



## ADDRESSING CHALLENGES OF BORDER POROSITY TO NIGERIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

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### ABSTRACT

*The prevalence of insecurity across the world has made a clarion call for international community to rescue societies from underdevelopment. Border porosity has been identified as important among many factors, which facilitated availability of weapons used for the illicit activities of bandits in Zamfara and neighbouring Katsina, Sokoto and Kebbi States. The motive behind development of the present study has been the unrest situation found around Zamfara State been it the cradle place for banditry in Nigeria. This study focuses on the negative consequences of banditry to Nigeria's national security. Specifically, the study has been designed to assess the influx of arms across Nigeria's land borders; to asses' negative consequences of banditry in Zamfara state; and to determine the factors that influence youth's involvement into banditry. Data has been obtained through structured questionnaire, interview schedule and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). A total of 384 respondents were drawn from the population of 3,278,873 (Census, 2006) as the sample size using Morgan Table for sampling while analysis was made using descriptive statistics (frequency table and percentages) and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings of this study highlighted on the nature and status of the Nigeria's land borders in terms of its porosity to influx of arms; as well as motives behind youth enrolment into armed-banditry. The study also recommended*

*purposeful leadership: reverse and redefine border lines; employment opportunities/eradication of poverty and involvement/support by the community*

**Keywords:** *banditry, Conflict, effort, influential, security*

## **Introduction**

Issues related to security challenges have been noticed right from inception of human settlements. The growth of conflict and its dimensional approaches has called the attention of many authorities across the globe. As the world is fast advancing technologically, security threat has become a serious issue to tackle. In everyday happening, numerous profiles of security challenges which stand at crippling the peace and wellbeing of the society are being recorded. Nigeria being the leading economy in Africa suffers series of such challenges ranging from ethnic crises, farmer-herder conflict, religious militancy and banditry (Imohe, 2010: 239-257) [1]. In another source the border proximity and the 1990's Libya's conflict has expose the country to danger of such criminal activities due to availability of weapons which resulted to complicated issue across the African sub-region (Blum, 2014:5) [2]. Other possible sources of acquiring arms may include pilfering of weapons by unscrupulous peace-keepers in the conflicts areas in the region (Adetula, 2014:11) [3]. Thus, insurgencies and civil wars in West African countries and beyond with sophisticated weapons, created not only the fear of the possible infiltration of arms into Nigeria, but the likelihood of such weapons being utilized by insurgent groups and other criminals to destabilize the country (Omede, 2006:14) [4].

Aluku (2012:72) [5] also posit that the long stay of various notorious social groups and their operations has to do with availability of small arms and light weapons across West African sub-region. Aluko gathered that rampant circulation of weapons remains gate way for involvement of both state and non state actors who become much more powerful to overwhelm the effort of international humanitarians' aid and posing number of people refugees and internally displaced persons while affecting the contributions of peace making organizations like ECOMOG, African Union and the United Nations Organization.

However, the curiosity to manage lingering issue made Nigeria geared towards re-strategize, cooperate and share intelligence with her immediate neighbours on how to safeguard their territorial integrity and counteract insecurity for corporate existence (Folarin, Ajayi &

Olanrewaju, 2014: 455) [6]. It has been observed that, Nigeria-Benin land border is the most critical border where Nigeria receive influx of small arms and light weapons, narcotics and human beings and the area serves as hidden place of social groups in the course of operations. The author further argued that the porosity nature of Nigeria-Benin land border and weak governance from the side of the countries has obviously facilitated a huge security challenge. The Nigeria-Benin land border, especially at Lagos and Ogun States axes: Badagry-Cotonou (Seme Border) and Idi-Iroko-Porto Novo (Idi-Iroko Border) had remained very notorious zones of unabated trans-border crime such as smuggling and arm banditry (Blum, 2014: 6) [2].

This could be justifiable from the effort of border security agents. There has been blockage and interception of weapons across the border area by Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) on many occasions. It has been noticed that rampant circulation of SALW's across Nigeria-Benin land border is the factor responsible for the increase of number of notorious social groups in Nigeria. 875 million small arms are approximately in circulation in the globe. The two third of the global small arms are also estimated to be held by non-state actors, and 100 million are reported to be in Africa (Esther, 2014) [7]. Most of the seizure by the Nigerian Customs Service was done on the land border with the republic of Benin. Similarly, the Nigerian security agencies often report incidents of arms smuggling along the country's 773-kilometre Badagry-Cotonou Road (Adetula, 2014: 17) [3].

Despite huge amount of literatures regarding security issues, the present study attempt to be specific with most recent damages caused by banditry having most of the efforts exhausted and concentrated on macro issue while giving little attention to micro concern. The study will focus to determine perception of people on how influx of SALW's across Nigeria-Benin border facilitates security challenges in Nigeria and pushing factor for recruitment of youth into social group.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Trans-nationalism emphasizes on trans-pass across territorial jurisdiction by individuals who claims fake identity and double standard of origin as a result of common features they shared with citizens of other nation from where they originated (Rosemberge *etal*, 2016) [8]. The intense at which movements of migrants from West African countries are growing has caused

panic to authorities like European Union and Spanish (Philippe, 2015) [9]. A scholarly engagement and inquisitiveness for a better understanding of international migration has pushed and influenced researchers from Anthropology, Sociology and Human geography to adopt the concept as theoretical framework in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Luis & Michael, 1998) [10].

Conflict theory sees society as a collection of social unit where competition of limited resources is taking place. The German Philosopher “Karl Marx” (1818-1883) argued that, society is characterized with competition between and among social classes for the means of survival. According to him food and housing, employment, education and leisure time, social institution like government, education and religion are all product of social and political resources that determine, motivate and influence individuals to indulge into competition in order to maintain unequal social structure. Upon Karl max assertion, a German sociologist “Marx Webber” agreed with economic inequalities as factor influencing conflict in every society but holds that inequality of political powers and social structure another factor causing conflict in the society (Introducton to Sociology 2019, April 4) [11].

Marx Weber, Karl Marx, Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer and Durkheim were said to be the propagators of political sociology which determined to explore how authority and the operation of oppression affect society ranging from micro to macro settings which usually brought about contestation of power gain. Political sociology has been developed since 1930 to look into issues that relate society with politics. The subject matter concern with social trends, changes and structure of domination and how it effect political process couple with influence of social forces. We have three outstanding theories in political sociology; Pluralism, Class and Elite Perspectives. The pluralism point of view challenges the view of monopoly in political power while upholding the view that no group decides political affairs of any state. However, class and elite theories challenged the assertion in which the elite theory has also been adopted for present study.

The major argument and perspectives of elite theory has emphasized on political domination perpetuated by inner circle. This has been a type of domination that covers all social institution including political, economic and military (Mills, 1956) [12]. According to Domhoff (2006) [13] as time goes on, bureaucratic and power operations have been increasingly becoming centralized

while possibilities of clash of interest among societal segments become necessary. In this theory, the elites share things in common with strong network among themselves. They also occupy most important societal areas and make use of the power to shape public opinion. They act and share a kind of class consciousness and cohesive group (Useem 1982) [14]. This could be a point of reference when making analysis on Nigeria's scenario where political position has been determine for the elite and their counterparts. Most of the issues that have great impact to citizenry were neglected and used as weapon against less privileged individuals. Issues like poverty, unemployment and school dropouts have been injected to affect upward social mobility of ordinary citezens. This has been regarded one of the reasons why the indigenous youth engage in criminal activities so as to be as equal as every citizens against exploitation.

From the foregoing assertions, Marxism school of thought debunks the issue of border line which is the central facus to present study. The school of thought maintains that division of societies and communities into nations is meaningless rather to ensure exploitation and denial of less privilege access to resources and labour for the interest of few individuals. Therefore, the division of Nigeria and Benin has been the interest of colonial masters to ensure unequal distribution of resources. However, Transnationalism has great concern with present study since the focus geared towards issues in relation to immigration while the central argument of the present study is to determine how Nigeria-Benin porous border influences insecurity in Nigeria. Nigerians and Benises have great connection in terms of socio-economic activities. Earlier before the coming of colonial masters there was existence of mutual relationship between Yoruba people of south-western Nigeria and the Fon from Republic of Benin who shared things in common including the exchange of languages (Adeyinka, 2014) [15]. The creation of artificial border between the two States has affected communities' relation who associates freely; visitations and economic activities were all taken place without any sanction (Babatunde, 2014) [16]. As a result of sociological and anthropological similarities couple with historical background has ensured a solid bond between the countries which continuous up till today while becoming very difficult to stop. The cross border and increase of immigrants in higher population has endangered Nigeria's security. Many of the immigrants claimed to visit blood relations and associates while introducing illegal smuggling. Nigeria-Benin border remain porous

where Nigeria receives illegitimate commodities including arms while threatening the peaceful co-existence of the country (Folarin S.F and Yartey Ajayi, 2014) [6].

On the other hand conflict theory proves that struggles for acquisition of both material and power bring about clash of interest among different social class and leading to dominance of one class over the other; for example unemployment, lack of education and poverty may deprive less privileged individuals and invariably resulting to conflict as what is happening in Nigeria especially in study area where we have issues of unemployment, school dropouts, illiteracy, poverty ridden and corruption (with most top ranking government officials). This no doubt remains the main factor attributing to escalation recruitment of number of insurgent groups like *Boko-Haram* and bandits while introducing social changes in the area. The operation of criminals has caused changes with people's attitudes and behavior like mistrust among themselves, changes with daily interaction and business activities for the fear of crime. It is observed that, negligence attitude of Nigeria's government in addressing the menace of insecurity and economic hardship has further attracted series of demonstration by the citizens especially those from the study area in order to show agitation with the problem and consequently may be the starting point of revolution if things are not addressed adequately. According to Gaiya *et al* (2020) [17] until the issue of unemployment is addressed and replaced with initiatives of entrepreneurship, the teeming unemployed youth will definitely converge to protest against socio-economic domination in Nigeria.

The theories have great concern to present study, most importantly the creation of artificial border has significant role that ensured separation of ethnic groups as we have good presence of Yoruba ethnic group from both Nigeria and Benin republic who have been denied access to labour and resources (which in turn injected abject poverty) from their motherland. Being claiming dual citizenship by most of the migrants remains a serious security challenge to identify their correct identity across the border. However, this serves as an avenue that continues to ensure border porosity while facilitating smuggling of SALWs across the (Nigeria-Benin) border. On the other hand as Nigeria receives influx of foreigners it also brought and posed economic pressure on limited resources while leading to social problems like poverty and unemployment in the country, which have been the influential factors for initiating youths into criminal groups.

### **Research Problem**

The research gap can apparently be observed from the review of some existing studies. It is clear that, none of the reviewed works is exactly the same as the present research in space and subject matter. In other words, there seems to be not a detailed academic study linking the smuggling of small arms and light weapons with their proliferation, insecurity situation and youth involvements into social group in Zamfara State.

It is understood that, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria is very disturbing and alarming and it causes loss of hundreds of lives and properties. The smuggled arms and weapons are being used by armed bandits in the country. However, little attention has been paid to study the menace of smuggling in small arms and light weapons vis-à-vis the proliferation of the arms and their seeming threat to Nigeria's security with special focus to Zamfara State of Nigeria.

Therefore, it is from the works done so far that the present study attempts to add in the existing literature on the subject matter. In its attempt to fill in that gap, the research raised the following questions:

- What is the perception of people regarding arms smuggling across Nigeria-Benin land border?
- What are the negative consequences of banditry in Zamfara State?
- What are the influential factors for youths recruit into such violent group?

### **Objectives**

In an attempt to address the research questions, specific objectives of the study were set to be:

- To examine arms smuggling across Nigeria-Benin land border.
- To asses negative consequences of banditry in Zamfara State
- To determine influential factors for youth involvement into violent group

### **METHOD AND MATERIAL**

Cross-sectional study has been employed in the first instant by using interview schedule and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to collect data from different category of individuals. The data to be used in this study is of two types: primary and secondary data; and the former would be

obtained largely from primary source using interviews and FGD. The latter type of data has been obtained from secondary materials in the form of textbooks, journal articles, theses and dissertation et cetra; for the study partly adopts content analysis of data. The study areas are Nigeria-Benin land borders and borders' communities as well as the major volatile Zamfara state of Nigeria where banditry originated in the country. In order to carry out the study, interview schedule and focus group discussion (FGD) were used to the sample population. Security operatives, people in the borders' towns, Zamfara inhabitants and community base associations were all engaged in an interview and FGD while critical analysis of the existing studies on the subject matter is considered as secondary data so as to explain the current trend of smuggling in small arms and light weapons across Nigeria-Benin land borders and its security implication in Zamfara state of Nigeria.

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

With regards to sample size, 14 local governments areas of the state namely; Anka, Bakura, Birnin Magaji/Kiyaw, Bukkuyum, Bungudu, Chafe (Tsafe), Gumi, Gusau, Kaura Namoda, Maradun, Maru, Shinkafi, Talata Mafara, Zurmi were visited with sample size of 384 that drawn from 3,278,873 (Census, 2006), using Morgan's Table for Sampling Size with 99% confidence and 5.0% Margin of Error. Simple random sampling technique has been used to ensure equal opportunity to the respondents.

### **Method of Analysis**

The method of data analysis used was descriptive (simple percentage, frequency table) and the Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC) to determine existing relationship between the variables (border porosity and security challenges in Nigeria).

### **Scope of the Study**

Nigeria-Benin shares land border to the west of about 1, 000 kilometres where the duo have connections through Seme and Idi-Iroko borders. However, the scope concentrated on arms influx into Nigeria across Nigeria-Benin land border and how it worsen security situation of Nigeria with special focus to happenings in Zamfara state.

### **Arms Smuggling and usage of SALWs**



<i>Sources of SALWs</i>			<i>Involvement of bandits in the smuggling of SALWs</i>			<i>Opinion about how often the usage of SALWs by the bandits in the State</i>		
<i>Border area</i>	296	77.1	<i>Yes</i>	198	51.6	<i>Often</i>	348	90.6
<i>Benin Republic</i>	88	22.9	<i>No</i>	186	48.4			
						<i>Very often</i>	36	9.4
<i>Total</i>	384	%	<i>Total</i>	384	100%	<i>Total</i>	384	100%

The major source of weapons for the bandits in the state was disclosed by the respondents. The first segment of the above table highlights that majority (77 percent) were with believe that the major source of weapons for the bandits in the state was from border area while nearly 23 percent responded against the former opinion. From the analysis majority (77 percent) of the respondents attested that the major source of weapons for the bandit's was through border area.

Respondents were intimated regarding bandits engagement in smuggling of SALWs or not, by ranking their opinions. The second phase indicates the attestation of majority (52 percent) regarding the bandit's involvement in smuggling of SALWs in the state while about 48 percent responded that the bandits in the state does not engaged in the smuggling such items. From the analysis majority (52 percent) of the respondent attested that the bandits in the State engaged in the smuggling of SALWs. Respondents further argued that, the social groups partake in smuggling such weapons into Nigeria due to porous nature of all Nigeria's land borders; they further said that there has been a number of bandit's interception while carrying SALWs.

While the last segment of the table shows that majority (91 percent) were of the opinion that usage of SALWs by the bandits in the State is often while about 9 percent were of the opinion that it is very often. From the analysis majority (91 percent) of respondent attested that usage of SALWs by the bandits in the State is often

**Influential factors for youth involvement and their activities in the study area**

The state of insecurity caused by the activities of bandits led to the death of many people in the state			Records of rapes and other dehumanization activities			Level of education among the youth of Zamfara State		
<i>Yes</i>	<i>208</i>	<i>54.2</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>280</i>	<i>72.9</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>06</i>	<i>1.6</i>
<i>No</i>	<i>176</i>	<i>45.8</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>104</i>	<i>27.1</i>	<i>Very high</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>4.2</i>
						<i>Law</i>	<i>158</i>	<i>41.1</i>
						<i>Very law</i>	<i>204</i>	<i>53.1</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>384</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>384</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>384</i>	<i>100%</i>

Respondents reported that the state of insecurity caused by the activities of bandits has led to the death of many people in the state. By ranking their opinions the first part of the table indicates that majority (54 percent) of the respondents affirmed that the state of insecurity caused by the activities of bandits has led to the death of many people in Zamfara State while nearly 46 percent were in disagreement that the bandits operation has led to the death of many. Majority of the respondents testified the fact that the activity of the social groups has caused the death of many innocent, especially in northern part of the country. Based on the reason revealed by them was due to the fact that innocent lives have been buried on daily basis due to operation of social groups.

The second segment asked respondents questions whether there were any records of rapes and other dehumanization activities by either criminals or security agents as a result of the operation in the state or not, by ranking their opinions majority (73 percent) attested that there was record of rapes and other dehumanization activities by either social group or security agents as a result of operation in Zamafara State and about 27 percents were in disagreement with the opinion. However those who agreed with such dehumanization act has attributed the reason with happening of inhuman treatment received by women where a lot of them fallen victims of circumstances of rape in places where such criminal activities is taking place; house wives, young girls and even mothers are being raped and kidnapped for continues raping according to respondents.

The last segment of the above table highlights that nearly 2 percent had high level of education, about 4 percent had very high education, about 41 percent had low education and majority (53 percent) had very low education. From the analysis majority of the respondents had very low education

<i>Youth dropout of school</i>			Unemployment among the youth of Zamfara State			Youth engagement in a number of occupations		
<i>Yes</i>	354	92.2	<i>High</i>	136	35.4	<i>Yes</i>	82	21.4
<i>No</i>	30	7.8	<i>Very high</i>	204	53.1	<i>No</i>	302	78.6
			<i>Average</i>	44	11.5			
<i>Total</i>	384	%	<i>Total</i>	384	100%	<i>Total</i>	384	100%

The table above discussed on youth dropout; unemployment among youth of Zamfara state and youth engagement in a number of occupations. Majority (92 percent) of the respondents said yes that many youth were dropouts of school in the state while nearly 8 percent said no. From the analysis majority of the respondents (92 percent) was of the opinion that many youth in the State dropouts of school.

In the subsequent part of the table highlights that about 35 percent agreed with high level of unemployment among youth in Zamfara State while majority (53 percent) responded that it was very high and nearly 12 percent responded that the rate of unemployment was average. From the analysis above, majority of the respondents (53 percent) were of the opinion that the rate of unemployment in Zamfara State is very high.

In another segment of the table indicates about 21 percent of respondents with view of youth engagement in a number of occupations in the State while majority (79 percent) responded with the view that youth suffer of lacking occupation. From the analysis majority of respondents (79 percent) were of the opinion that the youth in the state does not engaged in a number of occupations. In their (respondents) further explanation the scenario came into existence as a result of un employments, relocation of settlement and fear of kidnapping and brutal killings by bandits at farmlands.

The Use of intoxicant substance by youth			Youth are the majority among the bandits		
Yes	138	88	Yes	348	90.5
No	46	12	No	36	9.5
Total	384	100%	Total	384	100%

The above table has two segments where majority (88 percent) of the respondents reported that youth in Zamfara state used to taken intoxicant substance while 12 percent of the respondents responded with believe that youth were not engaged in taken such substance in the state. From the analysis majority of the respondent (88 percent) were of the opinion that the youth in the State used to taken intoxicant substance. With regards to reasons that invited such immoral attitude, the respondents made a submission that many youths that associates with such substance were political thugs as such the uses of drugs stimulate them to conduct the activity of political thuggery without fear of consequences.

The last part of the table talked about whether youth are majority among bandits or not. Significant number (91 percent) of the respondents indicates that youth were the majority among the bandits while 9 percent responded contrary to that opinion. From the analysis majority of the respondents (91 percent) attested that youth are the majority among the bandits. However, the reason behind that was due to unemployment and disengagement of employees during previous government.

### **Past effort of government**

They were also asked about the efforts of Nigerian federal government towards tackling the menace of banditry in the state which indicates majority (89 percent) responded that the efforts of Nigerian federal government towards tackling the menace of banditry in the State was deployment of security personnel and provision of arms while nearly 12 percent responded that the Nigerian federal government has not shown any efforts towards tackling the menace of banditry in the state.

Effort of the federal government			Effort of State Government towards addressing activities of bandits			The role of government to address motivational factors of youth recruitment in banditry		
Deployment of security personnel and provision of arms	340	88.5	Support to deploy security personnel	132	34.4	Youth employments	36	9.4
			Update federal government on security situation	108	28.1	Intervention of agricultural loan scheme to the farmers	60	15.6
			Reconciliation	46	12	No effort	288	75
No effort	44	11.5	No effort	98	25.5	Total	384	100%
Total	384	100%	Total	384	100%			

From the analysis majority of respondents (89 percent) affirmed that the effort of Nigerian federal government towards tackling the menace of banditry in the state was deployment of security personnel and provision of arms.

The respondents of the study reported about the efforts of State government towards addressing the activities of bandits in the state, by ranking their opinions it apparently indicates about 34 percent respondents with opinion that the efforts of State government towards addressing the activities of bandits in the State was support to deployed security personnel, about 28 percent

responded that the efforts of State government towards addressing the activities of bandits in the State was updated federal government on security situation, 12 percent responded that the efforts of state government towards addressing the activities of bandits in the state was reconciliation while respondent representing nearly 26 percent responded that the state government has no efforts towards addressing the activities of bandits in the state From the analysis majority of the respondents (34 percent) were of the opinion that the efforts of State government towards addressing the activities of bandits in the State was support given to federal government to deployed security personnel.

The third part of the table highlights 9 percent of the respondents with opinion that the roles of governments in addressing the socio-economic conditions of Zamafara people that might have been the push factor responsible for the engagement in banditry by mostly the youth in the state was youth employment contrary to that, respondents representing nearly 16 percent argued that intervention of agricultural loan scheme to the farmers was the roles of government towards addressing the issue while respondents representing majority (75 percent) responded that government yet play any roles in addressing the socio-economic conditions of Zamafara people that might have been the push factor responsible for the engagement in banditry by mostly youths in the State. From the analysis majority of the respondents (75 percent) attested that government does not play any roles yet in addressing the socio-economic conditions of Zamafara people that might have been the push factor responsible for the engagement in banditry by mostly youth in the State.

### **Reliability and Validity Test of data**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Statistics</b>
Number of Items	14
Cronbach's Alpha	0.943
N	384

***Source: SPSS OUTPUT***

The study adopts a more scientific measure of data and measurement reliability and validity test. Cronbach's Alpha is applied to measure the internal consistency and reliability, that is, do all the items in the scale really tap into one construct, and measure what is intended to measure. This study applied statistical test to establish the instrument reliability using the reliability coefficient (Alpha) which can range from 0 to 1, with 0 representing an instrument with full of error and 1 representing total absence of error and reliable. A reliability coefficient (alpha) of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable reliability.

It further shows the Cronbach's Alpha reliability test statistics based on 14 items of 0.943. In the social science research Cronbach's Alpha greater than 0.70 is considered as benchmark and acceptable. Thus, an Alpha of 0.943 is preferred and considered a good reliability of the questionnaire measurement.

### Pearson Correlation Analysis

The relationship between Porous Border and Armed Conflict in Zamfara State, Nigeria

ZAMFARA STATE		POROUS BORDER	ARMED CONFLICT
POROUS BORDER	Pearson Correlation	1	.903**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	384	384
ARMED CONFLICT	Pearson Correlation	.903**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	384	384

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS output

From the Pearson Correlation result above, porous border has a very strong correlation with armed conflict with a value of 0.903. From this analysis porous border is correlated against armed conflict. According to analysis, it has shown that the correlation coefficient is 0.903 at significant level of 0.01 (two tailed test). Thus, there is a positive relationship between porous border and armed conflict in Zamfara State, Nigeria. From the understanding of the study, the relationship is inverse (i.e. proper implementation of porous border is associated with lower the level of armed conflict).

### **FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION**

There was extracted information gathered during focus group discussion in order to enrich the outcome of the study. Those that provided such information for the study includes the communities' leaders, the women groups, the youths and opinion leaders as well as security agencies including the police, the customs, the military and naval force as well as the immigration officials

There has been lukewarm attitude with government in discharging its responsibilities. This was attested by the respondents during focus group discussion where a journalist who happened to be part of the discussion lamented on non-challant attitude found with previous government of Zamfara State when the state of insecurity was about to be evolved. The respondents maintain that, the victims (from the beginning) do not have much expectation from the government rather engaged and committed in farming and rearing animals but suddenly started experiencing operation of bandits which they reported to the government officials but the government debunked it by politicizing the issue which in turn influenced and motivated the communities to introduce a kind of counter group against the criminals which further invited troubles and escalation of the problem. There was no official IDP's Camp across the State except temporary camps which used to be organized by nongovernmental organizations as such many of the victims were scattered and hang around looking for means of survival. According to other respondents, the scenario motivated the victims to acquire and developed self defense for protection of future occurrence as many youths who were victims in the State got charm for protection of gun shoot to prevent themselves against counter attack by criminals.



Nigeria's borders are porous while ensuring proliferation of SALWs. Suleiman Joji and Daudu among others said both *BH* members and armed-bandits have been getting arms as a result of border porosity and they were becoming powerful to even destabilized and snatched military weapons to actualizing their activities in nowadays happening.

### **Discussion of Results and Findings**

#### **To examine arms smuggling across Nigeria-Benin land border**

With regards to porosity of Nigeria-Benin land border and arms smuggling highlights sources of weapons for the bandit's activities in Zamfara State which identified border areas the major source of weapons that were used by bandits. Respondents were engaged in an interview to determine the nature of border porosity, where majority (80 percent) of the respondents testified the porosity of border areas of the country that ensured the influx of weapons across the country while 23 percent shows Nigeria-Benin border porosity.

Half of the respondents (50 percent) have signified the involvement of bandits into smuggling of SALWs in the country. This entails that majority of the respondents have succumbed to belief that Nigeria's borders including the one that connect the country with Benin Republic are porous through which Nigeria encounters a very serious security challenge. However, this is in conformity with the work of Mohammed *et al* (2019) [18] which argues that the colonial artificial land border between Nigeria and Benin has continued to be a contest with Nigeria's internal security which led to the closure of the official passage of the border by Nigerian government. A similar study conducted by Blum (2014) [2] sees informal cross-border trade (as the most common cross border activity) and transnational criminal activities as the main challenges across the Nigerian-Beninese border. Nkiwane *et al.* (1999) [19] identified Swaziland as passage ground for illicit of weapons into South Africa for a very long time.

This situation ascertains the existence of proliferation of SALWs across territorial areas of individual States long ago. Virtually, African borders are characterized with porosity that gives breathing space for international criminal activities which required and necessitated the effort of African Union (AU) to end the phenomenon but later defeated due to lack of individual States' commitment (Okunade etal, 2019) [20].

**To asses negative consequences of banditry in Zamfara State**

It is justifiable to say that there has been prevalence of inhuman treatment receives from both security personnel and criminal groups in the study area. Majority (90 percent) of the total respondents assured the happenings of such degradation against the inhabitants. The effort of senate committee that paid a visit to Zamfara State due to unimaginable growing of criminal activities has counted the abduction of more than two hundred (200) innocent individuals; destruction of ten thousand (10,000) settlements; recorded two thousand five hundred (2,500) death and injured persons and destruction farm land of about one thousand and five hundred (1,500) hectors. Based on the information gathered by the ad-hoc committee women suffer of rape by criminals on several occasions (Sunnews, 2018 March 8) [21].

**To determine influential factors for youth involvement into violent group**

The responses by the respondents has clearly indicates the commitment of the government in deploying and supporting security personnel. However, holding government a failure to curtail the motivational factors that makes youth involve into such criminal activities and also not adequately addressing issues in regards to humanitarian crises caused by criminal groups. It has been reported that the little cooperation given by the government in provision of relief services has been undermined because the IDP's officials who were responsible to deliver the services were caught stolen the items meant for the victims (Premiumtimes October 5 2016) [22].

It has been observed, from the result, that most of the teeming youth in the study area were unemployed. Moreover, majority of the respondents (70 percent) lamented on the happening of school dropout across the area and further elaborated that the live of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP'S) has turned to begging as many of them were found to be scattered and homeless due to failure of government to provide an official camp for them. The result shows the annual income of the respondents was very low as many of them survive on fifty thousand naira (50, 000) annually. Considering today's economic challenges as naira (Nigeria currency) continued to be devalued compared to USD dollar as such it is another motive that invited socio-economic challenges while making situation herder to manage. The elite theory in this regard verifies and justifies the operation and oppression of elites against ordinary citizens in the country.

Almost 83 million of Nigerians associates with poverty ridden and most of States that were identified with high rate of poverty were northern States that comprise Yobe, Zamfara, Sokoto, Taraba and Jigawa respectively. The report indicates Ebonyi State as the only State with intense poverty in southern part of Nigeria (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020 May 4) [23]. It is therefore, a clear indication that, higher population of people with poverty is from northern part of the country. As such it could be a reason why the issue of banditry found the north a suitable environment for operation as the situation and condition of the inhabitants favours their activities. Until the fundamental factors are addressed the provision of relief services and deployment of security personnel will be of utmost importance.

## **Conclusion**

It has been so opened that several contributions and measures have been put in place regarding proliferation of SALWs and it is intense negative implication against humanity. It indicated therein related literatures that the global prevalence of border conflict, ethno-religion, and communal, interstate/intrastate conflict are all products of SALWs. However, the present study touches the inner feelings of Nigeria with regards to menace of Nigeria-Benin arms proliferation and it is serious security challenges against national security of Nigeria, where structured interviewed has been used to determined the argument. As per the data of the study that covered socio-economic status of the respondents, usage of SALWs and past effort of Nigeria's government in order to end the menace has made it clear that the artificial border made by colonial masters and weak government found with most African nations have been a factor responsible for trans-border smuggling of weapons, as an external challenge to Nigeria's security which is also in conformity with the theory of transnationalism. Significant number of the total respondents has been with believed that Nigeria's borders are porous and criminal groups got involved in summuggling weapons in to Nigeria. Despite the effort of government by recruiting, deploying and supporting security agencies in order to end the security challenges there has been intense usage of SALWs while resulting to rampant killings, raping and other damages of non human materials. It is observed that majority of the respondents from state have the opinion of usage of such deadly weapons by the criminals. 60 percent of the respondents revealed the happening of mass killings, destruction of properties and assault against innocent indigeneous which is in accompany with several records by researchers and NGO's. The fundamental issues

remain parallel as poverty, unemployment, school dropouts, lack of well established camp for Internally Displaced Person's have not been properly addressed. Therefore, the present study uphold the factors as compounding problems to Nigeria's internal security challenges, having most of the youths that become bandits recruits faced with such challenges (lack of basic necessities) and invariably become to be a serious threat to indigenous lives and properties which is also in agreement with indices of Marxian theory that emphasizes on denying the less-privileged individuals access to resources and invariably struggle for minimal resources (as capitalized by conflict theory) usually brings about conflict while resulting to insecurity in a given society. As such the following are propose mechanism to counter the current devastated security issues to Nigerias national security;

- Purposeful leadership: the democratic system should support and encourages the emergence of men of integrity to ensure sanity in discharging political responsibility to at least minimize the level of corruption;
- The border lines need to be reversed and redefined clearly: the regional organizations like ECOWAS and the concern States should come to the rescue of border insecurity by revisiting and making well defined borderlines with consideration to anthropological features in order to avoid claim of dual citizenship and illegal smuggling of SALWs;
- Employment opportunities and eradication of poverty: employment opportunities and equal distribution of resources should be encouraged to bridge the existing gap between have and havenot so as to reduce the level of poverty and avoidance of youth's recruitment into *Boko-Haram* and bandits groups within the study area;
- Involvement and support by the community: There should be involvement of different societal segments including youth associations to partake in mobilising and socialising the entire society regarding negative implications of criminal activities; as such traditional institutions should serve as key informants to update authority concern on happenings in their respective jurisdictions, being the fact that they are the most conversant to provide identification of their subject

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