemaker's shops or hair salons (ICG, 2021). Given the national budget for OPSC and the donors' support, it is expected that the concluding part of the training leading into economic reintegration should be realistically planned and diligently executed. Currently, the economic reality of Nigeria suggests that no serious-minded person can start a meaningful business or setup a workshop with a paltry 25,000 naira (ICG, 2021). This alone, coupled with their non-acceptance by the communities, is enough to get the graduate frustrated and be thinking of other (unlawful) means of survival.

The Way Forward

For Nigeria to effectively and efficiently deliver the OPSC programme as a veritable non-kinetic CTCoin operation, it is extremely imperative to consider, among other things, a review of the

OPSC programme, strategic communication for public and political buy-in, overhauling of the screening process, and strict adherence to international laws and best practices. These are subsequently discussed.

Review of the OPSC Programme

An urgent review of the OPSC programme is needed with particular reference to the reintegration component of the DRR. Currently, the programme has been designed with principal focus on the ex-terrorists and no significant attention is being given to the victims who constitute the receptive communities. The receptive communities ought to have been inclusively carried along to play notable parts, at least, in the design and implementation of the reintegration segment of the programme. But the reality on ground shows that they weren't part of the process; hence the hostilities and political rejections which the OPSC and its graduates are suffering currently. Consequently, a review of the programme should be done to:

- Accommodate critical victims as one of the principal subjects of the programme who should also be rehabilitated.
- Truth and Reconciliation Committees (TRCs) should be setup in each of the senatorial districts across Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states to coordinate reconciliation and reintegration between the returnees and the victims in the various receptive communities across the region.
- Training contents should be reviewed to include current entrepreneurial components like digital marketing, branding, graphic design and printing, solar energy installation tech etc.
- The startup packages for the graduates (victims included) should be realistic and sustainable with business investment capital and setups according to Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) standard.

Strategic Communications

The purpose and activities of the OPSC is yet to sink with public understanding, leaving the people to be hostile to the programme and its graduates in the North East. Whether Strategic Communication was part of the design of the programme is what the author cannot ascertain; however, its execution was poorly done. Consequently, the OPSC programme is losing the critical public support base due to ineffective public engagement especially in the North East and the country in general. Therefore, Strategic communication component of the OPSC must be rejigged, if it is available, or developed if there is none; to serve the purpose of winning the hearts and minds of the population and secure public and political buy-in among the citizens.

Overhauling of the Target Screening Process

Several evidences have indicated that hundreds of innocent Nigerians, many of whom were hitherto victims of Boko Haram terrorist activities, are now in Giwa, Kuje and Kainji detention camps suffering for crimes they know nothing about. Their human rights have been violated as they are being subjected to inhuman treatments and unknowingly serving as collateral damages for the country. Copious documentations have been done on the faiths of Aswans among the Rijals in the detention camps by previous literature on the subject matter (CDD, 2016; ICG, 2021; Ugwueze et al, 2021). Therefore, the target screening process must urgently be overhauled with technics and methods that would aid easy identification of criminals and guaranteed freedom for the innocents.

Detentions Conditions and Adherence to the International Laws

The horrible experiences shared by OPSC graduates about the horrible conditions they went through in detention centres across the country is not befitting of a country that is signatory to various international legal

instruments that guide such situations. The International Humanitarian Law (IHL) has clearly stipulated how surrendered belligerents and others that may be innocent should be treated in a conflict or war. Consequently, efforts must be accelerated to improve detention conditions, adding better safeguards to protect internees from abuse after surrendering and creating better systems to move defectors swiftly out of interim detention centres and into the Mallam Sidi camp.

Conclusion

The incorporation of non-kinetic lines of efforts into Nigeria's counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations has been acknowledged to be the game changer. While some efforts like the creation of CTCOIN legal, policy and strategic instruments as well as MDAs and CIMIC activities, the launch of OPSC in 2016 has been singled out by stakeholders and experts as a veritable peacebuilding strategy. Since its commencement, the OPSC has provided a safety net for the repentant RITGs members by admitting them into the DRR programme that is aimed at transforming them into useful and law-abiding citizens of the country. The programme, however, has been accompanied with some shortcomings that, if not urgently addressed, could further discredit all the laudable efforts made thus far. These include public awareness and political buy-in, arrest and admission of wrong targets, horrible treatment of clients, quality of training, as well as reintegration and non-inclusion of the receptive communities. Consequently, this paper recommends a review of the OPSC programme to also include some critical victims as clients, inclusion of the receptive communities in the planning and execution of reintegration process as well as establishment of TRCs across the senatorial districts in the affected states, and expansion of the training content for quality assurance and relevance. Others are establishment of a strategic communication cell, overhauling of

target screening process, and strict adherence to the IHL in detention management. It is strongly believed that, should the foregoing recommendations be urgently attended to by the FGN via the ONSA and DHQ, the OPSC programme would be enhanced as a veritable non-kinetic CTCOIN operation to further promote peacebuilding, security and development in the North East Nigeria.

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EFFECTS OF FLOOD DISASTER ON FOOD SECURITY IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES OF KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Kogi state experiences both riverine and flash floods, with the risk and severity of flooding being exacerbated by the pattern of yearly rainfall with significant effects on the food security. This study appraised the effects of flood disaster on food security in some flood affected communities of Kogi State. The study adopted a mixed research design of qualitative and quantitative methods. A multi-stage sampling techniques (purposive and simple random) was used to sampled (500) respondents out of which four hundred and ninety-three (493) were returned and analysed. With the use of descriptive method. (20) KII and IDI sessions were carried out and analysed with the use content analysis. Findings from the study revealed that: deforestation, climate change and heavy rainfall were the major causes of flood disaster and the occurrences of flood disaster showed a reasonable non-availability, accessibility, and increase in the price of food. The study concluded that flood disaster has impacted negatively on food security in Kogi State by reducing availability and accessibility of food. The study recommended that government should promote sustainable land-use practices that reduce soil erosion and improve water retention while stopping deforestation with the enforcement of appropriate land management practices.

Keywords: Food, Security, Flood, Disaster, Kwara

Introduction

Overtime, flood catastrophes frequently harm the agricultural industry and therefore have an influence on food security across the world. In the global index, 42 million people are already facing acute food insecurity due to both familiar and unfamiliar risks, such as flood disaster, pandemic, violent conflict, drought and others, interacting in a hyperconnected world (FAO, 2021). For instance, in Pakistan, India, China, and large parts of the European Union and the United States, available studies (Ashraf, et al., 2017 and Marino, 2022) showed that floods impacted on food security both

immediately and in the months after the flood event.

Specifically, flood disaster was of unprecedented level, affecting more than food nutrients of 20.1 million population in Pakistan (Ashraf, et al., 2017), while in china, flooding durations dropped soybean crop yield, in 2020 comparing 2011 and 2018 data and resulted into potential effects of waterlogging on wheat crops in the country (Marino, 2022). In Africa, floods have affected food security for 12% of modeled african population that

experienced food insecurity during our study period (Marino, 2022). In a study carried out in Columbia University's Climate School and others studied between the period 2009-2020 in 16 nations including Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mauritania and Nigeria, the findings indicated that approximately 12 percent of those who experienced food insecurity in the studied areas, or 5.6 million of African people, had their status affected by flooding over the period (Columbia Climate School, 2022).

The agricultural sector and, by extension, food security, are severely hampered in Kogi State of Nigeria's by repeated flood disasters. Recent years have seen an increase in the frequency of floods, which have severely damaged infrastructure, cattle, crops, and agricultural fields. The region's already-existing problems with food insecurity have been made worse by these flood disasters, which have had serious effects on food supply and accessibility (Echendu, 2022). Kogi State, which is part of Nigeria's Middle Belt, is distinguished by its proximity to significant rivers like the Niger and Benue rivers. While these rivers offer many advantages, like irrigation and transportation, they also increase the state's susceptibility to flood disasters. The state experiences both riverine and flash floods, with the risk and severity of flooding being exacerbated by the pattern of yearly rainfall (Tirivangasi, 2018). Understanding the precise effects in Kogi State and vulnerabilities in the agricultural sector is essential to addressing the problems that flood catastrophes pose for food security.

Statement of Problem

Food security in Kogi State is significantly impacted by flood disaster. Food production, accessibility and availability are hampered by the devastation of agricultural fields, loss of crops, and interruption of farming operations (Danjibo, 2019). Floods also harm transportation and storage of agricultural goods

by destroying infrastructure, including highways, bridges, and storage facilities (Echendu, 2022). These difficulties exacerbate the current food insecurity problems and endanger the population's welfare and way of life. Lack of empirical study regarding the precise effects of flood catastrophes on Kogi State's food security, particularly, the effects on agricultural productivity, food availability, and market access necessitated this study. In many of the previous studies conducted, agricultural systems in flood-prone locations are not sufficiently assessed for their vulnerability, and the main causes of the sector's vulnerability to flood disasters are not sufficiently identified (Okoro & Utazi, 2019; Balogun & Yusuf, 2018; Echendu, 2022; Tirivangasi, 2018; Danjibo, 2019). The aim of this study was to appraise the effects of flood disaster on food security in Kogi State by identifying the causes of flood in selected communities, and examining the effects of flood on food security in Kogi State.

Literature Review

According to National Geographical Education (2022), flooding is a general temporary condition of partial or complete inundation of normally dry areas from overflow of inland or tidal waters or unusual and rapid accumulation or runoff. Also, European Commission (2007) cited in Luino, (2016) defines flood as a natural phenomenon that results in the temporary submerging of water of a land that does not occur under normal conditions. Flood is observed as an excess of water on land that is normally dry and in a situation where inundation is caused by high flow or overflow of water in an established watercourse, such as a river, stream, or drainage ditch (Danjibo, 2019). A flood is a situation that results when dry land is covered with water of a river overflowing or heavy rain; it occurs naturally on the flood plains when water in the river overflows its banks, or sometimes results from a damaged constructed dam. Floods are part of the natural water cycle

or a “ hydrologic cycle” (National Geographical Education, 2022) .

In this water cycle, the energy of the sun causes water to evaporate and form clouds, which move inland and become rain. After rainfall, the surplus surface water will then flow as runoff either directly through the river systems or absorbed into the soil to later form groundwater flow. Floods happen when the capacity of the rivers is not enough to carry the water that has entered the river network, and therefore the banks overflow. They are the naturally occurring events and hence cannot be prevented; and they can have serious consequences such as displacement of people and damage to the environment (National Geographical Education, Reis & Fennell, 2021; Tirivangasi, 2018).

Based on the World Bank definition and in line with the United Nations' Committee on World Food Security, 1996 Food Summit, food security means that all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life (World Bank, 2022). This definition explains that food must be physically available and close to the people without any hindrances to the supply at any time; the price at which food is supply must be affordable for respective household; the quality of food available must be of good value and nutritious to the body and soil to enhance growth and development; and the availability must be stable in supply at all time in order to sustain the needed growth and development in a man. Also, Fakoyejo (2022) sees food security concept as broader than mere production and accessibility of food, it revolves round four pillars namely: accessibility, availability, nutritional and stability of food at all time. The above submissions have shown that before food can be said to be secured, the basic four objectives mentioned have to be

fulfilled.

Peng and Berry (2018) trace the concept of food security to 1970s when there was global food crisis due to a drought that happened. At that time, the major focus of the concept was on the availability and price stability of basic food items due to severity in the weather condition on agricultural commodity. Aside this evolution concept of food security, several other definitions has been postulated either at international or regional union of government. For examples, Food and Agriculture Organization, (1983) define it as “ensuring that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to the basic food that they need” while United National Development Programme (1994), consider food security as a requirement for human security (Berry et al., 2015). However, Peng and Berry elaborated the concept based on the widely acceptable definitions posits by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in its Annual report on food security 2001 that “Food security is a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO, 2002 cited in Peng & Berry, 2018).

Scholars and researchers have focused on the occurrences and recurrences of resultant floods disaster which is of great concern (Sani, 2023; OCHA, 2022; Okoro and Utazi, 2019; Balogun and Yusuf, 2018; Okoro and Utazi, 2019 and Echendu, 2022). Particularly in the rainy seasons, it is usually a common story to read about in the dailies and magazines, or to watch on TV stations about occurrences of flood disasters (Sani, 2023; OCHA, 2022). There have been journalistic reports (This Day News, November 4th, 2022; Premium News, 7th April, 2023) of floods in several parts of Nigeria, but they are superficial and lack directions for policy makers.

Furthermore, another factor that causes flood disaster according to Tirivangasi (2018), is severe sea storms, or the result of hazard such as Tsunami or hurricane. Folorunsho and Awosika (2021) as well as Igwe (2018) report that floods do occur in Nigeria in three main ways: coastal flooding, river flooding and urban flooding. Although many of the different types of floods mentioned occurred in Nigeria, Etuonovbe (2011) believe that flooding occurs throughout Nigeria in the following forms: Coastal flooding, River flooding, urban flooding, Levee burst, Dam breakage and Dam spills. Although a much bigger flood such as a 100-year flood is expected to happen rarely, there is still one in a hundred chances that a flood of that size will happen in any one year (Emergency Management Australia, 2014).

Flood disaster is not a recent phenomenon in Nigeria. It has been perilous to people and communities. In 2010, Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto and other parts of the State were affected by flooding chasing the inhabitants away and so many places were swept away. This resulted to the University asking students to remain at home for four months due to the damage of the bridge which is the only way linking the University with the city. This incident affected the academic activities of the university for that period of time (Etuonovbe, 2011). Similarly, flood disaster has been reported in Ibadan (1987, 1990), Oshogbo (1996; 2002), Yobe (2000) and Akure (2000; 2002; 2004; 2006). The coastal cities of Lagos, Port Harcourt, Calabar, Uyo and Warri among others have many times experienced incidents that have claimed many lives and properties worth millions of dollars (Folorunsho & Awosika, 2002; Ologunorisa, 2004).

As far as food security is concerned in Nigeria, flood disaster has a substantial and wide-ranging impact (Echendu, 2022). The state's agricultural industry, which provides a

significant portion of the population's food and livelihood, is especially susceptible to the effects of floods. To ensure a resilient and sustainable food system, it is essential to create effective mitigation and adaptation methods. According to Coker (2023), the post-harvest loss in Kogi State in 2012 flooding were as result of flooding. Due to prolonged exposure to water or because they may be more susceptible to rotting and spoilage, crops that survive floods may be of lesser quality. Post-harvest losses are made worse by inadequate storage facilities and poor food handling procedures. The reduction in the amount of food supply caused by lost harvested crops has an adverse effect on the stability of food (ElJuwairiya, 2020). Floods in Kogi State have disrupted the livelihoods of farmers and agricultural workers. A decrease in revenue and increased vulnerability result from the devastation of farmland, crops, and farming machinery. Farmers who depend largely on agriculture for their livelihoods suffer severe financial losses and may find it difficult to recover from flood damage. As a result of these disruptions in livelihoods, those affected find it more difficult to obtain food for their own family, further exacerbating the problem of food insecurity (FAO, 2021).

Theoretical framework

This study is anchored on human security theory. This theory argues that the attention of public policy-makers should be directed towards achieving security of people, not states (Aydar, 2016). The concept emanated from the 1994 UNDP Human Development Report New Dimensions of Human Security coined the term "human security" (UN Trust Fund for Human Security, 1994, cited in Adger, 2014). As part of ensuring human security, Adger (2014) revealed that people should be protected before, during violent conflict, post-conflict situations, pandemic, and disaster occurrences. According to the United Nations, human security is: "to protect the vital core of all

human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment” (UN Habitat, 2007; pg 23 cited in Aydar, 2016). Human security means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military, food, community and cultural safe and sustainable windows that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity (UN Habitat, 2007 in Aydar, 2016). This definition appears more inclusive and expressive in terms of bring out what are considered as 'the vital core', 'fundamental freedoms' and 'the essence of life’ (Aydar, 2016). In the context of this study, food security as a sub sector of human security, has become relevant in order to justify essences of food security in the study area.

Methodology

The study relied on mixed research design of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Both interview and questionnaire instruments were used to collect data in order to have deeper understanding of the issues, causes and management approach of flood disaster in Kogi State. The population of this study was 1,705, 572 residents, farmers, Non-Governmental organizations community leader and Flood victims in Lokoja, Ibaji, Bassa, Ajaokuta, Kotonkarfe, IgalaMela-Odolu, Omala, and Idah. In this investigation, a multi-stage sampling technique was employed. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 9 out of 21 LGA affected by flood disaster in Kogi State.

A random sampling was used to select 2 settlements from each LGA that had experienced floods on a regular basis. Copies of the questionnaire were administered among farmers, flood affected households, NGOs and community leaders. Out of 500 copies of questionnaire distributed to the respondents, 493 copies questionnaire were retrieved back and analysed, while a total of 20 Key Informant interview (KII) and In -depth (IDI) interview sessions were conducted for the farmers,

community leaders, religious leaders and staff of the State Ministry of Agric and State Emergency Management Agency. The SPSS 2020 software package was used to conduct descriptive statistical analysis on the data obtained from the questionnaire survey. Information from key informant interviews and in-depth interviews was evaluated using content analysis to derive meaning and come up with solutions to the primary study issues.

Data Presentation and Analysis

1. Demographic characteristics of Respondents

The table 1 below shows the descriptive statistics providing an overview of demographic characteristics of respondents.

S/N	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender		
	Male	319	64.7%
	Female	174	35.3%
	Total	493	100.0
2	Marital Status		
	Married	230	46.7%
	Single	165	33.5%
	Divorced	45	9.1%
	Separated	36	7.3%
	Widow	17	3.4%
	Total	493	100.0
3	Ethnicity		
	Yoruba	33	6.7%
	Hausa/Fulani	92	18.7%
	Igbo/Igala	223	45.2%
	Others	145	29.4%
	Total	493	100.0
4	Educational Status		
	No formal education	40	8.1%
	Primary	79	16.0%
	Secondary	224	45.4%
	Tertiary	150	30.4%
	No formal education	40	8.1%
	Total	493	100.0
5	Occupation		
	Unemployed	178	36.1
	Unskilled laborer	39	7.9
	Artisan	40	8.1
	Civil servant	105	21.3
	Trader/business	131	26.6
	Total	493	100.0

Source: *Field survey, 2023*

Table 1 indicates a slight predominance of males within the group. Moving on to marital status, the data shows that 46.7% of individuals are married, making it the most common marital status. Singles account for 33.5% of the population, followed by divorced individuals at 9.1%, separated individuals at 7.3%, and widows at 3.4%. These figures reflect the diverse marital statuses present within the community. The ethnic composition of this population is quite important. Igala make up the majority of the population, at 45.2%, making them the largest ethnic group. At 18.7%, Hausa/Fulani are the second-largest group, while others are third at 29.4%. Yoruba make up the smallest ethnic group, making up only 6.7% of the population. This information demonstrates the community's multiethnic makeup and the presence of its members with a variety of cultural origins.

The most common educational level among the respondents is secondary education, which has a completion rate of 45.4%. With 30.4% of the population having pursued higher education, tertiary education follows closely. 16.0% of people claim to have completed elementary school, while 8.1% claim to have no formal education. These results show that the community has a range of educational attainment. The distribution of occupations provides insight into people's employment circumstances. Unemployed people make up the largest category, constituting 36.1% of the population.

Tradespeople and business owners make up 26.6% of all occupations, placing them second. 21.3% of the population is made up of civil servants, compared to 8.1% of artisans and 7.9% of unskilled workers. This data shows a mix of employed and jobless people working in various industries, which is indicative of the community's broad occupational characteristics.

In short, this descriptive analysis of the table indicates a number of significant characteristics of the group being studied. It shows a gender divide, with more men than women. The majority of people are married or single, according to marital status. The community's ethnic composition can be seen by looking at its ethnic composition. Different levels of education are indicated by different educational statuses, with secondary education being the most prevalent. The distribution of occupations shows a mix of employed and jobless people working in various fields. With the help of these results, it is possible to gain a better understanding of the demographic and socioeconomic aspects of the population.

1. Causes of flood in selected communities of Kogi State

S/N	Statement/Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
1.	Human activities such as deforestation contribute to flooding	115(23.3%)	176(35.7%)	53(10.8%)	90(18.3%)	59(12.0%)	2.59
2.	Poor urban planning and improper drainage systems cause floods	129(26.2%)	127(25.8%)	107(21.7%)	82(16.6%)	48(9.7%)	2.58
3.	Climate change is a significant factor in causing floods	132(26.8%)	163(33.1%)	61(12.4%)	61(12.4%)	76(15.4%)	2.56
4.	Inadequate flood control measures worsen the impact of floods	113(22.9%)	185(37.5%)	66(13.4%)	56(11.4%)	73(14.8%)	2.57
5.	Poor waste management practices contribute to flooding	128(26.0%)	164(33.3%)	54(11.0%)	80(16.2%)	67(13.6%)	2.58

Source: Research's Field survey, 2023

Table 2 above provides responses to statements or questions regarding the causes of floods in selected communities of Kogi State. Each statement/question is rated on a scale from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree," and the frequencies for each response category are provided, along with the mean score. The first statement makes the connection between human actions like deforestation and flooding. According to the responses, this statement is supported by 23.3% highly agreeing, 35.7% agreeing, 10.8% neutral, 18.3% disagreeing, and 12.0% strongly disagreeing. According to the mean score of 2.59, there is a fair amount of consensus among responders about how deforestation affects flooding. Inadequate drainage infrastructure and bad urban design appear as the main causes of flooding. 26.2% of respondents strongly agree, 25.8% agree, 21.7% are neutral, 16.6% disagree, and 9.7% strongly disagree, according to the results. Similar levels of agreement exist as in the prior statement, with a mean score of 2.58. Climate change is mentioned as a key contributor to the increase in floods. According to the responses, 12.4% are indifferent, 12.4% agree, 33.1% agree, 26.8% strongly disagree, and 15.4% agree. The respondents appeared to have a moderate level of agreement regarding the impact of climate change on flooding, as indicated by the mean score of 2.56. The influence of insufficient flood control measures on the severity of floods is highlighted in the fourth statement. The results indicate that 14.8% strongly disagree, 11.4% disagree, 13.4% are neutral, 22.9% strongly agree, and 37.5% agree. A moderate level of agreement on this topic may be seen by the mean score of 2.57. The fifth statement focuses on how bad waste management procedures cause flooding. 26.0% highly agree, 33.3% agree, 11.0% are indifferent, 16.2% disagree, and 13.6% strongly disagree, according to the replies. There is a comparable level of agreement to the second statement, with a mean score of 2.58. Finally, encroachment on flood plains and

waterways is mentioned as a factor that raises flood risks. According to the responses, 38.5% of people agree, 15.4% of people are neutral, 12.2% of people disagree, and 9.9% of people strongly disagree. The average score of 2.45 indicates that there is a fair amount of consensus regarding the dangers of encroaching on floodplains and waterways.

This finding corroborates with the oral evidences collected from Key informant interview and In-depth sessions conducted that when there is heavy rainfall in the country and beyond, Kogi State will be severely affected due to its geographical location. According to a respondent;

Majority of the communities and towns are close to river Niger/Benue, and when this river overflows its banks, it will result into flood disaster. The flowing river in many instances are much, couple with the rain fall in our State, the lakes will overflow and cause disaster (KII: 45yr; Male; SEMA's spokesperson; 2023).

In the submission of chairman of NGO and civil Society Organization in the State,

The river Niger is long overdue for dredging, and this has been responsible for incessant flood disaster any time its rains heavily in the State (KII: 35; Male; KONGONET's Chairman; 2023).

According to an eyewitness,

Rain fall was the cause of last year flood disaster in our community. Any time there is continues rain fall for several days, the end result will be flood. (IDI: 25yr; Male; Ibaji flood Victim: 2023).

Some other eyewitnesses asserted that

There is no proper drainage to control flood in Lokoja, added with the heavy water flowing in the river, our community is always prone to perennial flood disaster during raining seasoning (IDI: 25yr; Male; Lokoja flood Victim: 2023).

We built houses and carry out rice farming close to the river Niger. So, when there is heavy rain fall, it will result in flood disaster. But last year disaster was beyond our control because virtually all our farm produces were taking away by the flood. We learnt there was a certain river that was opened in Cameroon that made river Niger to overflow its banks (IDI: 50yr; Female; Bassa flood Victim: 2023).

3. Effects of Flood on food security in Kogi State

S/N	Statement/Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1.	The flood resulted in a significant decrease in agricultural productivity	51(10.3%)	73(14.8%)	19(3.9%)	177(35.9%)	173(35.1%)	3.70
2.	The flood had a negative impact on the availability of locally produced food	43(8.7%)	78(15.8%)	8(1.6%)	212(43.0%)	152(30.8%)	3.71
3.	The flood disrupted the transportation of agricultural produce to markets	59(12.0%)	63(12.8%)	15(3.0%)	199(40.4%)	157(31.8%)	3.67
4.	The flood led to an increase in food prices in my community	57(11.6%)	64(13.0%)	22(4.5%)	192(38.9%)	158(32.0%)	3.66
5.	The flood resulted in reduced access to diverse and nutritious food	56(11.4%)	72(14.6%)	20(4.1%)	206(41.8%)	139(28.2%)	3.60

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2023

Table 3 above presents the responses regarding the effects of flood on food security in Kogi State. The statements or questions are rated on a scale from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," and the frequencies for each response category are provided, along with the mean score. The first statement addresses the decrease in agricultural productivity as a result of the flood. According to the responses, 35.9%

agree, 35.1% strongly agree, 10.3% disagree, 14.8% disagree, 3.9% are neutral, and 35.9% disagree. There is a surprisingly high degree of agreement in a mean score of 3.70—that the flood significantly reduced agricultural productivity. The second claim focuses on how the flood has reduced the amount of locally produced food available. The results show that 30.8% strongly agree, 43.0% agree, 1.6% are neutral, 8.7% strongly disagree, 15.8% disagree, and 15.8% disagree. There is a fair amount of consensus, a mean score of 3.71 that the flood had a detrimental effect on the availability of locally grown food.

On a claim that flood has affected how agricultural products are transported to markets. According to the results, 40.4% agree, 31.8% strongly agree, 12.0% strongly disagree,

12.8% disagree, 3.0% are neutral. The consensus is relatively strong, as indicated by the mean score of 3.67, that the flood hindered the movement of agricultural goods to markets. The increase in post-harvest losses of agricultural crops brought on by the flood is

highlighted in the fourth statement. Also, the flood has caused food costs to rise in the neighborhood. According to the results, 32.0% strongly agree, 38.9% agree, 4.5% are neutral, 11.6% strongly disagree, 13.0% disagree, and 13.0% disagree. The community appears to be in general agreement as indicated by the mean score of 3.66 that the flood contributed to a rise

in food prices. The final variable implies that the flood had a long-lasting effect on the nutritional status of vulnerable communities. The results show that 27.2% highly agree, 39.4% agree, 5.7% are neutral, 8.1% strongly disagree, 19.7% disagree, and 19.7% disagree. The consensus is relatively high—a mean score of 3.57—that vulnerable groups' nutritional condition was negatively impacted by the flood for a considerable amount of time.

Hence, this implies that the flood had significant effects on food security in Kogi State. The flood had a negative impact on agriculture's productivity, the availability of locally produced food, transportation of agricultural products was disrupted, post-harvest losses increased, the livelihoods of farmers and agricultural workers were negatively impacted, food prices increased, access to a variety of healthy foods was restricted, the nutritional status of vulnerable populations was negatively affected for a long time, and the need for better flood management was highlighted. These results highlight the need of taking steps to lessen the negative effects of floods on food security in the area.

Furthermore, responses from the interview sessions confirmed that transportation cost is extremely on a high side, prices of road transport and food increase, because there was no routes to get to the main town and you have to pass through different places. It does have a long lasting impact. According to a respondent;

Transportation was hell during flood, it was not easy. Transporters collected a lot of money when people are crossing from one area to another. Children were affected. They could not go to school (KII: 45yr; Male; SEMA's spokesperson; 2023).

In the submission of chairman of NGO and civil Society Organization in the State,

The major and noticeable effect is high cost of food particularly here in Lokoja. Most of the farmers could not move their produce from the riverine area to the main town. Farmers that were able to transport their farm produce paid much to get it done, and this caused a drastic increase in the price of food (KII: 35; Male; KONGONET's Chairman; 2023).

According to an eyewitness,

There is limited food supply in the town. There are some certain vegetable leaves that can no longer be accessed again because of the flood that rampaged the vegetable farms (IDI: 25yr; Male; Ibaji flood Victim: 2023).

Some other eyewitnesses asserted that

There was no food to eat in the camp, we were kept for several days. We had to be sharing little available rice brought for us by certain NGO. Even the NEMA's trucks bringing in food were unable to access road because of the flood that overtook the bridge of River Niger (IDI: 25yr; Male; Lokoja flood Victim: 2023).

We were unable to supply food palliative to the victims, and that resulted into food crisis in IDP camps (KII: 50yr; Female; KSEMA: 2023).

Discussion of Findings

Research question one addressed the causes of flood in selected communities of Kogi State; most respondents (around 59.0%) strongly agreed that human actions like deforestation contribute to flooding. This research emphasizes how deforestation harms the environment, especially in terms of upsetting the water cycle and causing more surface

also delays the timely delivery of commodities to markets.

Furthermore, the floods caused a rise in food costs. About 70.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the floods increased the cost of food in their neighbourhoods. This increase can be linked to fewer locally produced foods being available, broken supply chains, and rising transportation costs, all of which have an effect on how much food households can purchase. The nutritional status of vulnerable groups was also found to be negatively impacted by the floods. Approximately, 66.6% of those surveyed concurred or strongly concurred that the floods had a long-lasting effect on vulnerable people's nutritional health. This shows that the floods not only affected people's access to and availability of wholesome food, but also had a lasting impact on people's health and wellbeing, especially those who were already at risk of food insecurity.

The study's findings also show that the floods made it clear that better flood management and preparedness strategies are required. The need to take action to improve food security was underscored by the floods, according to about 71.2% of those who agreed or strongly agreed. This suggests that in order to lessen the impact on food security, better flood management techniques, early warning systems, and disaster preparedness were necessary. (Okoro & Utazi, 2019). This implies that floods in Kogi State have a wide range of implications on food security. The floods have a negative influence on vulnerable communities' nutritional status, local food availability, transportation systems, post-harvest losses, livelihoods, and food costs. These results highlight the significance of putting comprehensive flood management measures in place, encouraging climate-resilient agricultural methods, boosting infrastructure resilience, and creating social safety nets to lessen the impact of floods on

food security in the area.

Conclusion

Flooding in Kogi State was primarily caused by severe rainfall, inadequate drainage systems, deforestation, and climate change. These elements increase the communities' susceptibility to flood disasters. This study concludes by highlighting the significant impact of floods on food security in Kogi State and it shows a reasonable adverse impact on food security in Kogi State. Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance food security in flood-prone areas of Kogi State:

1. There should be an agency to strengthen flood management and preparedness in order to create comprehensive flood management plans that include flood risk assessment, early warning systems, and response plans. To promote efficient preparedness and response systems, improve cooperation between pertinent government agencies, local communities, and disaster management authorities.
2. The government should promote sustainable land-use practices, by taking into action to stop deforestation and to promote sustainable land-use methods that reduce soil erosion and improve water retention. To lessen the vulnerability of communities to floods, promote reforestation initiatives and the application of appropriate land management practices.
3. There is a need to improve infrastructure resilience in order to ensure their best performance and capacity during flood occurrences, upgrade and maintain drainage systems, dams, and reservoirs. To reduce the effects of flooding on agriculture, transportation, and storage facilities, make investments in the creation of strong, climate-resilient infrastructure.

runoff. Increased flood hazards result from a reduction in the land's ability to absorb water caused by the loss of forest cover. More so, inadequate drainage infrastructure and urban planning were noted as important contributors to flooding. Inadequate urban planning contributes to floods, according to a sizeable portion of respondents (52.0%) strongly agreed. This aligns with findings made by Akintola & Adelekan (2020). This shows that towns are more vulnerable to flooding because they lack adequate infrastructure and drainage systems. It highlights the need for better urban planning techniques that take into account the natural water flow and incorporate efficient drainage systems to reduce the risk of flooding. Similarly, it was acknowledged that flooding is significantly influenced by climate change. Significantly more respondents (59.9%) strongly agreed that floods is influenced by climate change. The likelihood of floods may increase due to increasing precipitation and more extreme rainfall patterns brought on by climate change. Furthermore, variations in temperature can have an impact on the melting of snowcaps and glaciers, which will raise the water levels in rivers and lakes and increase the risk of flooding. Furthermore, it was believed that ineffective flood control techniques made floods worse. The lack of adequate flood management measures worsens the impacts of floods, according to a sizeable majority of respondents (60.4%) who agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. In order to lessen the effects of floods and safeguard communities from their damaging effects, it is crucial to invest in strong flood control infrastructure, such as dams, levees, and reservoirs.

Additionally, it was acknowledged that improper waste management techniques contributed to flooding. Over half of those surveyed (59.3%) strongly agreed that poor waste management causes floods. The improper disposal of garbage, particularly in drainage systems and waterways, can block the

natural flow of water, which increases the danger of flooding and causes waterlogging. This emphasizes the necessity for efficient waste management plans and public education initiatives to encourage ethical garbage disposal methods.

Research question two shed light on the effects of floods on food security in Kogi State. The respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with several claims about how floods affect different facets of food security. We can learn more about the specific impacts of floods on food availability, agricultural production, access to nutrient-dense food, post-harvest losses, livelihoods, food costs, and the general nutritional status of the region by examining their reactions. According to the research, floods significantly reduce agricultural yield. Approximately 70.5% of respondents, or people, agreed or strongly agreed that the floods significantly reduced agricultural productivity. This research implies that floods substantially impair farmers' capacity to cultivate and harvest crops, leading to lower crop production. Floods also destroy crops and infrastructure. Furthermore, the floods were found to have a negative impact on the availability of locally produced food. The availability of locally produced food was negatively impacted by the floods, according to approximately 73.8% of the respondents who agreed or strongly agreed. This suggests that local food systems, such as the supply lines from farmers to markets, were affected by the floods, creating a shortage of fresh and locally sourced food options. The floods had a significant impact on agricultural produce transportation to markets. Approximately 73.8% of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the floods hindered the movement of agricultural goods. This breakdown in the infrastructure and transportation networks makes it more difficult for farmers and consumers to acquire and obtain food, and it

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PEACE SYMBOLISM: THE CASE OF ODU-OJA MONUMENT IN SHARE COMMUNITY OF KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Visual Art Symbols have always played a significant role in human communication, representing ideas, beliefs, and values. The primary objective of this study is to assess the visual art symbols as traditional mechanisms that foster sustainable peace. To achieve this objective, both primary and secondary data were collected and they provided a comprehensive understanding of the ODU-OJA peace monument and its role in promoting peace in the Share-Tsaragi community, Kwara State, Nigeria. By examining this particular visual within the local context, this paper argues that peace symbols play a crucial role in promoting peace and resolving inter-communal conflicts. The primary data were gathered through interviews and surveys with members of the Share-Tsaragi community, while the secondary data consisted of existing literature on indigenous peacebuilding practices. This research aims to contribute to the understanding of indigenous peacebuilding practices in heterogeneous communities.

Keywords: Visual Arts, Symbolism, Indigenous conflict management, Peacebuilding

Introduction

Symbolism is an art movement that originated in the late 19th century and it used symbols to represent absolute truths or ideas. Symbolism sought to express the meaning behind the forms, lines, shapes, and colors rather than the reality of the surface. Symbolism was a reaction against naturalism and realism and it used metaphors or symbols to illustrate a subject matter that would otherwise be difficult to convey. The symbolism art movement was at the forefront of modernism because it developed innovative, somewhat abstract methods for depicting cognitive truth and the conviction that there was a spiritual realm beyond the material world. What unites the

many visual artists associated with the Symbolist movement is the emphasis on feelings, sentiments, thoughts, and personalities rather than reality. A lot of examples of symbolist work convey their own ideologies and reveal personal information, most notably the artist's faith in their power to reveal their perceived truth. Symbolist painters rejected naturalism, instead using vivid and imaginative imagery.

Visual Art Symbols have always played a significant role in human communication, representing ideas, beliefs, and values. In the realm of peace, symbols have become powerful

to or attached to them) and conveyed powerful messages. Numerous emblems of peace have been employed in diverse cultural and contextual circumstances; among the oldest is the olive branch. Early Christians employed the dove and olive branch symbol, which has been used as a symbol of peace in Western civilization since at least the 5th century BC in Greece and was later accepted as a nonreligious emblem. Doves, which are pure, white, and humble, were counted as the universal symbol of peace, humanity, and love. Pablo Picasso made it prominent in 1949, and the post-war peace movement made extensive use of it. The "peace sign," as it is now widely called, was first created in the 20th century as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament's logo. International emblems of peace include the Banner of Peace flag and the V-hand signal. The banner of peace is a symbol of the Roerich Pact, the first international treaty dedicated to the protection of artistic and scientific institutions and historical monuments (Rigby 1998; GGI Insights 2024). The international scene employs the following twelve key symbols of peace:



Fig.1: International Peace Symbols
Source: Lola Sophia 2024

African art is rich in symbolism, especially in works that draw inspiration from proverbs. African painters frequently use symbolic elements to convey deeper meanings and ideas in their works. These symbols, which have cultural meaning, might be taken from the natural world, animals, artifacts, or patterns. Abstraction, which frequently stresses geometric shapes, patterns, and stylized forms over realistic portrayal, is a technique commonly used in African art. Rich in symbolism, many African art forms, such as sculptures and masks, often depict thoughts or notions pertaining to social class, religion, or cultural values.

Some forms of symbolism in African art use plants as points of reference. On cast plaques from Benin, a background pattern of river leaves is a symbol for Olokun (god of the sea). Symbols may be non-representational. For instance, geometric patterns on Bwa plank masks have multiple levels of meaning that refer to ideals of social and moral behavior taught to initiates. Materials also hold symbolic value. Gold foil used in Asante's regalia alludes to the sun and to life's vital force. Indigenous forms of writing, such as 'nsibidi' used among various cultures in Nigeria's Cross River region, embody multiple levels of symbolic meaning that can be accessed only by those initiated. Gestures, too, are a form of symbolism, just as painted designs on the forehead and cheeks of the

tools for expressing the desire for harmony, unity, and non-violence. These symbols transcend language barriers and cultural differences and serve as universal icons of hope and understanding. However, conflicts based on divergence in interest, beliefs, values, positions, status, resources, and pursuit of incompatible goals remain intractable in all human interaction. They give credence to the submission of the renowned philosopher Thomas Hobbs (1958) that "human society exists in conflict not only by accident but by the very nature of man, which makes him pitch against his fellow." Aigbovbiosa (2018) equally submits that in man's quest for survival and relational activities, there comes scrambling for limited resources, status or recognition of it, holding divergent opinions, views, interests, values, etc., owing to differing educational, cultural, political, religious, socio-economic, and ideological backgrounds, which are all potential breeders of disagreement, animosity, conflict, and even violence, if not well tolerated, managed, or resolved.

The indigenous conflict management model refers to traditional approaches to resolving conflicts that are derived from indigenous African society. Customary clash-deciding methods are the processes and practices used by African communities to settle disputes and reach agreements. This model is crucial to local communities, states, and regions because it aims to eliminate the underlying causes of conflict, foster genuine trust between settling parties, and uphold communal harmony, all of which will facilitate advancement and development in the environment. As a case study, the ODUOJA peace symbols in the Share- Tsaragi community include a commemorative reconciliatory festival that involves ritualistic activities. This festival serves as a monument to the community's history of peace agreements and is passed down through generations. Keeping in mind that

people interpret the world through the lens of their experiences and premised on their interactions, understanding human behaviors requires understanding the definitions, meanings, and processes that humans create. Social roles, customs, laws, regulations, goals, and other elements give people the raw material to create definitions. This paper argues that the ODU-OJA peace symbols play a crucial role in promoting peace and resolving inter-communal conflicts in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Literature review

The world is nested in the crucible of unavoidable conflicts, and human life on earth thrives through shades of irreconcilable differences to bring out the juices of positive functional outcomes. Conflicts could ensue between people of different communities normally due to determination of right, raid of livestock, and ownership of natural resources. Communal conflict is described as land dispute involving farmer and herdsmen or between rival ethnic communities (John 2018). However, throughout history, various cultures and civilizations have embraced symbols that embody the concept of peace. Peace symbols are powerful tools for preventing conflicts. The symbols speak directly to the subconscious mind. This part of the mind that is not in a state of awareness contains memory banks, thought generators, emotion generators, a sensory input controller, and a dedicated storage for habits. Hence, symbols develop the mind, and they are used as means for thinking and communication (Ashworth, 2000). With each symbol having its own distinct meaning and message, a number of symbols have evolved over time to capture this revered ideal. Understanding the origins of these symbols provides valuable insights into their evolving meanings and significance.

Many peace symbols have ancient origins, rooted in folklore, mythology, or religious traditions. These symbols were not merely decorative but held deep "meaning" (attributed

tolerance, and empathy prevail (Pearson et al., 2018). This traditional conflict management mechanism has been widely used in Africa in the spiritual and physical sense as it applies to conflict resolution. Chiefly, the religious part of home-grown disagreement settlement talks about building and restoring damaged rapport with God, the spirits, ancestors, relations, and fellow citizens as it applies. It is significant mainly for the reason that it is an approach employed to bring back and restore broken relationships between conflicting parties and among individuals at variance in the settlement progression of peacebuilding.

In essence, Brock-Utne (2001) attributes ease, as all can take part, flexibility, total significance, and being well-suited to the indigenous location. In like manner, Murithi (2006) claims that home-grown clashes' settlement centers on the values of affection, understanding, sharing, compassion, forgiveness, pardon, and support in tackling general troubles that highlight the real meaning of humankind. Therefore, the local disagreements' settlement approach is enduring, tolerable, and manageable because it is from inside African traditions. In the same vein, local disagreement's settlement permits transgressors the single chance, not just to assess the effect of their misdeed but also for them to ask for forgiveness and truly demonstrate a real regret in front of the affected and their families as a symbol of reconciliation towards enduring concord and societal progress (Arthur, Issifu, and Marfo, 2015). Therefore, taking the inherent ability of visual art symbols to enhance peace-building and cooperation, as upheld by Art for Peace, the opportunity to collaborate becomes a channel to promote interpersonal and intercultural understanding, as one of the steps to enhance positive cultural values that can facilitate positive and better coexistence between members of societies (Cabedo-Mas & Díaz Gómez, 2013).

Sustainable indigenous (native) symbolism possesses inherent cultural values. In the quest for effective conflict transformation in the society, artists play a unique role that cannot be imitated by others. To create new life, artists require a physical space of some bareness while displaying aesthetic sensitivity and cultural thinking. Cohen (2003) explores how works of art have supported movement toward coexistence, and submitted that, because art at its most basic level, is pleasurable and enlivening, it can reach beneath people's defenses, and invite reciprocity through aesthetic sensitivity and cultural thinking. He posits, that Art is a way of making contact with others, of finding out what they are like, of discovering what they care about, and of learning how they see things. Art is also a way of making contact with ourselves, of finding out what we are like, what we care about, and how we see things. The scholar further contends that Art is a way of testing our own views against those of others, and of revising our views in light of what we learn from others. It is a way of enlarging our vision, of expanding our horizons, and of enriching our lives (Cohen 2003).

Sustainability of arts through aesthetic sensitivity and cultural thinking helps people to grow in sensitivity to the culture and ecosystem, and it could equally be seen in two directions: to keep people away from any kind of violence by providing them with sensitivity and empathy as well as helping them to develop respect for the society and environment. Thus sustainability and art (peace-art) are processes that can lead to a creative outcome, because sustainability is a movement towards long-term wellbeing, with every action of now impacting on the future generation. The idea of sustainable peace becomes only imaginary, when there is protraction in disorderliness, chaos, skirmishes and insecurity but our collective devotion to faith and its value of 'Peace' (Salam or Shalom) has great propensity

to make peace visible. Visual art offers a creative approach to this end if peacebuilders will be courageous enough to latch its inbuilt capacity for collaborative initiative as a vital tool for conflict transformation. The Treaty of Hudaibiyyah and Jegar Sahadutha are historical evidences.

This symbolism had a profound impact. It showed the Quraysh and other tribes in the region that the Muslims had come in peace and were not seeking confrontation. It also demonstrated the Prophet's willingness to compromise for the sake of peace, despite initial objections from some of his followers. The Treaty of Hudaibiyyah eventually led to a period of relative calm and allowed the Muslim community to grow and spread their message peacefully. It emphasizes the importance of diplomacy, patience, and compromise as essential tools in resolving conflicts and fostering peace within and between communities (Quran in Surah Al-Fath, Chapter 48). Similarly, the story of Laban and Jacob from the Bible (Genesis 31:45-47), specifically from the book of Genesis, provides another example of how a symbolic monument was used to promote peace and resolve a conflict. By setting up this symbolism, Laban and Jacob publicly acknowledged their agreement and committed themselves to abide by its terms. It served as a visual representation of their commitment to peace and cooperation. The naming of the monument differently by each person reflected their distinct perspectives and the shared significance of the event for both of them. The symbolic served as a tangible reminder of their agreement and helped prevent future conflicts by establishing a clear boundary and understanding between them. It also symbolized the end of hostilities and the beginning of a new chapter of peaceful coexistence.

The above stories (the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah and that of Laban and Jacob's symbolic

monument) showcase the inbuilt capacity of visual symbolism in promoting peace, resolving disputes, and fostering reconciliation. It demonstrates across both faiths the importance of open communication, negotiation, and mutual understanding in finding peaceful resolutions to conflicts, as well as the significance of creating physical reminders to uphold commitments and prevent future misunderstandings. Art has the unique ability to symbolize complex abstractions in concrete ways, which yield the potential for raising awareness and bringing about a shift in mindset, necessary for sustainability. When analyzing the contribution of arts to knowledge, Eisner (2008, pp.10-11) contends that arts, first address the 'qualitative nuances of situations': "Thus, in addressing what is subtle but significant, the arts develop dispositions and habits of mind that reveal to the individual a world he or she may not have noticed but that is there to be seen if only one knew how to look." The scholar further observes that art permits fresh perspectives and new ways of perceiving and interpreting the world, permitting us to give up some of our old habits and responses and to generate new and creative ones, enabling us connect with personal, subjective emotions, and permit us to discover our own humanity (Eisner, 2008).

While advocating a rethink of the future of peace and conflict resolution, Onoja (2016) submits that visual art, including exhibitions, murals, installations, parks, and sculptures, plays a crucial role in peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria. Collaboration between individuals, cooperative bodies, and federal agencies can advance the visual arts for better understanding. African society employs traditional conflict settlement systems, providing healing and catharsis (cleansing and release) for individuals and communities affected by violence. These systems utilize symbolism, which includes institutions like leaders, council of elders, and clan chiefs, to

dialogue and engagement, addressing social and political issues, and appreciating beauty and aesthetics, art can promote understanding, empathy, and mutual respect among individuals and communities, contributing to a more inclusive, tolerant, and harmonious society. This creative role of ritualized symbolism, iconography, and recounting models and monuments as a visual art-based mechanism to seal earlier peace pacts and agreements is a veritable indigenous conflict management tool for transforming the protracted conflict between the Share and Tsaragi communities.

Theoretical framework of Symbolic Representation

Some symbols are conventional, while others are natural. The cross is a symbol of Christianity, and it is a conventional symbol of suffering. In order for it to become a symbol, people had to adopt, adapt, or accept the cross as standing for suffering. Other natural symbols include the sun as the symbol of life and strength, a river as the symbol of eternal change and flowing, and so forth, this symbolism is much the same in the tradition of all nations and civilizations. Symbolic representation as a social science theory asserts that, facts are based on and directed by symbols, with the foundation being "meanings." Symbolic interactionism examines the meanings arising from the reciprocal interaction of individuals in a social environment.

This theory has evolved over time, with theorists such as Dewey, Cooley, Parks, and Mead demonstrating different perspectives. For instance, Mead, a pragmatist and anti-dualist philosopher, believes that symbols develop the mind and are used for thinking and communication. Blumer, a student of Mead who was equally considered the founder of symbolic interaction, submits that "meaning" is either attributed or attached to objects and events; they both assume that people respond to

elements of their environments according to the subjective meanings they attach to those elements, such as meanings being created and modified through social interaction involving symbolic communication with other people (Lamle and Aigbovbioisa, 2019). Instead of addressing how institutions objectively define and affect individuals, symbolic interactionism pays attention to these individuals' subjective viewpoints and how they make sense of the world from their own perspective (Carter and Fuller, 2016). The objective structure of a society is less important in the symbolic interactionist view than how subjective, repeated, and meaningful interactions between individuals create society. Thus, society is thought to be socially constructed through human interpretation.

Africans communicate peace, coexistence, fairness, and justice more through symbols and hold symbolic rites in remembrance of peace agreements. Such a commemorative reconciliatory festival, which may involve ritualistic activities, is constantly conserved by building a monument to create an eventful history that is preserved with a model for recounting over generations and transmitted orally. Symbolism is simply the act of attaching inner meaning to outward things. Such attribution of inbuilt meaning could be for religious or social awareness purposes in order to provide more information than what is written about an object in its description. Symbols do shift their meanings, depending on the context in which they are used. For instance, the depiction of "a chain" may stand for "imprisonment as well as "union." Flowers stand as symbols of beauty, Hand sticking together - Hathor Holding Nefertari's Hand' stands for friendship, trust and togetherness (Fig. 2). Sema-Tawy: Uniter of the Two Lands symbolizing the unification of the two lands; the Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt (Fig. 3)

faces represent nsibidi (an indigenous writing). In Kongo art, a seated pose illustrates a dictum about balance, composure, and reflection, while a protruding tongue refers indirectly to the activation of medicines (Clarke 2006). Wieder and Pratt (1990), cited by Tetteh (2013), point out that cultural identities are perceptible in everyday life; members of a culturally identified group employ skills, art forms, symbolism, and speak the same or similar languages and understand the same views, ideas, and interpretations—elements from which they can be recognized as being from the same culture. Visual art-based interventions through effective engagement of symbolism enable societies to rename, reframe, and re-imagine new cultures of peace, justice, and equality by simplifying complex values and re-telling the stories of commonality through symbols. Similarly, indigenous visual art symbolism has the inherent capacity to communicate empathy, facilitate trust-building, and respect for others, as well as create platforms for dialogue of commonality, leading to healing and forgiveness.

In customary cultures, visual art symbols promote sustainable peace by raising awareness, encouraging dialogue, promoting cultural understanding, fostering creativity and critical thinking, and providing healing and catharsis. First, Art brings attention to social, political, and humanitarian issues that contribute to conflict and violence. Through visual representations, performances, literature, and other art forms, artists can highlight the plight of marginalized communities, human rights violations, and the impact of war and conflict on innocent civilians. By raising awareness, art generates empathy and understanding and mobilizes support for peacebuilding efforts. (Renza, V., Andersen, K.R., Fieseler, C., McDermott, F., McGannon, R.2024). Second, it creates spaces for dialogue and exchange, allowing diverse voices to be heard and fostering mutual

understanding. Artistic expression can transcend language, cultural, and societal barriers and create a common ground for people with different perspectives to come together and engage in meaningful conversations. Art promotes dialogue and facilitates reconciliation among communities that have experienced conflict or have historical grievances. Third, it celebrates diversity and promotes cultural understanding (Alam, 2023). By showcasing diverse cultural traditions, art promotes tolerance, respect, and appreciation for different cultures, fostering mutual understanding and reducing prejudice and discrimination. Through art, people learn about other cultures, their values, and their ways of life, leading to greater intercultural understanding and peaceful coexistence. Fourth, Art nurtures creativity, imagination, and critical thinking skills, which are essential for problem-solving and conflict resolution (Lombaerts K., De Mette T., Buffel T. 2012).

Artists often challenge the status quo, question norms, and offer new perspectives through their work, encouraging others to think critically and challenge assumptions. Art inspires innovative and peaceful solutions to complex societal problems and promotes a culture of peace and non-violence. And finally, Art offers healing and catharsis (release or cleansing) for individuals and communities affected by conflict and violence. Artistic expression is a therapeutic channel for trauma and grief, providing a means to process repressed emotions, cope with loss, and promote psychological healing. Art contributes to individual and collective well-being, supporting post-conflict recovery and resilience. (Spike, 2023; González-Zamar MD, Abad-Segura E. 2021)

Harnessing the transformative power of the visual arts through the appropriate engagement of symbolism will create a more peaceful and harmonious world where understanding,



Fig 2:Hathor Holding Nefertari's Hand'.

Source: <https://nl.pinterest.com/pin/631841022710272303/>



Fig 3: Sema-Tawy: Uniter of the Two Lands

It symbolizes the union of Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt.

Source: <https://historicaleve.com/sema-tawy-uniter-of-the-two-lands/>

Consisting of two symbolic plants from two regions: the lotus flower (representing Upper Egypt) and the papyrus (representing Lower Egypt), bound together with the hieroglyph “sema,” signifying “union,” and depicting the trachea and lungs, (Fig. 3). “Sema-Tawy” is considered as the earliest known documented visual symbol of inter-communal peace and unification which historically dates back to the era of Pharaoh Den from the First Dynasty. (Charles K. M., 1999, Haney, L. S 2020).

When a story is written, the actual theme of the story as well as the action in that story will be important to a certain extent. Understanding how we form symbolic meaning is essential for effective use of symbols to explain something very complex, making such things comprehensible in one shot, and bringing a lot of change in the conveyance of inner meaning when used appropriately.

Nexus between Indigenous Symbols, Conflict Prevention and Sustainable Peace

The indigenous conflict management model is crucial for African communities, states, and regions because it aims to eliminate the

underlying causes of conflict, foster genuine trust between parties involved, and uphold communal harmony, all of which will facilitate advancement and development in the environment. Therefore, these long-established different approaches of settling conflicts, which are thought to be ageless, are derived from indigenous African society rather than being a direct result of external influence. Zartman (2010) emphasizes that although Africans are a diverse people with a variety of traditions, there are still certain aspects of the African way of life that persist beyond the colonial era, such as customary clashes deciding methods.

The relationship between art and the advancement of peace is referred to as the nexus between arts and sustainable peace. It has long been acknowledged that art, in all of its forms—visual, performing, literary, musical, and cinematic—is an effective means of establishing harmony, advancing understanding, and settling disputes on an individual, interpersonal, and social level. Since art has the power to inspire, communicate, and unite people, it plays a vital role in global efforts to promote peace. The

The logs of wood

The observed logs of dry woods of various sizes and shapes, leaning on each other there, represent oneness and tolerance, though wood from different sources (trees) is all dead and dry without any sap that could snuff out the fire of love and communal harmony.

The base platform

The round concrete base platform represents a complete, elevated value, sacred post, symbolic position, and historical site, located in the midst of the market, where transactions take place for mutual gain, progress, and development.

The preserved rite

Concealed within the wood is the believed sacrifice offered commemoratively by the custodian after a narration of the truce and age-long peace resolution, along with prayers for all natural blessings of peace, joy, harmony, and fruitful harvest.

The stones

Stones supporting the logs at the base represent our true commitment to preserve the sacrifices made to keep the avowed determination for peaceful negotiations, co-existence, truce, and oneness.

The place

The location of the symbolic installation had more narrative potential; it could tell locals who come to the public space contemporary stories, which is not just as commemorative or narrative but as pro-active in the sense that it is intended to cultivate, gently, a dialogue of commonality and pass on the value of peace and co-existence to successive generations

Together, these symbols serve as a reminder of the community's commitment to peace and provide a framework for resolving conflicts in a peaceful manner. The participants in the FGD and KII state that Odu-Oja is regarded as one of

the oldest indigenous symbols of harmony between the Share and Tsaragi people and a potent reminder that our collective strength outweighs our individual strength. A key participant has this to say:

"Our symbol of peace is in the market; when you go there, you will see it there."

This statement shows that traditional institutions of conflict transformation mechanism exist, which are rooted in the local indigenous societal structures of pre-colonial and pre-contact societies, and have been practiced over a considerable period of time (Zartman, 2000). Such long-established practice and local custom of indigenous peace mechanism are both transactional and mutually symbiotic. This further reveal that while disagreement may ensue now and then, non-violent method must be used to resolve the differences; the parties in conflict must equally work voluntarily and intentionally in agreement to make the transaction profitable to each other, "a win-win" concept of conflict transformation which is consensus-based (MacGinty 2008, 148–149).

During a KII, a participant shares his knowledge about the monument:

... As you may rightly observe, there are logs of dry wood of varied sizes and shapes leaning on each other there. This represents oneness and tolerance, though the wood comes from different sources (trees). They are all dead and dry, without any sap that could snuff out the fire of love and communal harmony.

Another participant claims that

Those stones supporting the logs at the base represent our true commitment to preserve the sacrifices made to keep the avowed determination for

peaceful negotiations, co-existence, truce, and oneness.

Through the interview, it was gathered that this symbolism has been used as a tool for conflict prevention:

Anyone who is familiar with a peace symbol will be immediately reminded of its significance whenever they see it or come across what it stands for, which can have a direct impact on their actions. This has a significant impact on preventing conflicts.

The above findings align with Ohene-Amoh, C. (2023) who posits that,

Peace symbols help us make tangible what is intangible. And the only reason peace symbols have meaning is because we infuse them with meaning, making them sacred. That meaning lives in our minds, not in the item itself. Only when the purpose, cause, or belief is clear can the symbol command great power.

Furthermore, the respondents in the focus group discussion among the custodians of indigenous visual arts in Share make the following remarks:

Both the Share and Tsaragi communities lived mutually protected, in harmony, and celebrated at the Odu-Oja monument together. All conflicts were resolved at this monument. Similarly, mutuality in value is seen in the same source of water, Odo-soose, which flows from the base of Oke-Agbonna into the entire community. The wedding rites and festivals culminate with the traditional display of Aiyedero

masquerade. The misconception about the monument of Odu-Oja as idolatry further confirms the hostility of foreign religions and the demonization of cultural rites and artifacts. The sustained peace enjoyed by both communities before 1978 became imaginary after the advent of the two religions, as a result of the affiliation and total condemnation of the cultural rites its symbolic value and heritage.

There is no denying the fact that Africans' worldviews of sustainable peace are from within African settings, such as culture and tradition, which are inbuilt mechanisms and have endured the test of time. Therefore, neglecting it entirely and embracing solely the Western mechanisms of peacebuilding and conflict resolution will make sustainable peace a far-reaching aspiration on the continent. Africans respect their native customs and cultures and won't compromise them for other values. This is equally true as opposed to 'imported models' of peacebuilding, conflict transformation, and conflict prevention; rather than only focusing on the root causes of the violence, local conflict prevention prescriptions are preferred (Hauge, Doucet, & Gilles, 2015).

Conclusion

This study has highlighted the need to subject indigenous symbolism to systematic investigations so as to distil its inherent functionalities and contributions to conflict management, and further research on the role of symbolism in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, particularly in diverse cultural contexts. The study's findings inform the need for culturally appropriate interventions and policies that support peacebuilding efforts in heterogeneous communities. Put differently, the challenges of low awareness of the inbuilt

nexus between Visual Art symbols, conflict prevention and promoting peace has been the subject of various theoretical writings. These texts counsel contemporary peacemakers to use innovative strategies to support efforts at resolving conflicts rather than giving up when conventional conflict management approach have failed. Weaver (1999) opines that the arts should be used to transform conflicts and promote peace. According to him, looking at a dispute through the prism of art and social change might challenge human concepts of process, transformation, and healing. The scholar further contends that rather than adhering to a strict schedule of steps meant to achieve a particular outcome, peace-building projects ought to adopt a more creative approach.

Lederach (2003) defines moral imagination as the genesis of the intuitive and active mind, which has its foundation in the daily struggles of conflict and violence but it is also capable of conceiving the imaginary connections that do not yet exist in the web of relationships. Such moral reasoning is made possible by creativity and art, which give birth to such nonexistent change in our reality, particularly in our perceptions of it. According to Pratt and Wieder, 1990, cited by Tetteh (2013), cultural identities are discernible in day-to-day interactions; individuals belonging to a group that is culturally identified use certain abilities, artistic expressions, symbols, and languages, as well as sharing similar perspectives, ideas, and interpretations of visual elements that allow them to be identified as belonging to the same culture. Galtung (1996) insists that, in addition to direct violence, structural and cultural violence also impede the realization of an ideal state of peace in which disputes can be resolved in a compassionate, inventive, and nonviolent manner. Hence, the reconstruction of society following acts of violence necessitates thoughtful, situation-specific solutions. Societies can rename, reinterpret, and

reimagine new cultures of equality, justice, and peace thanks to these art-based initiatives. Through the use of symbols, indigenous visual art can retell stories of shared experiences that can foster empathy, respect, and trust among viewers. It can also serve as a commemorative platform for dialogue, healing, and forgiveness.

Discussion of findings: the case of Odu-Oja Iconographic Monument

The Odu-Oja iconographic monument is believed to have originated in the 16th century, and its commemorative rites unite communities in a shared cultural discourse. The Odu-Oja peace monument in the Share-Tsaragi community (Fig. 4) include a commemorative reconciliatory festival that involves ritualistic activities. During this festival, community members come together to celebrate past peace agreements and engage in symbolic actions that represent unity and reconciliation. Participants perform traditional dances, exchange symbolic gifts, and participate in ceremonies that emphasize forgiveness and harmony. The monument is made of different symbols such as the log of woods, the base platform, and the stones. There are meanings attached to each symbol as follows:



Fig. 4: The site of the Odu-Oja monument of commonality
Source: Field work 2024

capacities of visual art-based approaches inhibit their effective engagement as strategic mechanisms for promoting co-existence in these communities. Such factors that militate against sustainable peace and development in the study area include government bias, inadequate peace education, indoctrination, demonization of traditional artifacts, and prolonged narrations of animosity. In order to improve peace research and practice in a post-conflict area, a better understanding of symbolic cultural arts interventions is required, especially in terms of how and why they may lead to positive outcomes. By demonstrating the effectiveness of Odu-Oja peace symbol in promoting peace and resolving conflicts, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on indigenous conflict management models. Therefore, it is recommended that the Kwara State Government should synergize with relevant stakeholders by drawing on indigenous models, engaging dialogue of commonalities with visual arts-based approach that seals earlier peace pacts and agreements with a strategic symbolic joint communal monument to serve as a recounting model for successive generations.

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EFFECTS OF SOLID WASTE MISMANAGEMENT ON ENVIROMENTAL SECURITY IN ILORIN METROPOLIS, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Improper solid waste management, such as indiscriminate disposal of wastes in the rivers, gutters, culverts and uncompleted buildings by the residents, has continued to undermine environmental security in many parts of Ilorin Metropolis of Kwara State, thus resulting to floods, drainage blockages and health-related issues such like water-borne diseases. This study therefore examined the effects of solid waste mismanagement on environmental security in Ilorin metropolis. A questionnaire and key information interviews (KII) instruments were used to gather primary data from the respondents using multi-stage sampling technique of purposive and simple random sampling. Descriptive statistics of percentage was used for data generated from questionnaire, while content analysis was used in analyzing the qualitative data. Finding of the study showed that the nature of solid wastes generated in Ilorin metropolis were mostly household residues, garbage, as well as cartons and plastics. The major factors responsible for the mismanagement were lack of adequate awareness about proper method of waste management for the households, inadequate provision of mobile incinerators to collect waste generated by the households and lack of monitoring at respective dump sites by the concerned authorities. Among the findings, the study revealed that solid waste mismanagement was responsible for air-borne and water borne diseases, environmental contamination/imbalance, blockage of streams and water ways, blockage of gutters and air pollution. This paper concluded that solid waste mismanagement has a negative impact on environmental security. The study recommended, among other things, that the government should make available to communities the needed environmental sanitation facilities such as the provision of more of waste bins and mobile incinerators.

Keywords: Effects, Solid waste, Mismanagement, Environmental security, Kwara

Introduction

In many parts of the world, mismanagement of generated solid waste which is also known as improperly discarded trash, takes different forms, including indiscriminate disposal of pathogenic and infectious substances, which impact the environment negatively. These negative impacts range from land and water pollution, diseases to obstruction of drainage

system and loss of biodiversity, among others. It is estimated that about 1.2 kg/capita/day and almost 1.3 billion tons of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) are generated globally every year (Dudayev et al., 2021). Due to poor management of domestic waste from households, solid waste can cause an environmental hazard if it is not properly

elicit useful data for the study's objectives. A designed questionnaire was used for the collection of quantitative data while Key Informant Interviews (KII) and In-Depth Interviews (IDI) generated qualitative data. The population of this study comprised all the households in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State, Nigeria which is estimated around one million, one hundred and sixty-one thousand, one hundred (1,161,100) (NPC,2022). This study population is made of the four LGAs (Ilorin East, 311,500, Ilorin West, 548, 300, Ilorin South, 314, 100 and Asa, 187, 200). It covers staff of Kwara State Environmental Protection Agency (KWEPA), Kwara State Ministry of Environment (KWME), Kwara State Ministry of Health (KWMH) National Environmental Standards and Regulation Enforcement Agency (NESREA) and the selected four Local Government Authorities.

A sample for this study was taken with the use of multistage sampling technique. Firstly, purposive sampling technique was adopted to select some communities in the targeted LGAs within the Ilorin metropolis, namely Oja Oba, Oja Tuntun and Agbo-Oba communities in Ilorin West, Ipata, and Kankatu communities in Ilorin East, Airport community in Ilorin South and Eyenkorin in Asa Local Government Areas of Kwara State due to the volume of waste generated in the areas and how prone they were

to indiscriminate disposal of solid waste as observed from Preliminary investigation. However, a simple random sampling was used in selection of the respondents in those communities. Consequently, some staff of designated agencies concerned with the enforcement of environmental laws were interviewed. In this regard, the sample consists of two (2) environmental officers from KWEPA, KWME, NESREA, Public health officers of the Ministry of Health and two (2) environmental officers from each of the four LGAs (8), making up sixteen (16) respondents in this category. At the second stage, simple random technique was used to select respondents from their respective communities. Accordingly, a sample of 300 was appropriated for the study, and out of the 300 copies of the questionnaire distributed to the respondents, only 234 were successfully filled and returned for analysis. Thereafter, 15 in-depth interviews and eight (8) Key informant interview sessions were conducted for the selected residents and representatives of the agencies respectively. All the data collected for this study were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics of percentage and mean rating.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Communities

Communities	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Ipata	15	6.4%
Oja-Tuntun/Oba	73	31.19%
GaaAkanbi	8	3.4%
Kankatu	26	11.1%
Airport	42	17.9%
Eyenkorin	14	5.98%
Dada	21	8.9%
Alalubosa	27	11.5%
Total	234	100

Source: Research's Field Study, 2023

The result shows that majority of sampled participants for this study were from Oja-oba/Tuntun community 75(32.01%), Airport community 42(17.9%), and Alalubosa 27(11.5%), which seem to have more cases of

cholera outbreak, recently of which was the 2017 case at Alalubosa.

Table 2: Respondents Distribution by Age

Age	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
18-30	138	59.0%
31-40	54	23.1%
41-50	18	07.7%
51-60	24	10.3%
Total	234	100

Source: Research's Field Study, 2023

The age distribution of the respondents on Table 2 reveals that majority of respondents were between 18-30years; 138(59.0%). This was followed by respondents within the age group of 30-40 years; 54(23.1%). This implies that these particular age groups constitute the majority of sampled participants of this study. Worthy of note is that these age groups fall within the age bracket of Nigerian youth. The implication is that they have tendency to

produce more waste which can be managed properly or otherwise. Based on this, they take active role in solid waste materials disposal in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State. This makes them suitable to respond on the issue under investigation. However, the age groups with the least respondents are 41-50yrs (7.7%), and 51-60 years (10.3%).

Table 3: Respondents Distribution by Sex

Sex	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Male	103	44.0%
Female	131	56.0%
Total	234	100

Source: Research's Field Study, 2023

The sex distribution of the respondents on Table 3 reveals the frequencies and corresponding percentages of 131 (56.0%) and 103 (44.0 %) for females, and male respectively. The sex distribution illustrates that most of the respondents were female 131 (56.0%). The emergence of male as the

majority is not surprising as men are the head of their families and may be more outspoken and disposed to engaging in activities than their female counterparts.

Table 4: Respondents Distribution by Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Married	122	52.1%
Single	86	36.8%
Divorced	7	3.0%
Separated	12	5.1%
Widow	7	3.0%
Total	234	100%

Source: Research's Field Study, 2023

disposed. The improper dumping of refuse can lead to death of sea life and sea animals as well affect human health.

In the East Asia, the Pacific Region, China, Bangladesh and many other developing nations across the world, an increase in population has occasioned huge generation of municipal solid waste (MSW) leaving the authorities in dilemma on the way forward. In addition, seven to nine billion tons of waste is produced yearly across the world. Much of these wastes are improperly disposed thus causing environmental insecurity in form of land and air pollution (Ferronato & Torretta, 2019). The major challenge of dealing with solid waste in developed countries like China, United Kingdom, Canada, USA, has shifted from ensuring minimum damage to public health and environment to the manner in which discarded resources are handled such that it does not constitute environmental danger and future generations are not deprived of its value (Dudayev et al., 2021).

In Nigeria, there is a steady increase in solid waste quantity and variety due to population growth and industrialization, especially in all the State capitals of the country. Some of these waste include: used nylon, metals, pesticide can, and trash piling solid garbage. Nigeria generates some 32 million tons of waste per year, among the highest in Africa. Of the waste generated yearly, 2.5 million tones is plastic waste, most of which (70 percent) ends up in landfills, sewers, beaches and water bodies. However, in spite of huge deposit of garbage, the basic solid waste management system based on collection, transportation and disposal of such solid garbage remains highly inefficient and ineffective, especially in the urban centres resulting into environment insecurity. This study examines the effects of mismanagement of solid waste on environmental security in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Households' solid wastes are improperly managed in many parts of Ilorin Metropolis as residents indiscriminately dispose wastes in rivers, gutters, culverts, uncompleted building, and undeveloped sites. In addition, safe environmental deviants wait for rain to go and dump solid wastes in gutters for rain to wash them to other places while it is very common to see people dumping wastes illegally around the streets in the daytime and night fall despite the provision of garbage truck by the government to evacuate the refuse from designated spots to dump sites. It is obvious that residents of Ilorin metropolis lack prerequisites knowledge about environmental consequences of their actions and inaction, mainly environmental hazards which include flood disaster, drainage blockade and dreadful smell, that are hazardous to personal health security, among others (Health Science Report, 2021).

Aside its significant environmental consequences, waste mismanagement in some communities especially the legal and illegal dump sites at Lasaju along Eyekorin, Sokoto Ayekale at Amoyo, Kunlende, Dada airport road along Alapo, Alalubosa, Ajelende along Oke oyi and Ipata dump sites, and several major roads across the metropolis being littered with municipal solid waste are capable of obstructing vehicular movements, and water ways, degenerating into environment hazard, erosion and health related matters. It is therefore important to assess the effects of improper management of solid waste generated by respective households either at the respective dump sites or/and by road sides on the communities where these improper managements take place within Ilorin Metropolis.

Methodology

This study adopted a mixed research design of both quantitative and qualitative methods to

The information gathered on the marital status of respondents indicates that the majority of the respondents 122 (52.1%) accounting for more than half of the study participants were married. This was closely followed by respondents who were single 86 (36.8%). This connotes that there is low number of unmarried persons who participated in the study compared to the

married people. The implication of this result on solid waste materials disposal is the tendency to be less engaged with family matters which may encourage waste generation.

Table 5: Respondents Distribution by Educational Status

Educational Status	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
No formal education	28	12.0%
Primary	6	2.6%
Secondary	114	48.3%
Tertiary	86	36.8%
Total	234	100%

Source: Research's Field Study, 2023

The information gathered on the educational status of respondents as shown on Table 5 suggests that the study population were educated. The implication of this result on solid waste materials disposal is that people with high education are more likely to resort to proper waste management, waste disposal due

to a high level of literacy. However, since the study had more participants with secondary level education, there may be mild or moderate level of proper waste management.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents According to Occupation

Occupation	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Traders/Businessmen	74	31.6%
Farmers	24	10.4%
Civil servant	48	20.5%
Artisans	51	21.7%
Others	37	15.8%
Total	234	100%

Source: Research's Field Study, 2023

Table 6 above shows the occupation of the respondents. The result reveals that there were more traders/businessmen, followed by artisans, civil servants, others and farmers. This means that the traders contribute more to waste generation from their households than all other respondents.

In answering research question 1 about the nature of households' solid waste generated from households in Ilorin metropolis, Food residue came on top of the list. A notable proportion of respondents, 114(48.71%) strongly agreed with this nature, while a majority of 81(30.34%) agreed. This suggests a

widespread recognition of the issue. However, a small percentage of respondents, 17(7.26%) expressed uncertainty, and 22(9.4%) indicated disagreed. The mean score for this constraint is 4.02, indicating a relatively high level of agreement, with a moderate level of variability represented by the standard deviation (SD) of 0.65. Other identified types of solid waste include Cartons, Papers, Clothes, Shoes, and Ceramics. A considerable number of respondents, 106(45.2%) strongly agreed with this nature, while a majority of 96(41.0%) agreed. Only a few respondents, 23(9.8%) expressed uncertainty, and 9(3.84%) disagreed.

The mean score for this measure is 4.11, suggesting a relatively high level of agreement, with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.56, indicating a moderate level of variability in the responses. Waste electronic gadgets were also identified as another nature. A significant proportion of respondents, 100(42.73%) strongly agreed with this nature, while 84(35.89%) agreed. 28(%) respondents were unsure about this nature, but 22(9.4%) disagreed. The mean score for this constraint is 4.10, indicating a relatively high level of agreement, with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.63, suggesting a moderate level of variability. Furthermore, bottles, glasses, plastics and polythene house secured relative response from the respondents as of the nature of households waste generated. A notable number of respondents, 134(57.26%) strongly agreed with this nature, while 81(34.61%) agreed. A smaller percentage of respondents, 11(4.7%) expressed uncertainty, and 8(3.4%) disagreed. The mean score for this constraint is 4.12, indicating a relatively high level of agreement, with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.63, suggesting a moderate level of variability.

Lastly, cans and metals secured moderate response as nature of solid waste generated in Ilorin metropolis. A significant majority of

respondents, 153(65.38%) strongly agreed with this measure, while 73(31.19%) agreed. A smaller proportion of respondents, 3(1.28%), expressed uncertainty, and 5(2.13%) disagreed. The mean score for this constraint is 4.26, indicating a relatively high level of agreement, with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.71, suggesting a moderate level of variability.

Oral evidence from in-depth interview sessions granted by the residents supported the above result that house residuals in terms of waste garbage are the most solid waste generated in the study areas. According to a respondent,

“I generate wastes from the left over foods, cooking material no longer useful and every other sour or/and spoilt food items” (IDI: Female: Married: 23yrs: Resident: 2023).

Another respondent from a different community, when interviewed supported the information by saying;

From my household and almost household around my neighbourhood, the major wastes generated here are mostly food leftovers and kitchen wastes or garbage well as agricultural solid wastes including dead animal, food residues, crop residues, grasses and leaves...occasionally, wastes like ceramics, glasses and other electrical tools are spoilt or broken and they are collected through the use of polythene, bags and taken to dumpsites on weekly basis or sometimes less than a week, depending on the quantity and or nature of the waste (KII ; 33 years old resident; Female; Married; 2023)

In another in-depth interview session with a resident in a different community,

“Most people here in our community including myself are fond of generating residue home waste. Items like garbage, already used disposable plastic and food remnants constitute the majority of the wastes we generate” (IDI: Female: Married: 45yrs: Resident: 2023).

Corroborating this narrative, a community leader asserted that,

“Waste collectors always complain of unwanted odors and smiles from available wastes to be taken which indicated that our people are fondly generating and dumping of home residue wastes, particularly, leftover foods” (IDI: Male: 60yrs: Resident: 2023).

In answering the Research Question 2 on the factors responsible for households' solid waste mismanagement in Ilorin metropolis Kwara State, possible causes were itemized as follows: lack of adequate awareness on proper waste management, Inadequate mobile incinerators to collect wastes generated by households, Lack of control and monitoring at respective dump sites by the concerned authorities, Failure of the government and commercial waste collectors to evacuate household waste generated as at when due, and Lack of adequate training about waste recycling.

Firstly, regarding lack of adequate awareness about proper method of waste management for the respective households in the metropolis, a significant number of respondents, 150 (64.1%) strongly agreed, 75(32.0%) agreed and 9(3.8%) indicated not sure with this factor. The mean score for this role is 4.00, indicating a relatively high level of agreement, with a

moderate level of variability represented by the standard deviation (SD) of 0.68.\

Secondly, in terms of the inadequate provision of mobile incinerators to collect waste generated by the households, 149 (63.7%) respondents strongly agreed, and 76(32.5%) agreed. A smaller portion of respondents, 3 (1.28 %) were unsure, and 3 (1.28 %) disagreed. The mean score for this factor 4.23, suggesting a relatively high level of agreement, similar to the first factor, with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.68. Furthermore, lack of control and monitoring at respective dump sites by the concerned authorities was acknowledged by the majority of respondents. 164(70.08%) strongly agreed, and 53(22.64%) agreed with this factor. However, 11 (4.7%) respondents were unsure, and 6 (2.56%) disagreed. The mean score for this role is 4.30, indicating a relatively high level of agreement, and the standard deviation (SD) is 0.75, suggesting a moderate level of variability.

Additionally, failure of the government and commercial waste collectors to evacuate households waste generated as at when due was observed as a contributing factor. 169 (72.2%) strongly agreed, and 51 (21.79%) agreed with this factor. On the other hand, 11(4.7%) were unsure, and 3(1.28%) disagreed. The mean score for this role is 4.37, indicating a relatively high level of agreement, with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.73, suggesting a moderate level of variability in the responses. Lastly, the result showed that lack of adequate training about waste recycling process leads to mismanagement of households solid waste collected. 153 (65.38%) respondents strongly agreed, and 79 (33.8%) indicated agreed. Only 1 (0.42%) respondents were unsure, and 1(0.42%) disagreed. The mean score for this factor is 4.30, indicating a relatively high level of agreement, and the standard deviation (SD) is 0.66, suggesting a moderate level of variability. On the other hand, oral evidences

indicated that the above observed variables were inline as major and contributing factors responsible for the mismanagement of households' solid waste collected in Ilorin metropolis.

According to a respondent, a resident of Agbo Oba community,

We have no place to dump our refuse in this community. As big as this community is, government only provides one mobile incinerator per week. So, many residents have no option than to drop their wastes into the damaged bridge close to the main road located beside the church (IDI: Female: Resident; 34yr: 2023).

In another response by a resident of Eyenkorin,

Close to us is a dump site. But instead of waste collectors or residents that use to bring refuse here to drop it properly, they are found of dropping it along roadside with a claim that management will come and clean up the place.

Some of the wastes brought are in some instance required immediate burning or/and flitter with chemical to prevent the spread of the odor and diseases, unfortunately, nobody cares to the needful, forgotten the fact that residents living closer to the dump site could be pruned to the effect of refuse dumped if not treated immediately (IDI: Male: Resident: 46yrs: 2023).

Contrarily, a government official succinctly stated that

Government through our ministry provides incinerators to strategic locations across major roads in the metropolis. But residents living in the remote areas always find it difficult to bring out their refuse to the available incinerator at the main road, rather,

dump the refuse to drainage. Besides that, a lot of awareness has been raised warning residents to stop dumping refuse indiscriminately, yet, some still move around at dead of the night to dump refuse at main roads in a bid to sabotage government effort (KII: DD, Min. Environment: Female: 2023).

Elsewhere, representative of NESREA argued that

Residents of Ilorin metropolis lack enough awareness about different ways they can manage solid waste generated. Particularly, most of them did not know that when solid wastes are not dispose properly, it can leads to environmental insecurity. Even the enlightened citizens remain ignorant of proper ways solid waste can be managed (KII: NESREA: Male: 56yr: 2023).

With regard to the Research Question 3 centred on the Effects of households' Solid waste mismanagement on environment security in Ilorin metropolis, it was gathered that indiscriminate waste disposal exposes people to airborne diseases as represented by 102 (84.2%) strongly agreed while 95(40.5) agreed with the minority disagreeing and strongly disagreeing respectively. 106 (45.3%) and 77(32.9%) respondents strongly agreeing and agreeing respectively to environmental/air pollution, water borne diseases like cholera, environmental imbalance, blockage of curvets/gutters, rivers and streams.

Accordingly, oral evidence showed that blockage of waters ways (gutters) and health-related issues are the major effects of the indiscriminate dumping of refuse and disobeying of environmental laws in the Ilorin metropolis. The oral evidence of In-depth interview sessions conducted for the residents

considerable number of respondents, 126 (53.8%) strongly agreed with this measure, while a majority of 96 (41.0%) agreed. Only a few respondents, 3 (1.28%) expressed uncertainty, and 9 (3.84%) disagreed. The mean score for this measure is 4.11, suggesting a relatively high level of agreement, with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.56, indicating a moderate level of variability in the responses. Prompt collection and timely response to already generated house holds' solid waste was also acknowledged as a measure capable of improving management of households' solid waste. A significant proportion of respondents, 128 (54.70%) strongly agreed with this measure, while 84 (35.89%) agreed. There were no respondents who were unsure about this measure but 22 (9.4%) disagreed. The mean score for this constraint is 4.10, indicating a relatively high level of agreement, with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.63, suggesting a moderate level of variability.

Furthermore, adequate awareness campaign about proper methods of house holdsent of households' solid waste. A significant proportion of respondents. A notable number of respondents, 134 (57.26%) strongly agreed with this measure, while 81 (34.61%) agreed. A smaller percentage of respondents, 11 (4.7%) expressed uncertainty, and 8 (3.4%) disagreed. The mean score for this constraint is 4.12, indicating a relatively high level of agreement, with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.63, suggesting a moderate level of variability.

Lastly, training and retraining for waste recyclers and private waste collectors was recognized as a contributing measure that can help improve solid management in the metropolis. A significant majority of respondents, 153 (65.38%) strongly agreed with this measure, while 73 (31.19%) agreed. A smaller proportion of respondents, 3 (1.28%), expressed uncertainty, and 5 (2.13%) disagreed. Qualitative data obtained from interview

sessions supported the above policy measures. According to a respondent, a resident of Agbo Oba community,

Government needs to provide enough incinerators that will be sufficient to accommodate wastes generated in this community. Alternatively, public/ government waste collectors should deem it fit to come two times in a day to collect available wastes (IDI: Female: Resident; 34yr: 2023).

Similarly, one government official observed that

“Training and retraining still needed to be given to the government and private waste collectors on how best to collect and dispose solid wastes” (KII: Male: DD, KWEPA: 45yr: 2023).

Another government official said that

“public awareness needs to be intensified so that the residents will be adequately informed about danger involved in mismanagement of solid waste generates” (KII: Male: Married: 55yrs: Director: Ministry of Health: 2023).

A representative of NESRA stated that;

“Aside awareness campaign that have to be given to the respective households on waste management, concerned authorities must ensure prompt and regular collection of solid waste to avert outbreak of environment insecurity” (KII: NESRA: Male: 56yr: 2023).

Discussion of the Findings

The first finding of the study revealed that household residue garbage accounted for most of the solid waste generated from households in the Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State. This implies that household waste continues to be

of Alalobosaa, Oja-oba/Tuntun and Kankatu communities showed that those communities are prone to flood during raining season due to the blockage of drainage by the refuse dump.

An interview granted by a respondent residing in Alalobosa revealed that

Perennial flooding has been the major effect of indiscriminate dumping of refuse in these communities. Our people are of the habit of keeping refuse waiting for the rainfall. By so doing, they would pour it inside a gutter at any slight of little raining fall blocking free flow of water (IDI: Male: Resident: 2023).

On the account of the environmental officials in Ilorin West and East local government areas, both unanimously asserted that;

...apart from air pollution caused by improper and indiscriminate waste disposing, erosion and flood have destroyed our roads due to uncontrolled or poor waste management caused by environmental imbalance. Although some of the areas affected have no proper drainage to control rainwater, residents are fond of dropping wastes of different types into poorly constructed gutters thereby making it difficult for water to flow freely (KII: I L / W e s t / E a s t environmental officers, 2023)

. On the other hand, an Epidemiologist with the Ministry of Health submitted that;

Improper solid waste management has resulted in an outbreak of cholera in 2012 and 2017 in the Ilorin metropolis. In 2012 when the first incident occurred, an investigation was conducted by the taken samples of water from Kankantu community and some notable areas, and the result

showed that available drinkable water in the areas has been contaminated. Also, the 2017 outbreak was due to contaminated water due to a poor and dirty environment. That of 2016 was a severe case whereby every staff of the ministry has to be deployed to mitigate the spread of the disease (KII: Male: Married: 55yrs: Director: Ministry of Health: 2023).

Corroborating this, a resident of Alalabosa who accented to KII affirmed that:

There is a constant and common problem of pollution of water, land and air as the whole environment look untidy, flying over the road of polythene, around the city in places like U n i t y, P o s t O f f i c e , O j a Oba/Tuntun, Offa Garage and several other areas where members of his community have been taken to hospital on several occasions on the basis of cholera, dysentery and other water and airborne diseases; Ilorin resident who pleaded anonymous (Male: Married: 43yrs: IDI).

When it comes to the Research Question 4 regarding policy measures that can improve households' solid waste management in Ilorin metropolis, it appears that a notable proportion of respondents, 124(52.9%) strongly agreed with the provision of waste management experts and security at the dump sites. This suggests a widespread recognition of the issue. However, a small percentage of respondents, 22(9.4%) expressed uncertainty, and 22(9.4%) indicated disagreed. The mean score for this constraint is 4.02, indicating a relatively high level of agreement, with a moderate level of variability represented by the standard deviation (SD) of 0.65.

Another identified policy measure is the provision of adequate mobile incinerators. A

methods of households' solid waste management and Training and retraining for waste recyclers and private waste collectors are part of the measures needed to be adopted as demonstrated in the study of Nwosu, and Chukwueloka, (2020) who advocates for public awareness and participation as one of the remedies to the problems of waste management in Nigeria, and that the treatment of waste does not exist. As such, collected waste that are transported to dumpsites are burnt most often to reduce the volume of waste, which results in air pollution and the release of harmful gases to the atmosphere. To this effect, Nwosu, and Chukwueloka, (2020) advise the adoption of waste reduction, recycling and reuse as an alternative. Invariably, public participation in the waste management remains best alternative to environment security. Therefore, awareness of the residents of Ilorin metropolis in the management of the solid wastes they generated is very imperative to the environmental security of the town.

Conclusion

The mismanagement of households' solid wastes generated in Ilorin metropolis has negative effects on health, wellbeing and other environmental imbalances on the residents of the metropolis, necessitating the need to investigate factors responsible for the mismanagement of solid waste by the respective households. Having observed major factors such as lack awareness by the residents on best practices to manage solid wastes and lack adequate mobile incinerators for prompt evacuation of the available waste, the study concluded by suggesting various policy measures that can effectively improve management of households' solid waste in Ilorin metropolis. Based on the study' findings, the paper recommends that:

- a) There should be orientation as well as sensitization programmes by the Kwara State Government and non-governmental agencies on how to achieve the proper

waste management in Ilorin in order to improve environmental security in the city. This can be done by declaring a state of emergency in the environmental sector.

- b) The government should also provide the populace with the needed environmental sanitation facilities, which include provision more of waste bins and mobile incinerators to ensure residents have enough facilities to accommodate wastes generated.
- c.) There is need for the government to step up responses to the waste management at the respective dump sites. Adequate arrangement should be provided for the control, security and immediate discomposing of the waste dumped at the

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the major source of waste generated by residents that accounts for environmental pollution as well as imbalance and outbreak of water bone diseases like cholera.

This outcome does not come as a surprise considering that annual waste generation was projected to increase by 73% from 2020 levels to 3.88 billion tones in 2050 due to rapid population growth and urbanization with Knowledge creation a major strategy for effective waste management (WHO, 2022; Toure et al., 2022). As well as given residents are not ready to deal with the reality of disposing waste in the right and proper way to promote sustainable development. Considering that waste will always be generated from households, it is imperative to provide the needed awareness for proper waste management in the state as it will go a long way in ensuring sustainable environments security which contributes significantly to the SDGs with special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management with just about 7 years to the target year.

The second finding of the study demonstrated that lack of adequate awareness about proper method of waste management for the households, inadequate provision of mobile incinerators to collect waste generated by the households and lack of control and monitoring at respective dump sites by the concerned authorities are the major factors responsible for the household solid waste mismanagement in Ilorin metropolis, while failure of the government and commercial waste collectors to evacuate households waste generated as at when due and lack of adequate training about waste recycling are the contributing factors responsible for household solid waste mismanagement. The finding is in alignment with the study of Odiana, and Ikudayisi (2021) that residents in many urban areas of Nigeria lack efficient solid- waste management practice awareness that could be responsible for

disposing their wastes in burrow pits, road sides, and drainages, and that the efficiency of solid-waste collection services in some part of urban cities contributed a lot to the mismanagement of solid wastes. The bulk of blame still goes to the government and concerned authorities. Residents need to be constantly reminded about their responsibility and civic duties to keep the environment safe. By so doing, financial cost and human disaster implication of environmental imbalance will be minimized to manage compare with adequate monitoring, awareness and rigorous enforcement of environment laws that will prevent such imbalance to occur.

The third finding of the study showed the effects of mismanaging household solid waste in Ilorin Metropolis Kwara State which includes air-bone and water bone diseases like cholera, environmental contamination/ imbalance, as well as blockage of streams and water ways, blockage of gutters, air pollution, among others. This finding agrees with the study of Ijaiya (2013) which stated that poor waste management gives rise to proliferation of pests and rodents and it also has a negative impact on the environment, resulting to pollution of water, air, and land as well as damaging crops and plants, thus leading to reduced yields. Additionally, the spills from drain, damaged road and restrict traffic flow proliferation of waste picker (scavenger) at dump sites, constitute hazard and nuisance to the public and also to effectively manage waste.

The last finding of the study suggested policy measures that can improve household solid waste management in Ilorin metropolis. The major measures demonstrated in the study are: provision of waste management experts and security at the dump sites, provision of adequate mobile incinerators and prompt collection and timely response to already generated households' solid wastes, while adequate awareness campaign about proper

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'YAHOO BOYS' AND POLICEMEN: THE ENIGMA OF ENDSARS PROTEST IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) is a unit in the Nigeria Police Force specially created for combating armed robbery and other economic crimes such as advanced free fraud and financial corruption. The Internet fraud that Nigerian youths indulge in, both within and outside the country, has bastardized the country's image while portraying the youths as being 'lazy' because of the get 'rich- quick syndrome'. However, the corrupt tendencies in the Nigerian policemen is so pervasive that the professionalism of the law enforcement agents could not be seen in their interactions and practices. The study hinged on the brutality of the SARS Police Unit on the youth, which led to protests in major cities in the country. It adopted a qualitative research method that used WhatsApp messages in generating the relevance data on the #EndSARS protest of the year 2020. It found out that the youth protested online and offline without any form of organized leadership. Against the brutality and corruption which transpire in the response of the Police, the study recommends the scrap of SARS and strategic reorganization of the Nigerian Police to improve its service delivery.

Key Words: Yahoo boys, EndSARS protest, Internet fraud, Financial crime

Introduction

The year 2020 will continue to be remembered for two significant events in Nigeria, namely the global pandemic brought about by the coronavirus (COVID 19) and the Nigerian youth protest, tagged #EndSARS Protest and which demanded the disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) unit of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). The focus of this paper is on the protest that started as a peaceful demonstration by thousands of youths but it degenerated into destructions of government and private infrastructures and facilities. There had been an alleged brutality by and from the men of SARS, which contrasts

with the principles of policing in Nigeria. The Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) was established in 1992 primarily and specifically to deal with crimes associated with robbery, motor vehicle theft, kidnapping, cattle rustling, and firearms (Malumfashi, 2020). For ten years, SARS only operated within Lagos state, but by 2002, the unit had spread to all the 36 states of the federation as well as the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

As reported by Malumfashi (2020) in the early days of the unit, combat-ready SARS officers operated in plain clothes (Mufti), used vehicles

inequality and violence in order to enact change from the government in power. In this case, Nigerian youths embarked on protest to end police brutality on the Nigerian citizens most especially the Nigerian youths who are confronted with the challenge of unemployment.

Literature Review

Millions of people have protested and marched against injustices in an effort to enact social change across the globe. One of the most famous and widely published protests in the history of the US was that march of Washington for civil rights and freedom in 1963 where Martin Luther king Jr. delivered his 'I have a dream' speech.. Following the unfortunate death of George Floyd, in 2020, tens of thousands of protesters filled the streets of major cities in America and marched against systemic racism. In this regard, protest is a way to express outrage against hate, inequality, violence, and to effect change for better conditions for people (Learna and Zoe, 2020). Series of protests has taken place in European and Asian countries as a result of violation of people's rights and privileges. Marie Struthers, the Europe Director of Amnesty International explains:

In 2019, people in Europe and central Asia were threatened, intimidated prosecuted, subjected to excessive size of force by police, and suffered discrimination. However, the grassroots mobilization of courageous people who dared to stand up and hold states accountable provide a ray of hope for the future (Struthers, 2020, p. 1).

In Poland, the independence of the Judiciary was threatened by the ruling party and this was protested against by the people that made sure that the independence of the country's judiciary

stands and remains committed to the constituted duties. Protests and demonstrations became regular occurrence in major cities of European countries which included France, Austria, Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic and Hungary, putting government on its toes to take adequate measures on issues affecting the citizenry (Malufanshi, 2022). In South Africa recently, among the series of protests held was the May, 2021 by the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and the people against a King whose kingdom's police killed a 25 year old law student. The protest degenerated into violence when the police opened fire against protesters and the latter set fire to Eswatimi Beverages' building, a company partly owned by king Mswati III (Malufanshi, 2022).

Agitations, protests and confrontations in whatever form are part of political system of any nation. Nigeria as a country is not an exemption. Before the colonial government/administration, the monarchical structure also known as traditional government/empire system of government then, protests took place. In Nigeria, protests in those periods were cruel and extreme. For instance in 1900, the masses took to the street to express their grievances against colonial government hard policy on the people. It was then followed by 1929 women rebellion tagged 'Aba riot' which kicked against the intolerable tax levy imposed by the colonial rule. In 1947, an Egba woman known as Madame Olufumilayo Ramsome-Kuti led 10,000 women in protest to Alake of Egba Land's palace and demanded the abolitions of tax on women. The protest took place within the environment of Alake for more than two (2) days: sleeping, cooking and conducting their affairs within the palace environment. The pressure was so unbearable on the colonial authorities that they had to abrogate the tax laws and this caused the Alake to abdicate the throne on 3rd of January 1949.

without any security or government insignia (emblem) and did not carry arms in public. Malumfashi describes SARS job as of acting on information through radio communication for successful arrests of armed robbers and other criminals, citing the example of 'Evans' that was arrested in 2017 after five years of trailing him with 30 million Naira (\$65,000) ransom placed on him (Malumfashi, 2020). The men of SARS unit emboldened by the 'assumption power' moved from their main function of carrying out covert operation and began to set up checkpoints - collecting handsets/cell phones with the aim of getting access to the personal or private information of the users. Even though the officers remained in plain clothes, they now carried arms in public.

Surprisingly, the SARS unit with disciplined officers turned on targeting and detaining young men on the assumption that they were 'online fraudsters' or 'yahoo boys' based on the fact that they were in possession of laptops and smart phones, thereby demanding excessive bail fees. The main objective of the study is to establish a correlation between 'yahoo boys' and the corruptible police officers described or tagged 'yahoo policemen' within the SARS and their activities that brought about the #EndSARS protest. The study adopted a qualitative method of research based on secondary data gathered in the literature, including journal articles, books, and Internet materials on action against police brutality. In addition to the personal experience of the researcher on police activities along Nigerian roads, this study relied also on primary data gathered from Key Informant Interviews with selected youths that participated in both planning and execution of the #EndSARS protest of the year 2020.

Conceptual clarification

'*Yahoo Boys*' is derived from Yahoo as a web services provider which offers both a search engine and a directory of World Wide Web

pages. According to Merriam-Webster online, yahoo is a member of a race of brutes in Swift's Gulliver's travels and also has the form and all the vices of humans. In the same dictionary, yahoo is a boorish, crass or stupid person. However, it is also used to express exuberant delight or triumph (Merriam Webster, 2024). In Nigeria, yahoo boys are known as youths who get involved in cybercrime or who deploy internet means to defraud people. However, the perpetrators of online frauds have come to term with their nefarious activities and this has changed the narrative of their unwholesome financial activities to 'yahoo plus' (using human for money ritual). A policeman as a concept is the law-enforcing agent of the Police Force, charged with the responsibility of maintaining law and order in the society. However, in relation to fighting online crimes, *a yahoo policeman* describes the corrupt attitude of police officers hunting for youth who drive luxurious cars and use expensive phones and laptops. Yahoo police officers can stop any bike man carrying passengers with suspicious hairstyle or dress code. They believe that such young people are involved in cybercrime or online fraud. *EndSARS* is a word coined for the dissolution of a unit in the Nigeria Police called Special Anti-Robbery Squad. Overtime, this unit got ostensibly deviated from the security for which it was created, and its men began to operate as extortionist syndicates.

The Nigerian youths rose to the occasion and called for the disbandment of SARS, a unit that had in the past served diligently and exceptionally in containing armed robbery and similar crimes across the country. The slogan began to fly on social media in Nigeria and outside the country until the final burial of the unit in October 2020 when the SARS was put to an end. *Protest* is a concept that expresses objection, disapproval or dissent. Protest have occurred in different countries of the world as a way for the aggrieved set of people, especially the youths to express outrage against hate,

The success of Egba Women's protest motivated the concerted efforts of Alimotu Pelewura who stood her ground for a better life for women in Lagos. It was a protest against taxation of women especially market women in Lagos. It was reported that over 7,000 women participated in the protest that took place at the Glover Hall on Broad Street. The protest got the support of all the nationalists then like Herbert Macaulay who was on the same page with Alimotu (Adebowale, 2020). Adebowale (2020) captured the protest thus: "The exploit of Alimatu Pelewure gave a sense of direction, hope and belonging to women and had their demands met". The first labour protest/strike singularly fronted by the labour leader then Pa Michael Imodu was the biggest protest in the history of Nigeria in 1945. In fact, the protest took heavy toll on the economy of the country then, shutting down the country for over four (4) days. The "Ali must go" protest of 1978 embarked on by the Nigerian students as result of the increasing the meal ticket of students in tertiary institutions from 50 kobo to N1.50k and then to N2.00k was another popular protest (Bayo, 2023). The June 12, 1993 protest strongly held at the south-west region of Nigeria against the military regime for annulling the presidential election that which allegedly won by Social Democratic Party flag bearer Moshood Kasimawo Abiola (MKO) was also popular.

Initially, when SARS was established, the officers roamed around in plain clothes, unmarked vehicles and without mounting checkpoints. They carried out their primary activities as it should be. But, as time went by, the security officers expected to tame or tailor the society to be law abiding became involved in the dirty and criminal act of the society by extorting at checkpoints or anywhere there was security interactions with the officers of the unit. The unit officers became particularly ubiquitous in the early 1990s when problem

with internet fraudsters known as "yahoo boys" who used their ill-gotten money to buy exorbitant cars, phone, laptops and other wireless communication gadgets. SARS officers targeted anyone who seemed to be rich and whose standard of living to them, looked suspicious. They indulged in taking people's possession and money with impunity (Ward, 2020; Ikhioya, 2021).

The exuberant life styles of some youths, likewise the corrupt culture of SARS officers brought about the harassment and extortion of money from Nigerian youths. This unwholesome attitude and behaviour changed the mindset and human relations of some people, especially the youths with the police officers generally and SARS officers in particular. It got so bad and confusing that the Nigerian citizenry lost confidence in the Nigerian Police. Hardly would they give information to or invite or call police officers when something goes wrong as regards crimes and criminalities in their environments. Because, in most cases, the expected positive result will not surface except when you bring in their usual characteristics (hand notes or money). It was the perpetual, decades-long-abuse of the unit and the authority's unresolved attitude to reform the Police Force. As a result, thousands of young Nigerian came together to demand the end of SARS. That feeling of distrust in confidentiality, safety and security was among the 'whys' the activists, masterminded the EndSARS campaign in 2017, focusing their attention on one particular egregious police unit to make a wider and broader point.

Theoretical framework

The EndSARS protests of year 2020 started like a social movement that grew, and died out afterward. However, Blumer (1968) and Tilly (1978) in Opp (2009) outline a four-stage process of social movements. In the

preliminary stage, people become aware of an issue, and a leader emerges. This is followed by the coalescence stage when people join to organize in order to publicize the issue and to raise awareness. The stage where it should have been institutionalized happens to be the crash because the hoodlums hijacked the protest. This description would have been the nature of the EndSARS protest of the year 2020 if it were not hijacked by the miscreants. It revealed that the potential protest would have transformed into a social movement in the Nigerian social-political space.

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is Collective Action Theories (CAT), considering the purposeful nature of the form of collective behaviour of the youths in embarking on the EndSARS protest. The three theories (CAT, Resource Mobilization, and New Social Movement) supported the study out of the main classic and modern theories developed by the social scientists. McCarthy and Zald (1977) in Opp (2009) conceptualized resource mobilization theory as a way to explain protest success in terms of ability to acquire resources and mobilize individual for the involvement and participation in the protest. Resources in this regard are primarily time and money, and the more the higher these are, the greater the power of the organized movement or protest. The second theory mode of CAT is framing - Frame analysis is to explain how individuals identify and understand social events and which norms they should follow in any given situation. The theory explains that successful social protest uses three kinds of frames to achieve their goals. The first is diagnostic in which the problem is stated in a clear and easily understandable way. Prognostic type is one in which a solution is offered and even states the implementation and the third, motivational frame, is the call to action and implementation. These frames are action-oriented of theory in protestation.

Opp (2009) tries to explain the proliferation of postmodern movement that is difficult to analyze using traditional social movement theories. Rather than being one specific theory, it is more of a perspective that revolves around understanding protest as they relate to social change. The protest against SARS as organized and executed by the youths in 2020 was theoretically in line with Collective Action Theory (CAT) considering the resource mobilization, framing analysis through internet event connections (tweeter, Facebook, Whatsapp and other internet connections), and New Social Movement theory (protest theory).

Data Presentation and Discussion

There are several victims of police brutalities as well as SARS which went unreported by the media. In September 2019 at Abuja in one of the arbitrary checkpoints, Princewill, one of the passengers on the bus was listening to music on his phone with headset. When the driver refuse to give bribe to the SARS, claiming that he had nothing with him, one of the SARS officers snatched the phone out of the 22 years old man. As Princewill tried to retort for his offence, another SARS officer pointed his riffle on him, he had no choice than to watch the officer helplessly. After the officer rummaged through the phone, seemingly found nothing, the SARS officer chucked the phone to the side of the bridge. As the innocent person tried to get off the bus to retrieve it, he was prevented through the riffle pointed at him (Ward, 2020). It was reported that the men of SARS coaxed about \$25 from the driver and Princewill left the place without his phone.

The human rights group Amnesty International reported that SARS perpetuated at least 82 cases of brutality, torture, ill treatment and extra judicial execution" from January 2017 to May, 2020. Although, not everyone has had negative encounters with the force, most

people knew somebody who has had an experience with SARS. In March 2017, a 23 years old man was arrested and detained by SARS officers in Neni, Anambra state, southeast Nigeria, and was accused of stealing a laptop. He was tortured and given no food during the 40 days detention before taken to the court of law. As reported by Osai (2020),

Their leader directed them to hang me. They took me to the back of the hall and tied me with ropes. Then, they started using all manner of items to beat me, including machete, sticks, inflicting me with all kinds of injuries. One of the officers used an exhaust pipe to hit me on my teeth, breaking my teeth. I was left on that hanger for more than three hours.

It was reported by the Amnesty International that in October 2018, a 24 year old Sunday Bang, an amateur boxer was arrested in his home in Abuja by SARS officers and was alleged of robbery. He was detained for 5 weeks without access to his family, lawyer and medical care, and was not charged to court. He was tortured and maltreated and resulted in bone fracture. The impunity of the SARS officers on youths of Nigeria was so legion that no justifiable evidence could warrant such brutality even to prime committers or offenders readily apprehended not to say suspected individuals.

Arotiba, a reporter with the BBC News observes that the Nigerian youths have demanded for justice from the government on the killing of the innocent civilians by the SARS police officers. The reporter described how the Nigerian youths have protested against the police brutality and demanded for the scrapping of the SARS. Some of the SARS' brutalities were exposed through the social media platforms like Twitter, face book, Instagram, and even aired by the governments'

media houses like, NTA and Radio Nigeria. The incident of the Assistant Captain of Remo Stars Football Club, Kazeem Tiamiyuin Shagamu, Ogun State, in Southwest of Nigeria was a brutal one. The SARS officers alleged him to be a fraudster. The Remo Star player showed his identity card still the SARS officers denied him, threw him out of the pick-up, crushed by the vehicle coming behind theirs, and hit the 21-year football player. As reported by BBC, a lady named Mureen reported that her brother, and a 20-year-old Chibuike also known as 'Sleek,' an upcoming music artiste, went to his friend at an area called Elenlewo of Obio Akpor, River State where they saw some policemen of Anti-Kidnap unit; they thought they were SARS and as they tried to run away, one of the police officers opened fire and hit Chibuike and he died instantly. There were various incidences of police brutalities that happened to Nigerians especially youths.

Ukpe (2020) compiled day to day account of the protests, starting from Saturday 3rd October 2020: a viral message broadcast on social media where men of the SARS had gunned down a Nigerian youths snatched his car, and speed off with it. The person who recorded the video could be heard making frantic yells at anyone watching to see what had transpired. Wednesday 7th October 2020, youths in Lagos State set out for a three (3) day protest to call for the disbandment of SARS unit of the Nigeria Police, as part of the push for reforms in the police system. Youths matched to the Force Headquarters at Ikeja carried placards with inscriptions such as *"Protect, not exploit"*, *"Nigeria Police stop killing us"* amongst other printed messages. Monday 12th October 2020, protesters gathered at the Lekki VI tollgate making it the epicenter of the call for the end of SARS. It was on this particular day that the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria broadcast to the nation the disbandment of SARS, which was the first step in the government commitment to extensive

police reformation. To certain extent, the youths had achieved the EndSARS struggle. How they were able to get it done was on the power of online communication through hash-tags on Face-book, Twitter, WhatsApp, and other social media platforms.

Curtailing the ills and crimes in the society is supposed to be the focus of the SARS unit rather than extortion from members of the public especially youths. It is the responsibility of the Nigeria Police personnel to protect the life and property of the citizenry, combat crime and criminalities within the dictates and confines of the law, not contrary to the law of the state. But, for police officers to constantly hunt down, search for any individuals that is a tech engineer, and tagged him to be Internet criminal is not good enough. The corrupt attitudes of the SARS officers and the police officers generally become worrisome that questions are raised, as if it is not the same SARS that worked in those years back that is still serving in the current situation. However, the orientation, training, workshops seminars, conferences, and other modern practical skills should have made the SARS officers more advanced and scientific than the earlier officers that started in those years. It is rather unfortunate that the disbanded SARS officers should have worked effectively in combating crimes and criminalities among the Nigerian youths if the training they were exposed to were practically exhibited. The reverse was the case; the SARS police officers went after the internet fraudsters to have their share of the fraud monies. Both the yahoo boys and the corruptible SARS officers referred here as 'yahoo police officers' became collaborators in internet fraud business. The SARS officers were vigorously after the internet fraudsters, while the yahoo boys too were planning for the unit to be wiped out.

The call to end SARS started in 2017 and it was revived in early October, 2020 after a video

emerged of SARS police officers who allegedly killed an unarmed young man in Ughelli, Delta state (Arotiba, 2020). The hash-tag trended continuously on Twitter as Nigerian youths aired their pain and experiences online, which subsequently translated into full blown protests in most states of the Nigeria nation, especially, the states in the southern part of the country, but louder in Lagos, the commercial capital of Nigeria. However, the #EndSARAS protest was not that visible in the northern part of the country due to some reasons that have to do with security and politics. The Arewa Youths Consultative Forum (AYCF) faulted the SARS protests across the nation on the alleged that fraudsters popularly known as, 'Yahoo Yahoo Boys', armed robbers, and thugs were behind the anti-SARS protest. Shettima, the Forum President, alleged that the protests were aimed at preparing grounds for kidnapping, robbery and other social vices. As he puts it,

We have observed as a group the loud calls for total ban on SARS through politically motivated protest in some parts of the country, notably Lagos State. Much as we agree that, the Nigeria Police like all other agencies of the Federal Government could have a few black sheep in the system. It is not as bad as warranting outright ban (Daily Post online, Oct.2020).

The president alluded to the fact that there are corrupt officers within the rank and file of the police force but held that those few ones cannot smeared the majority good ones in the Nigeria Police for total disband of the SARS unit. He argued that Nigeria needs another round of recruitment in order to increase the number of officers and men of the Nigeria Police Force to achieve the desired decrease in the growing incidence of dangerous crimes.

The security aspect that discounts the disbandment of SARS was borne out of the

performance of the state unit in Zamfara State. Maishanu (2020) reported that the then governor of Zamfara State, Bello Matawalle, said the Nigerian police unit of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) was a vital necessity, which should not be scrapped. He argued that this vital unit of the Nigeria Police was fundamental to the pursuit of peace and tranquility in Zamfara State: “we cannot afford to do without their immense contribution to the success of our peace initiatives against banditry and other criminality.” He emphasized that Zamfara State had been over the years, bedeviled with incessant criminality especially banditry. The immense contribution of this unit (SARS) of the Nigeria Police which work tirelessly to counter the criminals was on record for everyone to see. As he puts it: “Doubtlessly, those who are vehemently against the operation of SARS in the country have more questions to answer from Nigerians. He urged the federal government and the Inspector General of Police not to succumb to pressure but to ensure that the right thing is maintained for the future security and prosperity of all Nigerians.

Similarly, the then President of National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), Abdul Aminu Mahmud is reported to have called the Inspector General of Police, to arrest those disrupting the peace of the society in the name of #EndSARS protest. According to him, “#EndSARS protest which started in Lagos has spread to other parts of Nigeria... had been hijacked by the hoodlums who took advantage to wreak havoc on other law-abiding citizens of the country” (Daily Post online, 2020). A close look at the types of people involved in the protests revealed that they are there to protect the hidden interests of high-profile fraudsters, like yahoo boys, thugs, street urchins, drug dealers and their collaborators. Hardly had you seen any prominent or respected Nigerian in the forefront of the protests.

Based on the responses of the Key Informants

that participated in the protest, as well as in this study, a popular figure in the comedy industry, widely followed on Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram and other social media platforms, Internet connectivity was the platform the Nigerian youths shared their experiences on police brutalities and the way to go in achieving their demands. However, there was divergent view on the period it took them for the protest to be held. The respondent revealed that they had been protesting the police brutality for decades. On the 'yahoo boys' being the mastermind of the protests, the respondent reiterated that no single group or person masterminded EndSARS. He narrated that it was a decentralized and democratic movement inspired by the hopes and demand of the Nigerian youth for a better country. This is contrary to the submission of the AYCF that 'yahoo yahoo boys, armed robbers, and thugs were the brains behind the anti-SARS protest. Even though SARS has been dismantled by the Federal Government, corruption, negative attitude and indiscipline of some police officers in the Nigeria Police Force continue to thrive.

Conclusion

The protest is a fight back planned by the 'yahoo boys' to get the SARS officers off the public in order to have a free will of operating. Some critics suggested that fraudsters popularly known and called “Yahoo, Yahoo Boys”, armed robbers, and thugs were behind the anti SARS protest. It was also alleged in certain quarters that SARS officers were corrupt in their activities, always targeting youths in order to collect their own share of the “maga” (defrauded monies). It is against this backdrop that the study interrogated the activities of both 'yahoo boys' and policemen in a cause and effect assessment of EndSARS protest of the year 2020. The Nigerian government did not believe the #EndSARS protests would attract so many young people online and offline as well. Whether it was sponsored by the 'Yahoo boys' against the 'Yahoo police officers', or the

hoodlums hijacked it in the process, the protest had exposed the high level of corruption in the Nigeria Police Force in general and SARS unit in particular. In this wise, there is need to reform the Nigeria Police Force through adequate understanding of the Police Act of year 2020 by all the police personnel for effective policing in Nigeria. As well as adequate training and retraining of the lower rank of the police personnel, there is need for the review of their take home package that is commensurate of committed security officers. The #EndSARS protest was also a lesson to the Nigerian youths who are generally vibrant, strong, energetic, educated, knowledgeable and industrious. They ought to discard nefarious activities and align with the common project of nation building. The government therefore should wake up to her responsibilities by designing and implementing policies that foster social justice, equity, peace, and development while empowering the youths to maximize their full potentials as today's generational change and future leaders of the great nation, Nigeria.

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