



An Assessment of the Traumatic Experiences of Women Victims of Boko Haram Insurgency in Michika

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Abstract

Terrorism in the twenty-first century is a significant cause of global trauma. It has hit almost every nation, with Nigeria being adversely affected by the rise of the Boko Haram insurgency, more prevalent in the North-Eastern part of the country. Michika, the local government of Adamawa State, is one such place that has been destabilised economically, socially, spiritually, and structurally. Women have been traumatised because they are a significant target. This paper assesses the traumatic experiences of women victims of the Boko Haram insurgency in Michika. The article further delineates the role of the church, government, and other relevant stakeholders in response to the plight of women. The study adopted a qualitative approach, collecting data through interviews, focused group discussions and secondary sources. Data analysis was then done thematically. It was established that women experienced the insurgency differently than men because they were targets for sexual exploitation, sex slavery, forced marriage, and conscription. Their businesses and other sources of livelihood have been affected, thus leaving them in abject poverty, a situation that only little can be accomplished by the government, church, and other organisations' sporadic interventions. More so, a single approach to counseling will fall short of addressing the issues and reintegrating them into society. Therefore, this paper recommends that the church should reposition itself to facilitate collaborative efforts in providing a long-lasting intervention that seeks to heal, empower, and reintegrate women into society so they can live everyday lives again.



Introduction

Today's world experiences a surge of terrorism, causing many nations substantial impoverishment economically, socially, and structurally (Bidel,2022). According to Kithinji (2020. p.27) "Terrorism is a serious phenomenon plaguing our age; it is currently the world's major threat to peace. Terrorism is also linked more to religious radicalism. It is linked to economic, political or any other ideology". The terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in the United States is a sobering historical example. In Africa, two instances of organisations that have utilised their religious convictions to commit acts of terrorism are the "Anti Balaka in the Central African Republic and the Lord Resistance Army in Uganda" (Cheda, 2021, p. 162). Furthermore, there is widespread concern about how terrorists handle women.

In Nigeria, Boko Haram has wreaked devastation on innocent people's lives. Starting in Yobe state in 2009, this group's violence escalated, resulting in unprecedented civilian deaths, terror, and property destruction. Hundreds of women and girls have been kidnapped by Boko Haram militants, who have used them sexually, forcefully conscripted them into terrorist groups after conversion to Islam and used them for cheap domestic labour (Human Right Watch, 2015). Men, on the other hand, are often killed. The question arises: 'How have women been affected or attacked by terrorist strikes more differently than their male counterparts, though men suffer from Boko Haram's attacks' These traumatic acts on women have a significant impact on their spiritual, physical, social, and psychological well-being.

Due to the religious inclination of these women, they often turn to their pastors and spiritual leaders for help. Abi-Hashem asserts that "emotionally struggling people and victims of tragic disturbances normally seek their spiritual leaders, friends, teachers, local pastors or religious mentors before seeking other professionals, such as a counsellor, nurse, therapist, physician or health care provider" (Abi-Hashem, 2019, p. 153).

Many women and children were abducted, forced into marriages, and sexually abused when Boko Haram raided Michika local government area on September 7, 2014 (Human Right Watch, 2015, p.1). Since then, pastors, trauma counsellors, missionaries, evangelists, and other church workers were always expected to respond to their needs. Sadly, most of these workers in the Lord's vineyard also have the same traumatic experiences because they, too, were victims of the attacks. Abi-Hashem posits that "though pastoral counsellors and spiritual leaders have an important role to play in stressful times and during the dark nights of the human soul, they can become at risk of



trauma-induced conditions, such as burnout, and compassion fatigue, as well as secondary trauma (also known as vicarious trauma)” (Abi-Hashem, 2019, p.155).

Unfortunately, the church in Michika has suffered structural and human destruction, causing a scarcity of pastoral counsellors and putting the church in a difficult position to respond to the needs of traumatised women. On the other hand, even though Boko Haram’s “clandestine tactics gradually grew more sophisticated, the Nigerian government was slow to recognise the extent of the crisis” (Brechenmacher, 2019, p.3). This paper evaluates the traumatic experiences of Michika's women victims of Boko Haram, looking at the ways and depths to which these women have been impacted. It examines how the church, the government, and other interested parties have assisted these women at their many points of need.

The Ideology of the Islamic Fundamentalists

Fundamentalism holds that one’s teachings, philosophies and ideologies are unailing and superior to others. Although it is as old as organised religions and philosophies, in modern history, the term was coined by Protestantism in the United States. It was reportedly used for the first time in July 1920 by Pastor Curtis Lee Laws (Trollinger, 2003). It is:

A host of religious movements across the globe that are militantly antimodernist, aggressively patriarchal, literalist in their reading of sacred texts, and assiduous in their efforts to draw boundaries between themselves and outsiders. While "Islamic fundamentalism" has received the most attention, particularly after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, scholars and journalists have also applied the term to movements within such disparate traditions as Judaism, Sikhism, and Hinduism, as well as to various Christian groups (p. 2).

When fundamentalism becomes extreme, it results in violence. In such cases, women are a target, not just to be killed, but to be captured as sex slaves or forced wives. Although all religions are inclined to be fundamentalist, Islamic fundamentalism has caused a more significant threat to the world today because of its use of violence to further its religious causes. In Nigeria, the fiercest form of religious violence has been carried out by the Boko Haram group, which officially calls itself ‘Jama’atul Ahhul- Sunnah Liddan, Watiwal Jihad’, which means the people committed to the prophet’s Teachings and Jihad.” (Agbiboa, 2013, p.145).

The Rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria

The term "Boko Haram" refers to an opposition to western education. Boko Haram argues that Islam's weakness results from Western influence on the religion. Thus, anything Western is against Islam and must be avoided by all Muslims. Since its primary objective is



to build an Islamic Caliphate modelled by and administered in line with the Qur'an and its legislation, they are categorised as an Islamic fundamentalist organisation. Its adherents and propagandists advocate killing non-Muslim believers whom they regard as infidels following their deadly teachings. But Muslims who are liberal or moderate are not immune to their terror. It is based in North-Eastern Nigeria, precisely in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states. (Gillian, 2018).

According to Matfess (2017), this group has been described in different ways. The Jamestown Foundation's Jacob Zenn sees the group as deeply intertwined with the global Salafi-Jihadist groups. To Murray Last and Andrew Walker, the group continues the long-standing patterns of dissent in northern Nigeria (Matfess, 2017). Thurston affirms that Mohammed Yusuf, the first leader of Boko Haram, achieved fame among local teenagers in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State (Thurston, 2019). He established a religious complex featuring a mosque and a school, where many low-income Nigerians enrolled their children (Bukarti, 2021). Mohammed Yusuf then embarked on establishing the group's own mosque in Maiduguri, named the Ibn Taimiyyah Masjid and owned by Yusuf's father-in-law, Baba Fugu Mohammed (Walker, 2012). Yusuf died because of conflicts between him and the Nigerian authorities in 2009 as tensions between the two parties grew. Yusuf's co-preacher, Abubakar Shekau, took over as his successor and oversaw the gang. They developed a maniacal determination to seize control of Northeastern Nigeria from the Nigerian state and local leaders. The sect's leadership is certain that "women do not share the same rights as men, in addition to rejecting western ideals and lifestyles. Additionally, it rejects democracy and maintains that Islamic Law and the Islamic form of government are superior" (Agbiboa, 2013, pp.144-157).

The Boko Haram rebels' main strategy is violence against women, including rape, sexual assault, forced marriage, and slavery. Moreover, males have been lured in by using women as bait as "not only do terrorists rape and violate women; they use them to attract thousands of male recruits by offering kidnapped women and girls as "wives." (Bigio & Vogelstein, 2019, p.10).

Understanding Trauma

Trauma is an emotional response to deeply distressing or disturbing events, including feelings of hopelessness, sadness, despair, guilt, and physical symptoms such as nausea and headaches (Hanya, 2021). Trauma shatters victims' faith and causes them to lose hope for the future (Langberg, 2015) Generally speaking; people may experience mild trauma which heals over time. However, when the experience is chronic, it results in traumatic stress.

The story of Tamar (2 Samuel chapter 13:22) is an example of trauma in the Bible caused by rape. She was constantly dressed in her long robe and sleeves, which in Israel's



custom, signified her virginity. Her half-brother, Amnon, raped her in her father's house. Her father, David, did not punish Amnon; she was made "desolate." In the Bible and in our time, the perpetrators of evil acts appear to shun Genesis 1:27, which states, "So God created man in his image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (ESV)."

In the context of Boko Haram's insurgency, this abuse of power is currently at play to the detriment of women and girls, which disillusioned and makes them disbelieve God. During captivity, the victim's experiences tend to make them question the basic tenets of their faith, making them nurse bitterness against God for forsaking them (Herman, 2015).

Causes of Trauma on women victims of Boko Haram Insurgency in Michika

Traumatic events have many causes for victims, be they natural or manmade disasters. These traumatic events include political upheavals, floods, cyclones, earthquakes and forest fires /fire disasters that plunge people into poverty, hunger and fear (Collins, 2007). Trauma has affected thousands of people in most global societies in a diverse way. Some lost their loved ones, homes, and properties, and women have been abducted, kidnapped, raped, and sexually assaulted.

Loss is inevitable because "we live in a transient world full of temporal things and mortal beings. Most losses that impact a person are involuntary" (Floyd, 2008, p.66). Today, the activities of the insurgents have left so many citizens in severe trauma in Michika, where so many people were living without homes. For instance, many women lost their husbands and children and became widows. Some have witnessed the brutal killing of their husband. They were oppressed, displaced and traumatized. All the sources of their livelihood were destroyed. To affirm this assertion, a pastor's wife confirmed to me in a discussion on 16 August 2022 that presently they have three hundred (300) widows in their local church whom Boko Haram killed their husbands. The situation is worse for housewives whose income depends on their husbands.

Hill et al. (2016) assert that "no one ever wishes to hear that their child, sibling, or friend is raped or sexually abused. But rape is a significant problem in most countries of the world" (p.53). It is an act that ravages the victim's soul. In Michika, there has been rape and sexual assault. Both daughters and women were raped in front of one another. Herman notes that prolonged traumatic event occurs in times of captivity. The perpetrator's major objective is enslaving the victim, which she/he does by exercising



despotic control over every aspect of the victim's life. It is about psychological domination (Herman, 2015). In Michika, many women and girls were abducted and spent months with the Boko Haram insurgents.

Traumatic Experiences of Women Victims of Terrorism

From the preceding, it is obvious that Boko Haram women victims in Michika are traumatised. The prevalence of violence against women based on gender and sex is high. Bloom and Matfess (2016) note that:

Sexual violence against women focused on rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, and forced pregnancy of women and girls have become a great concern in most countries over the numerous accounts of rape, sexual slavery, and forced marriage perpetrated by the Boko Haram, as well as widespread gender-based violence by armed groups in Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Nigeria, Mali, Libya and Yemen defiled women's purity in an oppressive and patriarchal way (p.108)

Gender-based violence in this area includes kidnapping, sexual assault, forced marriage, and recruiting enemy women into Boko Haram. Women faced many problems, including social and economic stress, food insecurity, and health issues. They are in situations where they are sexually exploited by those who are supposed to protect them due to the destruction the Boko Haram terrorists inflicted. Terrorist organisations' objectives are particularly well-suited to violence against women (Bloom & Matfess, 2016). "Several groups of women and girls are especially vulnerable to theft and punitive rape when living in crisis and displacement conditions" (Buba, 2015, p. 2).

Boko Haram and Women's Experience in Michika

In Michika town, women not only faced degrading circumstances but also endured abuse and witnessed the brutal killings of their loved ones, including the rape and kidnapping of their daughters, the massacre or/and kidnapping of their sons, and the elderly parents. In the case of the Chibok girls in April 2014, this horrible tendency became more apparent and is still present virtually regularly (Mantzikos, 2014).

When Boko Haram attacked Michika's local government areas on 7th September 2014, Christians and moderate Muslims experienced significant trauma. Notably, the invasion put women's lives at risk because they were targeted for abduction, rape and sexual violence. Hundreds of women and children were kidnapped and subjected to forced conversion, marriage, and other abuses (Human Right Watch, 2015). Women have been forced to convert from Christianity to Islam, become sex slaves, and marry terrorists. According to Matfess (2017, p. 88), women and girls who refused to convert to Islam were killed or subjected to physical and psychological abuse; forced labour; forced participation



in military operations; forced marriage to their captors; and sexual abuse, including rape. The women were made pregnant and gave birth to terrorist organisation members. Restriction of freedom and physical, psychological, or psychic agony or sufferings are examples of these abuse manifestations.

In 2020, one of the escaped girls from the Boko Haram captivity who had an unwanted pregnancy narrated that those women and girls held captive by the Boko Haram terrorist experienced appealing abuse. She further explains that when the Boko Haram terrorist kidnapped them, some were forced to convert to Islam, married the Boko Haram fighters, and many were raped. Some were forced to participate in military operations, including suicide bombing. In her case, three of the terrorist officials had sex with her daily, and God's grace made her escape, which she cannot explain. Hearing this narrative from the victim, one can imagine the kind of trauma women have passed through and still passing through. It is indecent, which is disheartening and a violation of human rights.

Impact of the Boko Haram Insurgency on Women Victims

Worldwide, terrorism is a major cause of trauma, and trauma experiences have various implications for humanity. The effects of these traumatic experiences come at different levels, either individually or communally and have long and short-term effects on victims' well-being. Terrorism, a form of war, has many socio-economic, psychological, and spiritual consequences on the masses or the target victims.

Terrorism costs governments, communities and localities a lot in money and assets. Whenever terrorists strike, they destroy business outlets and institutions. In the aftermath of their attacks, people are often afraid to venture out and conduct business. Also, through abductions and demands for ransom, terrorists have ruined the economies of communities and nations. We turn to the example of the bombing of the world trade centre in the United States to give us an example of how trauma globally affects the economy (Institute for Peace and Economics, 202. p.14). With the destruction of a place where nations conducted business, people witnessed economic setbacks worldwide.

Familusi and Oshomoh (2018) write that many indigenous people have fled their communities due to Boko Haram out of fear for their lives. Due to the negative effects on business establishment profitability, their economy has been seriously threatened. With the closure of her banks, Michika experienced extensive housing and social infrastructure destruction. The towns of Michika must now rebuild their infrastructure, but because there are no banking institutions, access to financial growth is limited. Attacks against people in their fields have significantly decreased agricultural productivity. What chance does someone having no idea where their next food will come from have of attending counselling sessions?



In a country or community where there is a high prevalence of war or conflict, child abuse, terrorism, and other vices that can lead to trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, poverty and economic hardship will also be prevalent. In a disaster, whether natural or man-made, war/conflict, terrorism etc., people often lose loved ones and properties. However, the government and other relevant agencies with the task of helping the victims of such menaces seldom extend a helping hand to enable these people to recover their properties and wealth.

This can cause economic hardship for the people affected sometimes. For instance, communities that comprise farmers are often displaced by the activities of terrorists, thereby reducing food and human resource production because of changes in location and the infliction of pain and distress victims are going through. Today, Nigeria has millions displaced from their homes to Internally Displaced People (IDP) camps. Such trauma drastically affects economic productivity (Dauda, 2014, p.251).

The activities of Boko Haram have left many women with serious setbacks and severe hardship on account of the destruction of many key economic institutions. Similarly, business premises, commercial buses, taxis, and cars were destroyed. Many widows have lost their principal source of support and are left in the hands of God without any source of livelihood support. The burden of caring for their children is placed on them, especially for those women who depend entirely on their husbands for their livelihood. Many businesswomen have lost their investments, while others lost their jobs, and thus, their futures remain at stake. Many families are living in abject poverty because the economic strength of Michika local government is drastically affected.

The social effects of trauma inflicted by the Boko Haram insurgency have left scars on the human social relationship. Since the advent of Boko Haram in 2009, women no longer trusted each other. They are unwilling to live together in the area where they lived harmoniously before the violence occurred. Interpersonal relationships have been damaged and broken. The insurgency has seriously produced social effects up to the point that Christians and Muslims cannot visit each other freely like before. Social intervention, as mutual trust and diversity that existed before, is negatively impacted. People are now seeing each other as betrayers and enemies. The market is being separated, so Christians have different marketplaces from Muslims. Boko Haram terrorists have created in the mind of people a culture of mutual fear and suspicion among groups. Despite the message of peace preached by both religions, and the activities of nongovernmental organisations, people still live in suspicion with each other and are reluctant to return to the status quo.

Terrorism is intended to provoke collective fear and uncertainty. This fear can spread rapidly and is not limited to those experiencing the event directly—others affected include



family members of victims and survivors and people exposed through broadcast images. Psychological suffering is usually more prevalent than physical injuries from a terrorist event. Understanding these psychological consequences is critical to the nation's efforts to develop intervention strategies at the present, event, and post-event phases that will limit the adverse psychological effects of terrorism. Signs of psychological trauma include greater muscle tension and more adrenaline-pumping, which can cause emotional reactions, including fear, wrath, anxiety, restlessness, headaches, nausea, and impulsivity. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a mental health condition resulting from trauma, may develop if symptoms continue and worsen.

Religious extremism, terrorism, and political tyranny have all become shared experiences for the global Christian community in the twenty-first century (Agang, 2016, p.73). In the Middle East, terrorists target churches and Christians. In some countries like Egypt and China, Christians are persecuted covertly or overtly. Women are often at the receiving end in the middle of all this because as earlier mentioned, they are considered mere objects or a means to an end, placing human dignity at stake. Their spiritual beings are deeply affected because God made them in His own image as well.

While all religions claim to uphold the well-being of humanity spiritually and socially, ironically, most terrorist acts are sponsored under the guise of religion. The implication of global trauma across the world due to terrorism is that women lose hope in God. The moral morass that cripples our world today could be because of mothers who have lost hope in God due to traumatic experiences. And the terrorism prevalent in the world is a contributing factor. Women are being abused in many societies in the hands of the perpetrators, and most especially in Michika, where Boko Haram activities are prevalent. Consequently, women's spirituality has been affected greatly.

Women who have experienced severe gender-based violence (GBV) have expressed spiritual anguish during and after their abuse. Whenever there is abuse, distress can manifest itself in various ways, including feelings of despair, feeling that life is meaningless, or perceptions of oneself as powerless. GBV victims have problems with the concept of God as omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. They feel guilty and angry because God has seen everything but does not seem concerned about their predicament.

They feel betrayed because the all-powerful, all-present God did not come to their aid. So, they tend to denounce God. They doubted God's faithfulness and protection as they asked questions like: 'Why did God allow this to happen?' or 'Where was God when they were undergoing these pains and suffering? Some even say that he (God) favours those he loves and not them. But Agang (2016, p.73) asserts that "as we face the threat of possible elimination, our consolation is in the fact that Jesus Christ, who is to those of us whom God calls, "the power of God and the wisdom of God" have promised that he will build his



church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Indeed, God seems to have a sense of humour. He uses weird situations, even human destructive tendencies, to bring about the most surprising outcomes”.

The incidence of the Boko Haram insurgency has challenged the faith of the church members entirely. In Michika, it is only natural to raise many questions due to their traumatic experiences; many women are already doing so. However, most Michika Christian communities interpret the crisis as the fulfilment of Jesus’ prediction in the scripture that the Boko Haram crisis is a sign of the end of the world and the nearness of the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, Christians in Michika face what Langberg (2015, p.48) calls the dilemma of suffering, using Matthew 10:29-30 which states, “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your father. But even the hairs on your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows” (ESV). Langberg explains that suffering, based on this scripture, usually comes to Christians with the approval of God, but at the same time, God is portrayed as a loving Father.

Langberg writes that “The dilemma of suffering is inherent in the Scriptures. Suffering cannot occur apart from the father. Suffering occurs with the knowledge and oversight of the Father, who cares and considers us valuable” (Langberg, 2015, pp. 47-48). How Christians should react to hardship is one of the questions that this author considers relevant. Christians need to understand that these atrocities are indescribable because they are so horrifying that words cannot express what occurred inwardly and externally. As a result, the trauma is stashed away, forgotten, and life continues as usual (Langberg, 2015). Should the church then take this stance that things will work out eventually? Should the church collaborate with the government and other relevant stakeholders to seek justice for victims and provide spiritual support? How is the church currently responding to the needs of these women?

Responses to the Traumatic Experiences of women

It has been determined that the Boko Haram insurgency has significantly impacted women. Individuals frequently turn to their religion and government when tragedy hits for support. It is the same as what the Boko Haram insurgency's female victims in Michika Local Government expected.

The Church: In difficult times, the church is called upon to offer pastoral care in small measure. Pastoral care refers to the church’s overall ministries of healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling people to God and one another. For Hunter, the term pastoral care is derived from the Biblical image of the shepherd. It refers to the solicitous concern



expressed within the religious community for persons in trouble or distress (Hunter, 2005). Yet, pastoral counselling work for counsellors, pastors, and theologians is growing more challenging, making their calling more difficult.

Abi-Hashem (2019) states that the challenge with pastoral care within the context of terrorism and war is fatigue for the helpers, draining and depleting their energies after devoting their attention to trauma victims for a long time. Thus, they develop symptoms of acute stress, burnout, depression, and anxiety. This raises concern about who will help the helpers, guard the guards, pastor the pastors and care for the caregivers. Signs of burnout may include headaches, poor concentration, and mild anxiety, amongst many other symptoms.

According to Billi (2015, p. 5), “during Boko Haram crisis, EYN-church lost over 8, 000 of her members while 700 000 of them were displaced; 43 out of 50 of District church councils were destroyed or closed; 1,674 churches or worshipping centres were completely burned down or closed”. As a result, 1,390 EYN Pastors, assistant Pastors and Evangelists were left without work and income to care for their families. The Pastors and their families were among the EYN Pastors who lost their lives due to the Boko Haram attack. All of these created massive and unimaginable pastoral challenges in Michika.

Consequently, during the Boko Haram crisis, pastors and their church members needed pastoral care as they were all scattered in different directions like sheep without a shepherd. Both competed for relief materials that were distributed to internally displaced persons. Some pastors left their pastoral responsibilities and moved from church to church to seek sympathy and assistance from other churches that were unaffected. This poses a new and peculiar challenge for the church to devise new creative strategies for reaching out to victims in an unstable setting like the Northeast of Nigeria, particularly Michika. How should the church reposition itself to meet these new challenges on the victim's side and pastoral counsellors?

The Government: In 2014, Boko Haram assaulted and ruled fourteen local governments, several significant towns, and numerous villages (Ogbondah & Agbese, 2018). One of these towns was Michika local government, which it ruled for six months. During these times, many horrifying atrocities were committed against women. The government intervened and recaptured the city; however, the organisation continues to conduct deadly suicide assaults, hold small pockets of land, and kidnap citizens, primarily women and children (Olukomaiya, 2018). Boko Haram’s success in the attack underscores the persistent threat it poses, despite the claim by the government that the group is a spent force (Ogbondah & Agbese, 2018). In addition, the Nigerian government began spending money on rehabilitating the Boko Haram insurgents, which further caused their victims to feel



neglected. While this paper does not condemn this effort, women victims must be given priority when it comes to psychological and physical heal them.

Non-Governmental Organisation's Responses: The efforts of non-governmental organisations and civil rights societies have been commendable. For instance, it was stated that the NEEM Foundation, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), has given more than 100 adolescent girls afflicted by the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast several psychological support. The initiative was called "Counselling on Wheels" (Olukomaiya, 2018). More so, many non-governmental organisations have contributed to gathering relief materials and sending them to the Northeast to ease the suffering of victims. All these are commendable but lack sustainability. For instance, if these women were provided funding but were not in the right frame of mind, there is only how that can go. Or, if they were counselled and no relief materials were provided, the intervention, although well-meaning, may be counterproductive.

Recommendations and the way forward

An assessment of the traumatic experiences of the women victims of the Boko Haram insurgency shows that they have been psychologically, spiritually, and economically affected. While the church, the government, and other parties have taken measures to lessen these women's difficulties, their efforts would not produce much. Additionally, the efforts made by non-religious counsellors lack solid biblical truths and counselling concepts, which are not in conflict with one another but can be amalgamated to reintegrate insurgent victim women. Therefore, this study makes the following recommendations and the way forward:

Firstly, Church leaders should organise dialogue with the government organisation and women victims for mutual understanding and respect for each other. Church leaders should empower and develop the women victims by helping them acquire helpful skills such as soap making, tailoring, knitting, beads making, and homemade bread to support the victims in earning their living.

Secondly, Church leaders should liaise, partner or network with the government, NGOs, and other stakeholders to provide a means to ensure security to protect people from the insurgents' attack and to fight for the right of its citizenry to help the victims overcome their traumatic experiences.

Thirdly, Women should voice their feelings for concerted efforts by the government, religious organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and civil societies to initiate sustainable programs and processes that would help heal physical and psychological injuries women sustain from the Boko Haram insurgency.



Fourthly, the church should be able to train expert trauma counsellors, set up a rehabilitation Centre for victims, and host seminars and workshops to mobilize and educate people to help society become aware and proactive in combating the causes of trauma. They should also create an integrative trauma counselling approach that will meet these women at multiple levels of challenges instead of using models that focus on just one area of their lives, physical, psychological, or spiritual. As mentioned earlier, it would be futile to counsel one on a hungry stomach or to offer victim aid during the counselling sessions and/or once they are over, they are left alone, having a dependency mindset.

Fifthly, Strategies must be implemented to help the victims rediscover themselves and make meaning out of their lives. Counselling sessions should reinforce the dignity of the women victims once heard. Skill acquisition should be taught once again, and for women who have skills and lived well but have now lost everything, there is a tendency to give up on life in general. Academic institutions should develop a more systematic understanding of women in conflict and crises in Nigeria. Further study should be carried out on the issue of trauma, especially in other metropolises of Nigeria and other parts of the world.

Conclusion

Global terrorism has posed a threat to human existence. This is exacerbated by arms finding their way into the hands of terrorists who unleash untold hardship on innocent people. Usually, terrorist groups are birthed by fundamentalist ideas. In recent times, Islamic fundamentalism has caught the world's attention, with some forcing their ideologies on the world. A potent tactic for most groups is targeting women for sexual exploitation, cheap labour, forced marriage, exchange tools for ransom, baits for male recruits and weapons of attack. Even though the activities of the insurgents have affected all gender, in war cries conflict, women are the most vulnerable and always at the receiving end due to gender-based violence at the hands of their perpetrators. Hence, women experience terrorism more differently than men, and that can result in trauma.

In Nigeria, the rise of the Boko Haram insurgent group has put many women in difficult situations affecting them socially, economically, spiritually, and physically. Generally, Boko Haram targets all gender, male and female, where some men lost their houses and properties, while some became widowers. But the research focuses on women because most of these targets are Christian women. The most vulnerable, who it has been established, have been affected or struck more differently by terrorist strikes than their male counterparts. This since they are targeted to be sexually abused, made into slaves, and weapons of terrorist attacks. As a result, they experience post-traumatic stress disorder, are tempted to deny their faith, and live in abject poverty. The government's response has, however, been slow. A potent strategy that this paper recommends is the



integrative approach to trauma counselling, administered through collaborations and within the context of women victims of the insurgency.

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