

The Impacts of Boko-Haram Insurgency: An Assessment of International Protection for Vulnerable Women and Girls in Madagali, Adamawa State, 2012-2019

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Abstract

This study attempts a historical analysis and assessment of the international protection for vulnerable Women and girls affected by Boko-Haram insurgency in Madagali Community, Adamawa State. The study covers the period of the peak of the nefarious activities of the sects 2012-2019 in Madagali which later spread to other parts of Adamawa. The paper argues that the most vulnerable group in the society, women and girls, bears the brunt of the insurgency. In situation where conflicts prevail, women bear the burden of the problems arising from such event. As evidences proved, the activities of the deadly Boko-Haram insurgency on women and girls in Madagali remains untold story which are diverse and dynamic in nature. Amongst other issues, the impact is mostly felt in losses in agricultural activities which remain the major source of income in which other economic activities revolve around in the society. Rape and other gender based violence on the girl-child by the insurgents and security forces on the other hand is believed to be a silent phenomenon. Both Primary and secondary sources were used to generate data, thus, qualitative research method has been adopted in rendering the facts. The findings from the study indicate that the atrocities of Boko-Haram activities have severe implications and consequences on the economy and socio-cultural lives of women and girls in Madagali community, where the activities of the sect are more pronounced in Adamawa State. This work hopes to fill a historical gap to remedy the virtual neglect of insurgency activities and international intervention in Madagali by scholars.

Introduction

Madagali is still in quagmire occasioned by the Boko-Haram conflicts. This is in spite of the fact that the Nigerian Military has declared that it has technically defeated the insurgents. However, “technically defeated” the Boko-Haram means that the Nigerian military was able to rescue or regain all the local governments including Madagali that were hitherto under siege by the insurgents. Thus, there are still outbreaks of attacks by the section Madagali communities; most especially women and girls are still living with the impacts of the unabated insurgency. Many women and girls are bearing the brunt of the insurgency such as social displacement, psychosocial problems, gender-based violence, hunger and deplorable health conditions. Some of them have become members of the Boko-Haram Sect. Quite significantly, another group of women and girls step up effort and fought against it. Unfortunately, a lot of women and girls have had cause to join the Boko-Haram sect either by coercion or persuasion. Quite unfortunately, some women have been engaged in influencing other women and girls to join the sect. These girls and women were brain washed by the sect to carry out suicide bombing attacks with the purported teaching that they are fighting for God and paradise would be their reward.

There are also cases of gender based violence in the Madagali transits IDP camp and host communities perpetrated on the unfortunate women and girls by some camp officials and security men, who are supposed to protect these women. Hunger as a result of inadequate feeding became severe in the camp and this further exposed the women and girls to malnutrition. These are some of the challenges faced by women and girls as a result of the Boko-Haram conflicts in Madagali, Adamawa State. It is against this backdrop, therefore, that this study aims to investigate the impacts of the Boko-Haram conflicts on this vulnerable group in the society; women and girls. The study begins with conceptual Definition of the term impacts, Boko-Haram, Insurgency, International protection and Vulnerable. It will trace the emergence and causes of the insurgency in Madagali. The impacts of the insurgency on women and girls will be discussed as well as responses to the impacts of the conflict on women and girls by both local and international intervention before conclusion of the study.

Conceptual Definition

Impact: Cambridge English Dictionary defines impact as a strong effect or influence that something has on a situation or person.¹

Boko haram:

also known as Jama'atul Ahlus Sunnah Lid daawati wal Jihad which means in English “People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet’s Teachings and Jihad” is an Islamic religious fundamentalist nefarious sect that views western influence and society as actively anti-Islamic or as waging war against Islam, whose ideology is seen as advocating a return to the “most conservative fundamental element of Islam. Cook² defines it as the Islamic group which is better known by its Hausa name “Boko-Haram”, a local radical Salafist group which later transformed into a Salafist-Jihadist Terrorist Organization after year 2009. The phrase Boko-

Haram is derived from the combination of both a Hausa word Boko (book) and Arabic word, Haram (forbidden) meaning “Western Education is forbidden”.

Insurgency:

is a violent attempt to effect changes by convincing a government or population to agree to demands. Insurgency may be based on ethnic, political, economic, social or religious identity. Insurgents (often called Terrorists) tend to use such tactics as bombing, kidnapping, hostage taking and hijacking.³ Hence, Boko-Haram declaration that western education and indeed all western institutions are infidel and as such must be avoided by Muslims. According to Powell and Abraham,⁴ insurgency refers to a violent move by a person or group of persons to resist or oppose the enforcement of law or running of government or revolt against constituted authority of the state or of taking part in insurrection. Insurgency as defined above becomes violative of the constitution’s criminal law and the international treaty obligations of a nation in the following circumstance:

When it constitutes an attack on defenceless citizens that leads to injuries, loss of lives and property as well as forced or massive internal displacement of people out of their habitual places of residence. When it drives business/ investors away from an insecure area and also when it constitutes domestic and international crimes punishable by law such as treasonable felony, terrorism, murder, crimes against humanity and genocide.

International Protection

According to directive 2011/95/EU, “international protection” means the recognition by an European Union State of a non-European Union national or a stateless person as a refugee or as a person eligible for subsidiary protection.⁵

Vulnerable:

being exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally.⁶

Historical Overview

Madagali is a town and local government area in Adamawa State, Nigeria, adjacent to the border with Cameroon. The LGA was created in 1991 when Taraba State was created out of Gongola State. It borders Michika to the north, Askira Uba to the west, Gwoza local government area to the south and the Republic of Cameroon to the east. There are many ethnic groups, but Margi, Maffa and Fulani are the major ethnic languages. The major villages in Madagali LGA are Gulak, Shuwa and Madagali Town, which is the focus of this study. Madagali is richly blessed with fertile land which makes the people to heavily engage in agricultural activities that have been the major source of income which other economic activities revolve around in the society.⁷

The Boko-Haram insurgency originated from Borno State in 2009 under the leadership of late Mohammed Yusuf which later extended to seven (7) local governments in Adamawa including Madagali community where the activities of the deadly group are more pronounced in the State. Adamawa State has been badly

impacted by the Boko-Haram insurgency. Just like other LGAs of Adamawa, Madagali also suffered throughout 2012 from attacks blamed on individuals and groups believed to be associated with Boko-Haram. In particular, 2012 saw at least three attacks on local police stations, with one being burnt to the ground in December. In April 2013, an attack on the village of Midlu left at least 11 dead and several others injured in an assault on the deputy governor's home and surrounding residences. While initial reports blamed the attacks on Boko-Haram, others attribute the attack on lingering political tensions between the deputy governor and House speaker based on the last local elections in which each was vying for the PDP nomination, with the speaker eventually securing the needed votes. During the attack, the deputy governor's daughter was reportedly kidnapped, although she was later released unharmed.⁸

In September 2012, a Boko-Haram commander was killed in Madagali by Nigerian government forces, and 156 arrests were made as a part of "Operation Restore Sanity".⁹

Gradually, the continued bombing, killings, kidnappings and destruction of life and property by the religious extremist on Madagali community has greatly affected the people. Boko-Haram attacks on Madagali have become a daily affair. Notwithstanding, the town was seized by the insurgents in August 2014 and came under their control. In September 2014, residents of Madagali, Gulak, Shuwa and even Michika LGA fled to mountainous areas and Mubi town, in the wake of a failed attempt by government troops to re-take the town from the insurgents. The insurgents controlled Madagali town between 2014-2015 and the community is still experiencing attacks on soft targets by the degraded terrorist group.¹⁰

Vulnerable Women and Girls in the Boko-Haram Conflict

The Boko-Haram conflicts that took place in Madagali, Adamawa State between 2012- 2019 had multi-dimensional implications on women and girls, ranging from the recruitment of women into Boko-Haram, Female used as suicide bombers, abducting of women and girls, Sexual and gender based violence (SGBV), use of vulnerable Women and girls as resting place for the sect and security forces on the other hand, as well as disruptions of socio-cultural connectedness leading to disastrous impact on the society. Hence some of the impacts are examined below.

Recruitment of Vulnerable Women and Girls

There were some women and girls that joined the Boko-Haram group either voluntarily or by force. These women and girls have helped the group in its recruitment of other members and also in attacking the group's targets. The Boko-Haram insurgents used a mixture of persuasions, coercion and deception in recruiting women and girls into their ranks. Persuasive and coercive approaches may contain deceptive elements. Insurgents may be deliberately discreet with regard to their goals, support levels and strength. They mask their heinous activities and make up some abuses, claiming that they are from the government. They mostly target women and girls who do not understand the larger implication of joining. Thus, in illiterate population, insurgents easily deceive people into joining them.¹¹

Their adherence, willingly or forced to the insurgents' version of Islam also contributed to the dissemination of its ideology among other women and young men. Women can carry out roles that vary with traditional stereotype. In the Boko-Haram conflicts therefore, women have become recruiters, spies, domestic labourers, fighters and forced or willing suicide bombers.¹²

Several reasons have advanced the role women played in the recruitment of Boko-Haram in Madagali community. According to a source, poverty is one of the significant roles that influenced young men and women to join Boko-Haram. A former member of the group confessed that she joined to earn a living. "We had nothing to eat; therefore, when this group came we were forced. All my parents were killed so I was left with only brothers who encouraged me to join this group to earn a living". It is apparent therefore, that the boys joined the group for worldly benefits while the girls joined by force to obey their spouse' or relatives' orders.¹³ She lamented that, young girls were also brain-washed to join through schools established by the group for mental manipulation of new recruits. But the major pathway to joining Boko-Haram was through abduction.¹⁴

Failure to improve the lives of girls and women trapped in poverty and domestic drudgery in Northeast Nigeria could drive them into the ranks of extremist groups. According to Amnesty International and rights groups, many girls and women have been abducted by the jihadist group. The insurgents used them as cooks, sex slaves and even suicide bombers. Analyst said, some women in the Muslim communities, frustrated by poverty, gender discrimination and deep-rooted patriarchy have chosen to join Boko-Haram voluntarily in the hope of a better life.¹⁵

With all the roles women played in Boko-Haram recruitment, they often take senior positions in Boko-Haram. Female members are, almost as likely as men to be deployed as fighters, and may outnumber them in some roles such as recruiters and intelligence operatives. A Nigerian psychologist, Fatima Akilu, in her study reported that, women who chose to join Boko-Haram, were afforded more power and freedom and this made it far more difficult to deradicalise and reintegrate into their communities than men. Depagne said, exclusion and abuse of women may undermine military gains and mean that, they have same kind of grievances that pushed many to join Boko-Haram in the first place.¹⁶

Vulnerable Female used as Suicide Bombers

A different tactic of Boko-Haram, which had actually become a trademark of this group, was the use of women in terrorist actions.¹⁷ Within the organization, women had either simple support roles, or they were actively involved in unlawful and violent deeds, such as arms smuggling, armed assaults or suicide bombings. Using women in terrorist activities is not a new tactics, and the reasons behind it are rather simple: women are less suspicious than men, they are often searched in a looser manner and their clothes permit them to easily conceal weapons or bombs. But lacking the successful propaganda and appeal of organizations like the Islamic State, the majority of women involved by Boko-Haram in terrorist attacks were forced to do so. As one editorialist wrote in the New York Times:

Among all the many horrors of Boko-Haram's rampage across West Africa—the attacks on mosques, churches and schools; the mass killings of civilians; the entire villages left in ashes after militants tear through—one of the most baffling has been its ability to turn captured women and girls into killers.¹⁸

Using women and girls in terrorist actions was definitely a planned and thought-out tactic that started with the kidnapping of over 200 girls in April 2014, from Government girl's secondary school Chibok. Since then, hundreds of women and girls were abducted, forcefully trained and used in terrorist attacks. The results were almost immediate, for example, the 16th January, 2017 attack on a mosque at university of Maiduguri where a female bomber strapped with a suicide vest blew herself up, killing one professor and 3 others.¹⁹

The use of women as suicide bombers poses conflicts with some fundamental religious leaders' beliefs, while serving the tactical need for a stealthier weapon. In January 2002, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas, "categorically renounced the use of women as suicide bombers."²⁰ Two school girls' suicide bombers killed 45 people and wounded dozens in a coordinated attack on a crowded market in the town of Madagali. The attack took place on Friday 9th December 2016 after Nigerian forces recaptured the town from Boko-Haram insurgency in 2015. The two bombers were disguised as customers, detonated their suicide belts at the section of the market where grains and second-hand clothes are sold.²¹ Another source stated that, a bus station near the same market was targeted by two female suicide bombers who killed at least 30 people in December 2015. In June, Boko-Haram fighters opened fire on mourners at a funeral in Madagali, killing 18 people. "Since the town was retaken by the Army or Boko-Haram Insurgents army more than a year ago, it has been attacked on several occasions".

Another two female Boko-Haram suicide bombers blew themselves up in what appears to be a failed mission at Magar village in Madagali. Reports from witnesses in the area indicated that, the two bombers who strapped improvised explosive devices on their bodies sneaked into the village in the early hours of Saturday but the explosives detonated before they could reach their targets. A woman was however injured in the blast. The attack is coming barely a week after insurgents abducted three young women from their farms in the area.²²

According to a source, Madagali community is one of the seven local government areas in Adamawa State that were controlled by Boko-Haram between 2014 and 2015 and still experiences attacks on soft targets by the degraded terrorist group.²³

It is pertinent to bring to limelight that 13% of the incidents of suicide bombings recorded in Northeast Nigeria between January 2014 and December 2016 were perpetrated by children. Among 44 children, 40 girls and 4 boys were used in the suicide attacks during this period. Some women and girls were trained and forced to become combatants, spies and suicide bombers.²⁴ In spite of the success recorded by the military, there have been over 100 suicide bombings so far executed by girls and women in Northeast Nigeria since Boko-Haram commenced the use of female suicide bombers from June 2014. The sect use children as suicide bombers not

minding whether they are boys or girls. At the height of the insurgency, cases of female suicide bombers abound.²⁵

Abduction of Vulnerable Women and Girls

The number of kidnappings linked with terrorism increased during the year. Boko-Haram abducted women, children and men, often in conjunction with large-scale attacks on communities. The group forced men and boys to fight on its behalf and forced girls and women into domestic and sex slavery, the group also forced some women to join the fight. A report published by HRW on October 2014 stated a female victim of Boko-Haram who escaped from one of their camps claimed that she was forced to carry ammunition for the group during an attack. She also stated that she was ordered to lure C-JTF members into ambushes where they were killed.²⁶ United States Department of State, (2014).

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices-Nigeria, 25 June 2015.

The rebels abducted one Hussaina Dahiru and other 13 girls who were taken to the Sambisa forest. Miss Dahiru who was not less than 16 years was taken from her home in Madagali on May 2015 and forcibly married off to the insurgents, who already had three other wives. She later escaped from Boko-Haram custody after she became pregnant. "Life in the insurgent's den was oppressive and unbearable," recounted Dahiru.²⁷ Food was scarce and punishments were severe. "If your husband did not go for operation, you would not be given food". The captive women and girls were frequently beaten. Attempting escape was nearly impossible and often fatal. Those who were caught trying to escape were butchered; their butchered body parts were shown to the others. In February 2016, heavily pregnant and unable to bear the daily terror and hunger, Miss Dahiru took a chance and managed to escape. She ran through the night and at daybreak, a soldier found her on the Mildu road in Madagali and helped her find refuge. A member of the Child Protection Network (CPN) in Adamawa State eventually introduced Miss Dahiru to UN Women.²⁸

Hussaina Dahiru's story doesn't have a happy ending. Two months after her escape, on 16 April 2020, she died during childbirth. Her child survived and is being cared for by her aunt. The Ministry of Women's Affairs has provided food and provisions for the child and for the foster mother. However, like most children of rape committed by Boko-Haram insurgents, stigma surrounds him. The family and the community are yet to decide whether they would keep the child or give him up for adoption. Miss Dahiru's story is dismally common, a 2015 report by Amnesty International estimated that more than 2,000 women and girls had been abducted by Boko-Haram and used as sex slaves. The consequences of this violence extend across generations and cripple communities.²⁹

Another kidnap was that of 14 women and 2 girls that were abducted by gunmen suspected to be Boko-Haram insurgents in Sabongari. The women who were said to be in company of two community vigilante operative went into the nearby forest in search of fire wood and farm produce as others went for fishing in a nearby river before their abduction. According to a source, two out of the women had managed to escape the snare of the abductors under the pretext of being

drowned by the river. He said “the two women who were in real state of trauma told us that the suspected Boko-Haram insurgents had a field day carting away the women when their escorts ran away for fear of their lives”.³⁰

There have been many more kidnappings of women and girl-child by the insurgents following the Chibok school girls’ abduction in 2014. Residents said the militants sneaked into Mildu and Kaya villages of Madagali, shot an elderly woman and abducted three people. A local who identified himself as Baba John, said many residents fled to the bush but returned the following morning. “Boko-Haram insurgents launched surprise attack on us at Kaya, which is much closer to military base. They looted food stuff, carted (them) away with one vehicle and abducted three people,” he said. Though they were repelled by our gallant hunters and vigilante that killed one Boko-Haram member, others were injured after a fierce battle.³¹ He explained that, concurrent attack also happened at Kaya, one kilometre away from Gulak; they abducted three residents in Kaya. Also corroborating, the member representing Madagali, Michika Federal constituency at the National Assembly said, disturbed by incessant attacks, “Some of our people are planning to leave due to several attacks in the last one month”. Hardly a day or two pass without attack particularly at villages where there is no presence of soldiers. Many were killed; women, children and the youth are being abducted.” Madagali is closed to Sambisa but there seems to be no major operations to clear-off the remnants of Boko-Haram that keep ravaging.³²

Armed Forces Engagements with Women and Girls

One notable impact in regard of this study has to do with a focus on the emerging trends in which armed groups are exploitatively engaging female bodies in their activities. In Madagali, several accounts of rape and sexual abuse were reported to be prevalent and being committed with impunity by members of security forces. Threats of sexual and gender-based violence were reported by women and girls in IDP camps, when going out to conduct daily activities, such as collecting firewood, water, going to farm in the host communities and areas of return and using the latrines in the camps at night where there is no light. Collection of water was identified to be a time when women and girls are particularly susceptible to harassment and attacks. For instance, a girl from Madagali host community highlighted her fears that she might be attacked, stating, “There have been a young man who harasses me in the community and my family cannot do anything to him.” Some of the harassment was reported to be perpetrated by members of security forces. Threats of abduction by Boko- Haram were further cited as a concern among women and girls. Similarly, gender-based violence can take different forms and mostly affects women and girls. It is pertinent to note that, sexual exploitation was also reported to be committed at critical levels by men in the community and also members of security forces, with resulting cases of HIV and unwanted pregnancies.³³

Focus groups of men, boys and able females and a key informant interview with a traditional leader each reported that mass rapes of women and girls took place in 2014 and 2015, with hundreds of women and girls sexually assaulted by armed groups, including members of security forces. Such instances of mass rapes

were said to have resulted in many cases of pregnancies as well as incidents of HIV. Many women uprooted by the conflict and were living in camps for the displaced have resorted to selling sex in exchange for food, while those who were married to or raped by the militants are often rejected by their communities.³⁴

A female vigilante in Gulak disclosed in a conversation that, women and girls in informal settlements and host communities face sexual violence, often in the course of daily activities such as collecting firewood, fetching water and using toilets and showers. In some cases, men hosting displaced women and girls have sexually abused them, forcing them to have sex in exchange for food and shelter. Non-displaced women and girls also experience sexual violence, although this is less studied. There is still an overwhelming culture of silence around sexual violence, particularly for older girls and women who are often blamed for crimes committed against them.³⁵ However, the Boko-Haram conflicts in the community, has in no small measure, hampered the developmental growth of family life. A source stated that, with the advent of Boko-Haram our women have fallen easy prey to insurgents and security forces to sexual molestations, harassments, rape and abuse of their dignity. And again whenever conflicts emerge in the community, security armed forces deployed by the Federal Government authority to calm the conflicts in Madagali use the women in the area as their resting place.³⁶

At night, they suppress/invoke private homes, scare residents with beatings, raping women and girls and all forms of assaults. Besides, the girls and young women who are looking for economic survival hang around the security men to keep themselves at the services of both the local armed groups and security armed forces deployed by the Federal Government who are believed to be 'guys in money'.³⁷

Female Community Vigilante

The authorities have also encouraged the establishment of community vigilante groups. In many villages in the area, these groups carry out searches at the entrance to markets, worship centres and points of aid distribution, and inform the authorities about the presence of suspect individuals. Women carry out searches of other women. These volunteers, often armed only with whips, machetes and knives, have on several occasions managed to identify suspected members of Boko-Haram planning attacks, like in January 2016 in Madagali and late 2016 in Gulak. They also allegedly arrested and disarmed suspected members of the group in the villages of Shuwa and Kaya in December 2016.³⁸

The role of the community vigilante in countering the Boko-Haram Insurgency cannot be overemphasised. There were also some women that fought against the insurgents especially with the emergence of the community vigilante in 2015, when Madagali was recaptured. According to Benjamin Kuda, three women from Gulak and one in Imirsa Village volunteered to join in the fight against Boko-Haram and they were reported to have done significantly well. The roles of the female members include conducting pat-down or frisking women and girls in worship centres, check points and other public places, such as weddings and social gathering etc. They are also engaged in intelligence gathering and arresting suspected female insurgents.

The female vigilantes are also used to guard Internally Displaced Persons' (IDPs) transit camps within Madagali community.³⁹

The Boko-Haram sect has been attacking Madagali community through the use of female suicide bombers. But the efforts of the female vigilante members have tremendously helped in averting several attacks by the insurgents. In situations where there is need for house to house search, the female vigilante are mostly used because of the Islamic religious and cultural system which forbids men from entering women's houses, the female vigilante members easily help in making arrest in such places. Female vigilante can be found patrolling the market, cloth in a hunters' uniform, with gun and charms.⁴⁰

The success of the female community vigilante alongside civilian JTF can be attributed to two factors. The first is that, both male and female resort to the use of charms and juju to confront the terrorists. The significance of this is that the traditional Africa metaphysical knowledge is still potent and relevant. The second factor is the knowledge of the terrain and the fact that they have been engaging in hunting, fetching fire wood and farming among others for a long time. The community vigilantes were always at the lead to enter Sambisa forest to confront the criminals. At a point in time, the men of Nigeria Army were retreating while the community vigilante stood up to the insurgents and helped in salvaging the situation.⁴¹ Another effort made by female vigilante in Madagali community was the time when a woman was allegedly caught with a new farm sprayer containing kunu (local drink) heading to the bush to give the insurgents. The woman claimed she was going to the farm, but unfortunately the sprayer was filled up with a local drink instead of water and chemical for the farm.⁴²

Implications on Agriculture and Socio-Cultural Activities

The Boko-Haram conflict in Adamawa state, especially Madagali community, has drastically crippled the agricultural, socio-cultural and other economic activities such as: business and educational connectedness which have negatively affected both men and women. Majority of the female were young married women and girls within the age group of 26-35 years. Bulks of them are crop farmers and those engaged in handy works, such as selling and trading. A source stated that between (2012-2015), Boko-Haram insurgency had really had a toll on all normal human activities in the area, including farming, to the extent that crop and animal production virtually came to a standstill and many farmers went into exile for a period of one year (2014-2015). He said, our women could not go to the farm which is the economic base of our people due to fear of rape and abduction.⁴³

However, with the restoration of relative peace in 2015 as a result of which many of the displaced people returned to the town, agricultural activities, especially crop production gradually picked up which led to a good bumper harvest in 2017. However, many women returnees still depend on food aids being distributed by a number of Non-Governmental Organisations. Besides, crop trading has been found to have improved greatly. Unfortunately, impacts of the insurgency on livestock production are still felt across the Local Government Area as many livestock farmers have completely relocated to other places considered safer to graze their animals,

which led to a significant decrease in the number of animals, especially cattle in these areas. Undoubtedly, the next economic activity to agriculture was commerce. While one would be naïve to suggest that, this activity was a 19th century phenomenon, no one would dispute the fact that it blossomed within the emirate of Fombina following its expansion and consolidation as the century progressed. Most sources agreed that the Boko- Haram conflict in Madagali community has affected economic activities.⁴⁴

Socio-cultural lives of women and girls have severe impacts, following the activities of the insurgents on Madagali community. Victims of displacement due to the Boko-Haram conflict are particularly likely to report serious disruptions in social connectedness, of women and their family, community at large, and kinship networks.⁴⁵ Social connections were found to be an important factor influencing the choice of destination among displaced people. Those with social connections in the areas of refuge have established themselves in “connected” settlements, and have an easier time finding shelter and re-establishing a livelihood. By contrast, those without such social capital are forced to settle in “unconnected settlements” such as transits camps and unfinished buildings, have limited possibilities for integrating into the economic, social and political lives of the host areas, facing greater challenges re-establishing themselves.⁴⁶ Social connectedness emerged as either an amplifier or mitigating factor of broader impacts of forced displacement, making it central to the displaced’s recovery needs. As such, social connectedness affects the resilience of the displaced and their longer-term development outcomes.⁴⁷

International Protection for Vulnerable Women and Girls in Madagali

The International protection for vulnerability, both local and international organizations, have significantly responded to the plight of women and girl-child affected by Boko-Haram conflicts in Madagali. For instance, in a joint initiative by UN women and UNHCR (the Refugee Agency), in partnership with NGO’s, the women in Madagali transits IDP camps and host communities were provided with not only the basic necessities, but also supported to build and run their own businesses. Through this initiative generously funded by the Government of Japan, women survivors receive training on micro business management and start-up funds through a local-finance institution, ASSUSU. As at 2019, 350 women are reported to have started their own business and have used the income to improve the health and wellbeing of their families.⁴⁸

Saratu Halilu, benefitted from the micro-finance and business management trainings. Today she sells cereals and spices. “After seven months of support from ADL and UN Women, now I have 20 bags of maize and five bags of millet in my cereal bank, and over 50,000 naira in my savings account. After each sale, I divide the profit into three parts, as we learned from the management training. I put one part in my account for savings reinvest another part in my business, and the third part allows me to support my family. Today we have a stable life and no longer depend on someone. My children are happy now”, she explained. Five of her seven children are now attending school regularly.⁴⁹

The former children and women associated with Non-State Armed Group (NSAG) in Madagali complained to be rejected by family members and the community. In addition, culturally approved discrimination against all blacksmiths in the community caused disharmony in Madagali/Michika, meanwhile in Angwan Kara, the non-inclusion of host community members in the provision of humanitarian assistance created tensions between IDPs and host communities.⁵⁰ However, several international organizations have carried out awareness in both Madagali transit IDP camps and host communities in different forms to curtail sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). Results from assessment shows that access to education for vulnerable girls in Madagali community has been more severely affected, where more respondents have identified lower school attendance rates. While this can be linked to an impact of the Boko-Haram conflicts on school infrastructure.⁵¹

Generally, sensitizations involving community leadership structures; the scale-up of service provision in sectors, such as WASH susceptible to affect the social cohesion; the implementation of community programmes benefitting both IDPs and host communities remain powerful tools to address existing sources of conflict and foster peaceful coexistence. However, due to the multifaceted and complex implications of insurgency, Government-led Dialogue and reconciliation initiatives; inclusive, and gender-sensitive reintegration programs, as well as de-radicalization programmes targeting the youth, need to be considered for sustainable peace.⁵²

According to a source, responding to the implications of Boko-Haram conflicts on women and girl-child in Madagali host community; individuals in the community have played part through counselling and educating women and girls. Government officials and religious leaders have reported several worrisome issues to the security force leaders. This fact makes women and their group critical agencies of intervention and development devolution in the society that should be properly harnessed in addressing the complex Madagali situation in Adamawa State.⁵³

As shown in the foregoing, the army has driven Boko-Haram out of much of the communities it held in 2014, but the government and agencies must focus on caring and reintegrating women affected by the insurgency as the country comes back under their control. Rinaldo Depagne added that, the desperation among women to join Boko-Haram is a reflection of huge abyss and a failure of the Northeast society. The rate of child marriage, school enrolment and literacy among girls is worse. Meanwhile, women in position of power are far higher in the north of Nigeria than the rest of the country. Hence, the state and civil society must improve the situation for women affected by Boko-Haram, both victims and perpetrator's, ensuring they play a role in rebuilding the Northeast.⁵⁴

Conclusion

From the foregoing, this article has examined several impacts of the Boko-Haram conflicts and assessed the international protection for vulnerable women and girl-child in Madagali. From the discussion so far, conflict is often synonymous with women and girls bearing the brunt of the sect's activities. The insurgents used various methods in recruitment, such as kidnapping, forceful conscription, persuasions and deceit. More so, illiteracy, poverty and unemployment served as

fertile ground for preaching their twisted Islamic ideologies. Thus, the impacts of the insurgency on women and girls were in the form of abductions, sexual and gender based violence, deplorable living conditions in the Madagali transits IDP camps, psycho-social problems, and female suicide bombers, among others. It is pertinent to note that, Boko-Haram insurgents engaged in the kidnapping of women and girls in order to use them as human shield against attacks from the security agents and also bargaining pawns in negotiating the release of their members from the Nigerian government. The paper also assessed the international protection for vulnerable women and girls who bear the brunt of the insurgency to a larger extent compared to men in Madagali community.

Footnotes

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