

CULPABILITY OF FEMALE SUICIDE BOMBERS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NIGERIAN AND AFGHANISTAN LAWS

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Abstract

Boko Haram gained international notoriety as a terrorist group in 2014 with the abduction of more than 200 schoolgirls in Chibok, North-Eastern Nigeria. This group has perfected a system of using girls as suicide bombers and war mules. Considering the devastating effectiveness of Boko Haram strategy of feminisation of terror, there is wide negative perception about the complicity of these girls in terrorism, thus raising fundamental questions about the status of these girls. Using the strain theory of terrorism as the framework of analysis, the paper undertakes a comparative study of the laws and strategies on the two global co-travellers in the terror craft- of Boko Haram and the Taliban, examining how very restrictive local socio-economic conditions influence the choices of female suicide bombers in Nigeria, Pakistan and Afghanistan and operational response of the security services to the roles of these girls in terrorism. It also evaluates the adequacy or otherwise of the Nigeria's counter-terrorism strategy as it relates to gender-sensitive handling of potential suicide bombers. It further examines the legal culpability of these girls in light of Nigeria's criminal law regime and international and regional human rights frameworks. The findings reveal the restrictive and discriminatory socio-cultural strains which drives the choices of female suicide bombers in Nigeria and Afghanistan. The paper concludes by recommending among others that Nigerian government should endeavour to promote social regeneration in the North and break the vicious cycle of poverty, lack of education, inequalities and industrial stagnation that blight the region.

Keywords: *Book Haram, Taliban, Suicide bombing, Terrorism and Girls*

1. Introduction

Nigeria has a long history of political violence, but the turbulent political events of the 1990s introduced events that marked the beginning of Nigeria's struggle with terrorism. The decade was marked by assassinations, bomb blasts and a plane hijacking¹. However, since the emergence of Islamist movement that calls itself the "Sunni Community for the Propagation of

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¹ Isaac Albert, "Terror as a Political Weapon: reflections on The Bomb Explosion in Abacha's Nigeria" in Special Research Issue, (Ifra,Ibadan) vol 1(2005), p. 41

the Prophet's Teaching and Jihad"² popularly referred to as '*Boko Haram*', *Boko Haram* has dominated regional and international policy debates among academics and policymakers interested in Nigerian and African politics.

Since its formation, *Boko Haram* has attracted global attention due to the magnitude of human and material destruction it has wrought, its unorthodox beliefs and ability to endure, adapt and evolve in Nigeria's evolving political and military space. Of great relevance is the ability to network with other notorious terrorist powerhouses such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Ansar Dine in Mali or Al-Shabaab in Somalia.

The global pre-eminence of *Boko Haram* is such that it was consistently classed among four of the world's deadliest terrorist groups between 2007 and 2017, joining the evil triumvirate of Al-Qa'ida, Taliban and ISIS³. One common operational tactics of these groups is the use of bombings and explosions, particularly suicide bombings, which is responsible for around a quarter of all attacks by these groups⁴.

An historical analysis shows that groups classified as terrorist groups, groups such as Al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka utilized female suicide bombers as part of their terror strategy⁵. However, *Boko Haram* expanded the terror scope by using children or young girls as terror operational assets⁶.

Boko Haram in Nigeria pioneered the use of suicide attacks and the use female operatives for its terror operations and questions have been asked particularly about the use of female suicide bombers. Is it an act of desperation, a measure of last resort or they perceive women and girls as more convenient weapons against the Nigerian state? While some experts have asserted that the use of girls indicates the inherent operational weakness of *Boko Haram*⁷, the jury on this is still out. However, the use of female suicide bombers by the group change the dynamics of the conflict in its operational theatre in North Western Nigeria, creating in the process an intense climate of fear among community members.

The main thrust of the paper is an examination of the culpability of female suicide bombers under extant local, regional and international laws in Nigeria and Afghanistan putting in

² Jama'atu Ahles-Sunnah Lidda' Awati Wal Jihad

³ Institute for Economics and Peace, Global Terrorism Index (2017) 72

⁴ Institute for Economics and Peace, Global Terrorism Index (2017) 75

⁵ R Skaine, Female Suicide Bombers, McFarland & Company, London (2006) 12

⁶ S. Allotey-Pappoe & A. Agyeiwaa Lamptey, Pawns, Puppets or Weapons of Choice: Examining Boko Haram's Use of Female Suicide Bombers in Nigeria, KAIPTC Occasional Paper (2019) 42, 4

⁷ BBC, Boko Haram crisis: Nigeria's female bombers strike; (<http://www.bbc.com/news/worldafrica-28657085>)

perspective their age, socio-economic status and legal agency in the terror process. In selecting the two terror actors- *Boko Haram* and the Taliban- the paper considered similarities in operational ideology, the presence of mutually pervasive socio-cultural practices that exclude women from political life and the unbridled tendency of the two actors for indiscriminate violence.

Primarily, the paper adopts the strain theory of terrorism as the framework of analysis in discussing the legal liability of terror mules vis-à-vis the extant legal regime in the countries of interests. The paper in the process highlights how the restrictive and discriminatory socio-cultural strains drives the choices of female suicide bombers in Nigeria, Pakistan and Afghanistan and operational response of the security services to the roles of these girls in terrorism.

2. Strain Theory of Terrorism as Framework of Analysis

By its nature, the term "terrorism" is bound up in political controversy and it is largely a concept with a very negative connotation. To complicate matters, there is no universally accepted definition of terrorism. Countries define the term according to their economic and political interests, ditto for multilateral organizations who primarily craft definitions that reflect the interests of their members. So much that for this and for political reasons, many news sources, especially Reuters avoid using this term, opting instead for less accusatory words like "bombers," "militants", "freedom fighters" and so on⁸.

The vital reason for this definitional controversy is that the use of violence for the achievement of political ends is common to state and non-state organizations. The difficulty is in agreeing on a basis for determining when the use of violence, directed at whom, by whom, for what ends is legitimate. Hoffman in highlighting the dilemma of definition has averred that

On one point, at least, everyone agrees: terrorism is a pejorative term. It is a word with intrinsically negative connotations that is generally applied to one's enemies and opponents, or to those with whom one disagrees and would otherwise prefer to ignore. "What is called terrorism,"...Hence the decision to call someone or label some organization "terrorist" becomes almost unavoidably subjective, depending largely on whether one sympathizes with or opposes the person/group/cause concerned. If one identifies with the victim of the violence, for example, then the act is terrorism. If,

⁸ Sean Maguire, when does Reuters use the word terrorist or terrorism? (2007) (<http://blogs.reuters.com/world-wrap/2007/06/13/when-does-reuters-use-the-word-terrorist-or-terrorism/>)

however, one identifies with the perpetrator, the violent act is regarded in a more sympathetic, if not positive (or, at the worst, an ambivalent) light; and it is not terrorism.⁹

While it must be understood that no definition of terrorism can possibly cover all the varieties of terrorism that have appeared over times in all its forms, however that said conceptual inadequacy does not mean that terrorism is an indescribable form of violence. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights report on terrorism¹⁰ suggested these distinguishing features as the hall mark of terrorism: “the nature and identity of the perpetrators of terrorism; the nature and identity of the victims of terrorism, the objectives of terrorism; and the means employed to perpetrate terror violence”. The report further noted that the perpetrators or instigators of terrorism may be “comprised of states as well as private individuals or groups who may act independently or with the direct or indirect support of states”. The report further posit that “the targets of terrorist violence have also varied to include persons, institutions and property”.

Irrespective of who definition it used, terrorism is manifested in the following activities, strategies and tactics of terrorists, be it criminal, political, national or international : bombing and laying of mines and explosives at strategic places; arrests, kidnapping, and detentions; beating and torture, murder and assassination, arson, sabotage of installations, mysterious and anonymous phone calls, intimidation and threat, hijacking and piracy, bank raids and other forms of armed robbery, biological and chemical warfare and Suicide bombing. The focus of this paper would be limited to suicide bombing as one of the activities of the two focal terror groups.

The General Strain Theory was originally formulated by Robert Merton and updated by Robert Agnew¹¹. The central thesis of the theory is that people are fundamentally conformist in nature and that they are immensely influenced by the society they live in, particularly its socio-cultural values¹². Proponents of the theory have argued that human beings as part of the social setup are conformist and they seek the good of the society. However, not all in society provide equal

⁹ Hoffman, Bruce Inside Terrorism, (1998) Columbia University Press, P. 32.

¹⁰ The Report on Terrorism & Human Rights by The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (OEA/Ser.L/V/II.116 Doc. 5 rev. 1 corr.)

¹¹ Agnew, Robert, Building on the Foundation of General Strain Theory: Specifying the Types of Strain Most Likely to Lead to Crime and Delinquency, Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency (2001) 38(4): 320

¹² Ibid

opportunity to achieve high status or acquisitions. This can be attributed to social strains such as the lack of education, lack of money, immigration status, race or other real or perceived inequalities. The theory then posits that crime and delinquency may happen when the materialistic goals are not attained¹³.

General Strain Theory further states that under certain conditions, persons may resort to crime as a response to certain strain in their lives. Strain theorists believe that crime may occur when there is a perceived discrepancy between the materialistic goals and values and the availability of such goals. According to Agnew, crime is a more likely response to strain when it results in negative effect such as anger and frustration¹⁴. Essentially, social strain for the purpose of this paper would include the negative impact of perceived and real inequalities in the social setup which caused by religious, cultural, emotional and political reasons.

The general strain theory of terrorism goes further and argues that terrorism is a more likely result of strains experienced by a community. Specifically strains that are recurrent, that occurs for long and apply averagely to all community members contribute to terrorism. Strains such as protracted conflict resulting in widespread death and violence, genocide, mass imprisonment, and threats to livelihood or identity are communal and fall into this category¹⁵.

Young girls who are in the centre of conflicts in North Western Nigeria and in Afghanistan generally find themselves subject to violence, dislocation, discrimination, poverty, inequality and other real or perceived injustices. Examining the impact on these strains on the ability of terror groups to use girls in Nigeria and Afghanistan as terror operatives. Furthermore, where the cultural practices consider women as inferior and socially dispensable, this cultural strain has been shown to stimulate undesirable feelings of fear, failure, anger, and humiliation. The pressure caused by these emotions encourages a response for which terrorism empowers and becomes a vehicle. It is from this prism that the culpability of suicide operatives of the two focal terrorist groups is discussed.

3. Conceptual Clarification

One of the challenges scholars face in the study of the headline grabbing phenomenon of suicide attacks in the last three decades is the question of definition as different writers have

¹³ R. Agnew, A general strain theory of terrorism. *Theoretical Criminology*, (2010) 14,131

¹⁴ C. Bartol, *Criminal Behaviour A Psychological Approach*. (2011), Prentice Hall Publishing, NJ, 32

¹⁵ R. Agnew, A general strain theory of terrorism. *Theoretical Criminology*, (2010), 14(2), 13

defined the same phenomenon as suicide bombing, suicide terrorism, suicide missions, and suicide attacks, among other usages¹⁶.

A larger number of scholars conceptualize suicide bombing as an attack where the death of the bomber is the primary means by which the attack is carried out, thus excludes attack where the bomber's chances of survival is infinitesimal but theoretically probable¹⁷. While another group of scholars only consider the high likelihood of death of the bomber as the most important definitional threshold¹⁸. All sides consider the weaponization of the human body as critical in defining the concept.

Boko Haram refers to the Islamist group known as *Boko Haram* (formally known as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, or more recently, the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP) and other *Boko Haram* franchisees of terror that have been responsible for the unrelenting wave of violence across the Lake Chad Basin region of West Africa, at the intersection of Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon

The Taliban, or "students" in the Pashto language, emerged in the early 1990s in northern Pakistan following the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. It is believed that the predominantly Pashtun movement first appeared in religious seminaries - mostly paid for by money from Saudi Arabia - which preached a hard-line form of Sunni Islam. By 1998, the Taliban were in control of almost 90% of Afghanistan. Afghans, weary of the mujahideen's excesses and infighting after the Soviets were driven out, generally welcomed the Taliban when they first appeared on the scene¹⁹.

4. Feminisation of Terror as a Deliberate Strategy

Since Sana'a Mehadli on behalf of the communist Syrian Social Nationalist Party in April 9, 1985 blew up herself and a truck of explosives next to an Israeli convoy in Lebanon during the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon²⁰, several terrorist groups and insurgency movements have perfected the use of female suicide bombers to undertake attacks. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, a Marxist revolutionary organization committed to the overthrow of Sinhalese rule over the Tamil portions of Sri Lanka, adopted the strategy and put it to brutal efficiency

¹⁶ Michael Horowitz "The Rise and Spread of Suicide Bombing", (2015) *Annual Review of Political Science* 18 71; available at <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev-polisci-062813-051049>

¹⁷ Martha Crenshaw "Explaining Suicide Terrorism: A Review Essay" (2007) *Security Studies* 16 134

¹⁸ Ami Pedahzur, *Suicide Terrorism* (2005) 261

¹⁹ BBC News, who are the Taliban? 27 February 2020 (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-11451718>)

²⁰ Mia Bloom, 'Female Suicide Bombers: A Global Trend', (2007) *Deadalus* 136 (1) 94

reportedly deploying at least 46 women on suicide missions²¹. Also, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) dominantly used female suicide bombers against Turkish military and police targets, with a source stating that "eleven out of the PKK's fifteen successful suicide bombings have been carried out by women"²².

The Chechens became the first Islamist movement to employ women as suicide bombers and other groups such as the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, HAMAS, and al-Qaeda adopted the strategy and have weaponized women in conflicts in Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Chechnya, Israel, Iraq, and Jordan²³.

As earlier discussed, Nigeria has had a long history of internal conflicts, *Boko Haram* introduced a new dimension in 2011 with the attack on the convoy of the Inspector-General of Police through a suicide bomber²⁴ and another suicide attack later in the year on the UNDP office in Abuja, killing people and destroying the property²⁵. These two successive attacks shattered the long-held illusion that Nigerians love life and will not take to suicide bombing in pursuit of any ideology. The rest they say is history, as suicide attacks became a permanent feature of the Nigeria security and governance landscape.

However, *Boko haram* introduced a new dimension to the violence in June 2014 with the use of female bomber to attack a military quarter-guard in Gombe, the female suicide bomber detonated the explosive concealed in her hijab, killing herself and a soldier²⁶. This was followed by another attack by another suicide attack by a female suicide bomber at an energy depot in Lagos²⁷ and a long line of attacks by female operatives of the Islamist movement.

The Afghan Taliban prior to its defeat in 2001 by the US and her allies organizationally regarded the use of suicide attack as an operational tool improper and illegitimate²⁸. The Taliban unable to challenge militarily the superiority of the military arms arrayed. Thus, it was impelled to change strategy and co-opted the use of strategy that promoted asymmetry. Mullah

²¹ Strafor Worldview, An Unprecedented Use of Female Suicide Bombers (2015), available at <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/unprecedented-use-female-suicide-bombers>

²² Dolnik Adam 'Learning to die: suicide terrorism in the 21st century' (2006) in: James F (ed) *The Making of a Terrorist* 171

²³ Ibid

²⁴ "Suicide bomber blasts Police Hqtrs", *Vanguard Newspaper*, 17 June 2011

²⁵ 'Suicide bomber kills 10 UN staff at Nigeria HQ' *The telegraph*, 27 August 2011

²⁶ 'Female suicide bomber, soldier die as bomb explodes at Gombe Army Barracks', *Vanguard Newspaper*, 8 June 2014

²⁷ 'Female suicide bombers strike in West Africa', *The London Evening Post*, 5 December 2015

²⁸ Anand Gopal, *The Battle for Afghanistan Militancy and Conflict in Kandahar*, Counterterrorism Strategy Initiative Policy Paper (2010) 36

Dadullah, one of Taliban most important operational commander, pioneered the use of suicide bombs in southern Afghanistan²⁹. The use of suicide bombers became a devastating weapon to destabilize the enemy's defences in a more superior way to the conventional weapons that the Taliban could access.

There was a sharp increase in the use of suicide bombers by the Taliban after 2006. Suicide operators attacked public centres and government institutions such as the provincial council in Kandahar city. In 2009 the campaign accelerated. Suicide attackers struck the governor's palace, the NDS headquarters, and other sites in Kandahar. At least 80 persons were killed at bombing at a dog-fighting match in February 17, 2008³⁰. Also, a Taliban suicide operator attacked an ISAF convoy in Spin Boldak, killing more than 37 civilians the next day³¹. Between 2001 and 2009, there were 414 suicide bombings in Afghanistan³² thus opening the Taliban epoch of the destructive use of suicide operators.

In spite of the Taliban's perfection of the use of suicide bombers for strategic advantage, the use of female suicide bombers in Afghanistan is rare. Between 2010 and 2011, the Afghan Taliban conducted six suicide attacks using women and young girls³³. However, some of these reported attack by female suicide bombers have been denied by Taliban sources³⁴.

The seeming absence of women from the Taliban martyrdom operations has been attributed to:

permissive social and geographic environment in Afghanistan gives insurgents freedom of mobility and a resistance capacity characterized by a reduced necessity for female suicide bombers; second, the capacity of a fiercely conservative culture restricts female participation in both Afghan society and within insurgent organizations; and third, the pronounced absence of a female culture of martyrdom limits women from participation in insurgent actions and narratives³⁵.

²⁹ Antonio Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, 225

³⁰ "At Least 80 Killed in Afghanistan Suicide Bombing" NPR, February 17, 2008

³¹ "Attack on Canadian convoy kills at least 37 in Afghanistan", *The Guardian*, 18 Feb 2008

³² Worldwide Incidents Tracking System (WITS), National Counterterrorism Center Database. Available at <http://wits.nctc.gov/Main.do>

³³ BILL ROGGIO 'Female Pakistani Taliban suicide bomber hits hospital', July 21, 2019, available at: <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2019/07/female-pakistani-taliban-suicide-bomber-hits-hospital.php>

³⁴ Matthew Dearing, *Like Red Tulips at Springtime: Understanding the Absence of Female Martyrs in Afghanistan*, 33, 2010, 1081

³⁵ Matthew Dearing, 1079

Socio-cultural rights have acquired an unprecedented importance in the modern world and Nigeria in particular. Lack of these rights have become not only a yardstick for judging the increase in the participation of women and girls in terrorism but also a tool in judging the socio-economic performance and situation of civil liberties and political freedom of the Northeastern part of the country. As *Boko Haram* continues to use girls as victims or vanguard of terror, there is need to revisit the issue of socio-cultural rights debates.

Socio-cultural rights have been categorised as part of the second rights which Selby³⁶ and Chris Brown³⁷ have referred to as “Security-oriented” and “Second generation” rights. These rights protect the physical, mental and social well-being of individual in a given society. Arguably, these rights whether as ‘second generation rights’ or not are interdependent as these rights have received tremendous support under the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999³⁸ (as amended) and with the adoption of the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (African Charter) in Nigeria³⁹. Distinction as to which type of the rights should be important to other rights were not hierarchally stated in the Charter and it does not theoretically make any distinction as to their implementation⁴⁰. Interestingly, the Preamble recognised that “it is henceforth essential to pay particular attention to the right to development and that civil and political rights (which is regarded as ‘First generation rights’) cannot be disassociated from economic, social and cultural rights in their conception as well as universality. Also, the satisfaction of economic, social and cultural rights is a guarantee for the enjoyment of civil and political rights”⁴¹. However, as Nigeria is a ‘Federal Republic’, each State has the power to decide on their own policies and legislations. In this regard, the gender issue needs to be considered with greater coordination with respect to socio-cultural rights. North-East is dominated with Muslims and their ways of lives are determined in-line with Islamic injunctions. Under the Islamic jurisprudence, Islam also appreciates the fulfilment of rights by

³⁶ Selby, *Human Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 8.

³⁷ Chris Brown, “Human Rights,” in John Baylis and Steve cited in Faraz Anjum, “Human Rights, Cultural Relativism and Islam” (J.R.S.P., Vol. 50, No. 2 2013). Available at https://www.researchgate.net/.../317012517_HUMAN_RIGHTS_CULTURAL_RELATI... (Last visited, September 7, 2018).

³⁸ See sections 16, 17, 18 and 21 of the 1999 Constitution.

³⁹ Articles 15-24 of the Charter protect ‘socio-economic rights. For instance, Article 16 provides for right to health while Article 17 provides for rights to education.

⁴⁰ See the African Commission decision in *Purohit and Another v The Gambia* (2003) AHRLR 96. See also, Viljoen, F., *International Human Rights Law in Africa* (Oxford University Press, 2007) 240.

⁴¹ David Robertson, *A Dictionary of Human Rights*, 2nd ed. (London: Europa, 2004), s.v. “African Charter on Human and People’s Rights,” 6 See also, Mbazira, C., “Enforcing the economic, social and cultural rights in the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights: Twenty years redundancy, progression and significant strides” (African Human Rights Law Journal, 2006) 6/2 338.

elevating human rights from a status of “rights” to that of “necessities” and to the level of “duties and obligations.” On this note, the basic teaching of Islam is that “every person is under obligation to realise the rights of others in every possible way”⁴². Thus, when people are engaged in the fulfilment of their rights with this consciousness, the society becomes the paragon of respect for the rule of law and human rights⁴³.

However, the authors observe that the problematic factor in evolving a rights-based approach in Nigeria is the unmistakable devaluation of socio-cultural rights as legal entitlements. In Nigeria, the rights have been seen as secondary rights that are not enforceable despite the domestication of the African Charter. This was evident by Olowu in his book thus:

A particularly problematic factor in evolving a rights-based approach in African development discourse is the unmistakable devaluation of economic, social and cultural rights as legal entitlements. While the legal systems of many African states are replete with constitutional provisions and multiples of treaty provisions that give positive recognition to the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights, these rights are generally less protected, less implemented, and even generally less discussed. The outcome has been an unmistakable incoherence in the interpretation of economic, social and cultural rights at diverse fora in Africa. I seriously contend that the continued devaluation of economic, social and cultural rights will render human rights practically irrelevant to whatever development agenda Africa embarks upon⁴⁴.

This chapter posits that enforceability of ‘socio-cultural rights’ in Nigeria are the telling factors in the generation of girls that volunteered or forced by *Book Haram* being ready to kill or be killed because according to Solomon⁴⁵, he opined that:

where there is shrinking social resources, excruciating economic crises, a retreat of the welfare state and its consequences on contracting social services, and a market ideology of ‘fend for yourself’, sharp divisions are wrought in social

⁴² See Quran Chapter 19 verse 93. See also Quran Chapter 2 verse 228

⁴³ See Quran 4 verse 36

⁴⁴ Olowu, D., “An integrative rights-based approach to human development in Africa” (ABC Press, Cape Town, South Africa, 2009). p. 1

⁴⁵ Solomon, H., “Boko Haram, Identity and the Limits of Counter-Terrorism.” (E-International Relation, 2013). Available at <http://www.e-ir.info/2013/11/03/boko-harm-identity-and-the-limits-of-counter-terrorism/> (Last visited, October 10, 2017).

relationships, in which the identity issue becomes a major weapon of economic and social competition.

5. Areas of Differences Between *Boko Haram* and Taliban Strategies

While other terrorist groups have used and are using female suicide bombers, *Boko Haram* has used more female bombers than any other terrorist group in history surpassing record set by the Tamil Tigers⁴⁶. According to a recent study by Jason Warner and Hilary Matfess

from April 11, 2011, to June 30, 2017, *Boko Haram* deployed 434 bombers to 247 different targets during 238 suicide-bombing attacks. At least 56% of these bombers were women, and at least 81 bombers were specifically identified as children or teenagers⁴⁷

The gruesome record of 44 over a decade set by the Tamil Tigers pales into insignificance when juxtaposed with the hundreds sent to death by *Boko Haram* in pursuits of its strategic objectives⁴⁸.

Comparatively, *Boko Haram* strategy focuses more on the volume of attacks, media coverage and the disruptive potential of attacks than the lethality of suicide attacks. *Boko Haram* has a lower percentile of deaths from suicide bombings compared to other groups utilizing suicide bombers, with a report putting the fatality of attacks at 21.5%⁴⁹ of the total 15,467⁵⁰ deaths between 2012 and July 2018. Compared to other studies that put fatalities from suicide attack at approximately 48% of terror attacks⁵¹ and another study of Palestinian conflict, which puts fatalities from suicide attack as accounting for more than 50% of all suicide mortalities⁵².

⁴⁶ 'Why Boko Haram uses female suicide-bombers', the Economist, 23 October 2017

⁴⁷ Jason Warner and Hilary Matfess, Exploding Stereotypes: The Unexpected Operational and Demographic Characteristics of Boko Haram's Suicide Bombers (2017) 4, available at: <https://ctc.usma.edu/app/uploads/2017/08/Exploding-Stereotypes-1.pdf>

⁴⁸ Amy Waldman, 'Masters of Suicide Bombing: Tamil Guerrillas of Sri Lanka' New York Times, 14 January 2003

⁴⁹ Jason Warner and Hilary Matfess, Exploding Stereotypes: The Unexpected Operational and Demographic Characteristics of Boko Haram's Suicide Bombers (2017) 10

⁵⁰ Council on Foreign Relations, Nigeria Security Tracker, Available at: <https://www.cfr.org/nigeria/nigeria-security-tracker/p29483>

⁵¹ Robert Pape, Dying to Win: The strategic logic of suicide terrorism (2005) 347

⁵² Efraim Benmelech and Claude Berrebi, 'Human capital and the productivity of suicide bombers' (2007) *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 21(3) 224

Considering the number of unsuccessful attacks-interception of suicide bombers before target is reached or killed fewer than three persons- there are questions on the mental preparedness of the would-be bomber and the quality and quantity of explosives utilized by *Boko Haram* for attacks and the relative sophistication of its bomb factory.

In selecting targets of attacks for female operatives, *Boko Haram* has prioritized markets, schools, religious centres and military barracks.⁵³ As integral part of the urban landscape in Nigeria, markets are platforms and networks for the reception and distribution of agricultural produce, livestock and sea produces as well as centres of social exchange and gatherings hosting people in hundred⁵⁴. It is therefore understood why *Boko Haram* prioritizes these centres for attack by female bombers, who would easily blend in.

Another feature of the *Boko Haram* strategy is the use of feminine suicide bombers who are minors. In December 10, 2016, *Boko Haram* used two girls aged between seven and eight-year-old to carry out a suicide attack in Potiskum⁵⁵. In March 14, 2017 at least six persons were confirmed killed by four teenage girls who detonated explosives worn around their bodies at the outskirts of Maiduguri⁵⁶. In November 17, 2017 three female teenage bombers died in an attack on Maiduguri⁵⁷ and a report by CNN stated that:

Of the 134 suicide bombers whose age could be determined, 60% were teenagers or children. The youngest suicide bomber identified to date was just 7 years old. *Boko Haram* has used four times as many young girls as it has young boys⁵⁸.

The use of female minors as human incendiaries is geared towards confusing public perception on the imagery of a terrorist as a means of achieving its destructive objective. *Boko Haram* has distinct itself from other terrorist groups in history by its reliance on prepubescent and teenage female bombers.

⁵³ Freedom Onuoha and Temilola Georg, *Boko Haram's use of Female Suicide Bombing in Nigeria* (2015) 5, Available at: <http://studies.aljazeera.net/mritems/Documents/2015/3/18/20153189319985734Boko-Harams-Female.pdf>

⁵⁴ Tosin Osasona, 'Informal Institutions and Conflict Resolution in Wet Markets in Nigeria' (2017) *TDM* 2, available at: www.transnational-dispute-management.com/article.asp?key=2461

⁵⁵ 'Girls 'aged 7 or 8' staged Maiduguri suicide attack – witnesses', *Punch Newspaper*, 11 December 2016

⁵⁶ 'Six killed as suicide bombers attack Maiduguri', *Premium Times*, 15 March 2017, available at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/226150-six-killed-suicide-bombers-attack-maiduguri.html>

⁵⁷ 'Three female suicide bombers die in failed attacks on Maiduguri – SEMA', *Punch Newspaper*, 18 November 2017

⁵⁸ Robyn Kriel, 'Boko Haram favors women, children as suicide bombers, study reveals', *CNN* 11 August 2017, available at: <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/08/10/africa/boko-haram-women-children-suicide-bombers/index.html>

6. *Boko Haram* and Taliban Recruitment and Strategic Motivations

One of the most baffling questions for security experts working to counter the *Boko Haram* insurgency in Nigeria remains – How does the group recruit young and innocent pre-adolescents and turn them into human bombs? How well does the rational theoretical perspective of some scholars of economic and political science leaning⁵⁹ explain attack by 7 and 8-year-old suicide bombers that security officers - ‘*thought they were looking for their mother?*’⁶⁰ Or is the reward in afterlife in paradise, a promising relief from the gruelling life of poverty that the girls have to contend with in North-eastern Nigeria their primary motivator? Or is monetary inducement (in a region where a great percentage of people live below poverty line) the compelling driver of this menace? It is hard to generalize but the answer can be deduced from the circumstances around some of the girls that *Boko Haram* has dispatched to their deaths.

Studies have pointed to the fact that a number of the girls co-opted by *Boko Haram* as suicide bombers are orphans and victims of displacement caused by the group’s insurgency and are largely victims of circumstance. They are most times coerced and manipulated into roles they are not totally aware of its consequences. According to a study, these girls are

likely children or widows of *Boko Haram* fighters who have been brainwashed or radicalised into undertaking a mission not only for martyrdom but also as revenge against the ‘infidels’ whom they have been made to believe are responsible for the death of their loved ones⁶¹

Different studies and reports have constantly pointed to abduction and kidnappings as one of the main sources of the girls that *Boko Haram* uses as suicide bombers, this is understandable if one puts in perspective the global attention that the group attracted with the abduction of 276 girls from the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok in 2014⁶². According to Hilary Matfess ‘thousands of girls have been abducted by the insurgents’⁶³, *UNICEF* in a report also

⁵⁹ Jeff Victoroff, ‘The mind of the terrorist: A review and critique of psychological approaches’ (2005). *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (49) 3-42

⁶⁰ ‘Girls ‘aged 7 or 8’ staged Maiduguri suicide attack – witnesses’- Punch Newspaper, 11 December 2016

⁶¹ C. Onuoha and T. George, *Boko Haram’s use of Female Suicide Bombing in Nigeria* (2015) Aljazeera studies (<https://www.google.com/search?q=boko+haram+use+of+female+sucie+bombers&oq=boko+haram+use+of+female+sucie+bombers&aqs=chrome..69i57j33i160.12380j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>)

⁶² ‘Chibok abduction: The Nigerian town that lost its girls’, BBC News, 14 April 2016, Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-35979157>

⁶³ Hilary Matfess, ‘Boko Haram has kidnapped more girls. Here’s what we know’ The Washington Post, 8 March 2018, Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/03/08/boko-haram-has-kidnapped-more-girls-heres-what-we-know/?utm_term=.d618eb5e55e4

stated that ‘Since 2013, more than 1,000 children have been abducted by *Boko Haram* in North-eastern Nigeria’⁶⁴. Also, *Nnamdi Obasi* stated that

the fate of the Chibok girls has come to symbolise the horror of the insurgency, because the victims have been publicly identified by name and face. But there have been countless other incidents where unnamed thousands have been abducted, brutalised, sexually violated and shared out as “wives” to insurgents. Scores have been sent to their death in suicide bombing missions⁶⁵.

Also, in a bizarre show of support for the ideals of *Boko Haram*, some members of the local communities where the insurgent group operates donate their young children to the group as a form of support. The case of a 13-year-old female suicide bomber who failed to detonate her suicide belt at the Kano City Textile Market in 2014 highlights this reality. She claimed she was handed over to *Boko Haram* Operatives by a father as a form of support for the group⁶⁶. In validating this position, a general of the Nigerian Army appealed ‘to religious, traditional and community leaders, and other Nigerians in the North-east, to dissuade people from donating their daughters to *Boko Haram* for indoctrination and suicide bombing missions. It was discovered that most of these hapless minors were “donated” to the terrorist sect by their heartless and misguided parents and guardians, as part of their contribution to the perpetuation of the *Boko Haram* terrorists’ dastardly acts against the Nigerian society and humanity.’⁶⁷

Some of the girls used in suicide mission of *Boko Haram* are children and widows of *Boko Haram* fighters who have been radicalized and conditioned to undertake bombing missions not only for revenge against the state and community responsible for the death of their loved ones but also in furtherance of religious call to martyrdom⁶⁸.

One very important reality is that some of the female suicide bombers joined *Boko Haram* voluntary in hope of pecuniary benefits. Putting in proper context the fact that the North-

⁶⁴ UNICEF Press Release, 13 April 2018, available at: <https://www.unicef.org/wca/press-releases/more-1000-children-northeastern-nigeria-abducted-boko-haram-2013>

⁶⁵ Nnamdi Obasi and Ayo Obe, ‘The Chibok Girls Must Be Found and Freed’ (2016), available at: <http://blog.crisisgroup.org/africa/nigeria/2016/04/13/the-chibok-girls-must-be-found-and-freed/>

⁶⁶ ‘SHOCKER: Kano suicide bomber says father donated her to Boko Haram’ Premium Times, 25 December 2014, available at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/173769-shocker-kano-suicide-bomber-says-father-donated-boko-haram.html>

⁶⁷ Premium Times, ‘SHOCKING: Parents donate daughters to Boko Haram for suiciding bombing, Nigerian Army says’, August 5, 2017 (<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/239362-shocking-parents-donate-daughters-boko-haram-suiciding-bombing-nigerian-army-says.html>)

⁶⁸ *Op cit* Nnamdi Obasi and Ayo Obe

eastern Nigeria that has borne the brunt of the insurgency is one of the poorest regions in Nigeria⁶⁹.

According to Sanusi,

North-West and the North-East, demographically, constitute the bulk of Nigeria's population, but look at human development indices, look at the number of children out of school, look at adult literacy, look at maternal mortality, look at infant mortality, look at girl-child completion rate, look at income per capita, the North-East and the North-West Nigeria, are among the poorest parts of the world⁷⁰.

Hilary Matfess in her vivid account of the main drivers of females joining *Boko Haram* stated that some women who joined the group were motivated by the opportunity the group provided for them to have Quranic education⁷¹, their only shot at having an education in the region where female adult literacy is as low as 14.9%.⁷² According to the author, others were motivated to join because of money, as the insurgent group pay women married to *Boko Haram* fighters their pride price instead of customary practice of paying such to their families⁷³.

There are both tactical and strategic benefits to *Boko Haram*'s choice of female suicide bombers. The use of female suicide bombers by the group provides easy access to targets due to deep socio-cultural practices that makes it improper to search women and the deflection of attention by security actors, as girls do not fall into *Boko Haram* stereotypes. Nothing highlights this hesitancy than the public debate in Nigeria on the proposal to ban hijab and burka in public places for security reasons⁷⁴. Also, the usage of female suicide bombers creates more media headline and helps booster the group's global notoriety.

7. Legal Culpability of *Boko Haram* Female Suicide Bombers:

a. Nigerian Legal Regime

Female suicide bombers used by *Boko Haram* in carrying out attacks in the past can be broadly categorized into four groups: minors under the age of 10, teenagers between age 11 and 17, females who were hypnotized/coerced/deceived and females who willingly undertake suicide expeditions. This categorization is essential for determining criminal responsibility under

⁶⁹ *Op cit* Nnamdi Obasi and Ayo Obe

⁷⁰ 'Nigeria's North-West, North-East, poorest in the world – Sanusi', Punch Newspaper, 6 April 2017

⁷¹ Hilary Matfess, *Women and the War on Boko Haram: Wives, Weapons, Witnesses* (2017) 86

⁷² 'Northeast has the highest adult illiteracy rate – CITAD', The Vanguard 16 July 2018

⁷³ Hilary Matfess, 92

⁷⁴ Niyi Aderibigbe, 'If Female Suicide Bombings Continue, Should Nigeria Ban the Veil?' (2015) Available at: <http://venturesafrica.com/eritrea-to-build-new-port-for-potash-export-in-the-wake-of-ethiopia-peace-deal/>

extant Nigerian criminal law regime. However, in practice there is little or no distinction in how Nigerian security officials treat females with alleged links with *Boko Haram*. More than 4,826 females including 2,438 children have reportedly been arrested for links to *Boko Haram*, a figure indicating more females than males⁷⁵.

Central to the question of criminal responsibility under the Nigerian criminal law regime is the question of the human freewill to make a choice to engage or not to engage in an act or omission that constitutes an offence/crime. As to question of age, the minimum age of criminal responsibility varies among Nigerian states. For example, the Criminal Code as well as the Criminal Law of Lagos State define criminal responsibility as ‘liability to punishment for an offence’⁷⁶

For one to be legally culpable for an act or omission under the Nigerian criminal law regime, the person must satisfy three basic conditions, viz: the capacity to understand what he/she is doing; the capacity to know that he/she ought not to do the act or omission and the capacity to control his/her action⁷⁷. The Court of Appeal in *Njoku V State* lucidly explained the concept when it stated that:

It is also trite that criminal responsibility for the commission of a crime is premised on the satisfactory proof of the two pillars of actus reus and *Mens rea*, the doing of the act that constitutes the offence and the requisite mental capacity and the duty is always on the prosecution to prove the commission of a crime by proving the act done and the requisite guilty mind of the accused person beyond reasonable doubt.

In other words, in a criminal trial, before an accused person is asked to undergo any sort of sentence, there must be a finding by the trial Court on the concurrence of the two main elements of any crime; that is, the actus reus and the *Mens rea*. Actus reus is taken to be the wrongful deed that comprises the physical components of a crime and that generally must be coupled with *Mens rea*. *Mens rea* is the criminal intent or guilty mind of the accused. For the prosecution to establish a criminal act against an accused person, it must go beyond establishing the commission of the unlawful criminal act by the accused and establish that the accused had the correct legal criminal mind of committing the act. The two must coexist, whether explicitly or by necessary implication⁷⁸.

⁷⁵ “Army parades 3 female bombers, 8 foreigners,” Daily Trust, 2 March 2017

⁷⁶ Chapter 1 Criminal Code Act, Cap C38 LFN 2004 and the Criminal Law of Lagos State 2011

⁷⁷ Ikenga K E Oraegbunam and Julian N K Chukwukelu, “Section 24 of the Criminal Code and its Effect on Criminal Liability in Nigeria” (2015) *Journal of Law and Criminal Justice* 3(1) 126-128

⁷⁸ (2013) 2 NWLR (Pt 1339) 548. "Per ABIRU, J.C.A. (Pp. 12-13, Paras. E-D)

Also, one cannot be responsible for an act or omission, unless he/she has attained a certain age. The Child Rights Act does not specify a minimum age of criminal responsibility but define a child as “a person under the age of eighteen years”⁷⁹. The Children and Young Persons Act defines a child as

a person under the age of twelve years” and a juvenile as ‘a male or female person who is 7 years of age or above and below the age of 16 years’ and a young person as “a person who is twelve years of age or more but under the age of sixteen years”⁸⁰.

Section 30 of the Criminal Code provides that:

A person under the age of seven years is not criminally responsible for any act or omission.

A person under the age of twelve years is not criminally responsible for an act or omission, unless it is proved that at the time of doing the act or making the omission, he had capacity to know that he ought not to do the act or make the omission.

A male person under the age of twelve years is presumed to be incapable of having carnal knowledge⁸¹.

Also, Section 50 of the Penal Code provides that:

No act is an offence which is done-

(a) by a child under seven years of age; or

(b) by a child above seven years of age but under twelve years of age who has not attained sufficient maturity of understanding to judge the nature and consequence of that act⁸².

Under Sharia Criminal Laws that is applicable in nine states in Northern Nigeria⁸³, the age of criminal responsibility is set at puberty. According to the Sharia law, “No sentence of hudud⁸⁴ or qisas⁸⁵ shall be imposed on a person who is under the age of taklif⁸⁶ and that when court is of the view that a person was under the age of taklif when he/she committed an offence, the

⁷⁹ Section 277 Child Rights Act 2003

⁸⁰ Section 2, Children and Young Persons Act

⁸¹ Criminal Code is applicable in Southern Nigeria

⁸² The Penal Code is Applicable in Northern Nigeria

⁸³ Ikenga K. E. Oraegbunam “*Sharia Criminal Law and State Secularity Principle in Nigeria:*

Implications of Section 10 of 1999 Constitution (as Amended)” (2014) Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization 39

⁸⁴ *Hudud* means offences or punishments that are fixed under the Sharia and includes offences or punishments which include sexual offences like *Zina* (Fornication). See Sections 126 to 141 of the Sharia Penal Code.

⁸⁵ *Qisa* means punishments inflicted upon the offenders by way of retaliation for causing death of or injuries to person.

⁸⁶ *Taklif* means the age of puberty.

court shall deal with him/her in accordance with Section 11 of the Children and Young Persons Law (CYPL) and Section 95 of the Sharia Penal Code.⁸⁷

The cumulative position of these legal provisions has implications for the criminal culpability of the female suicide bombers recruited by *Boko Haram* for suicide missions. By the combined effect of the provisions of Section 30 of the Criminal Code and Section 50 of the Penal Code, suicide bombers under the age of 7 are deemed incapable of fulfilling the legal conditions required for the commission of an offence. What happens to suicide bombers who are above age 7 but less than 12 years which happens to be the prominent age bracket of the girls that have been deployed as suicide bombers by *Boko Haram*.

Section 50 of the Penal Code provides a caveat with this age bracket with provision that “a child above seven years of age but under twelve years of age who has not attained sufficient maturity of understanding to judge the nature and consequence of that act.” This provision is in *pari materia* with section 30 of the Criminal Code. These sections put in view the concept of forensic mental health assessment to establish the *doli incapax* for the children under the age of 12 years used by *Boko Haram* in suicide missions.

Conceptually, the focus of assessment of criminal capacity in children is concerned with the child’s level of psycho-social development and the focal variables among others will include intelligence, cognitive development, age, exposure and social competence⁸⁸. These variables are some of the most critical markers in maturity and human development and are measurable. Creating an index or proxy for measuring them in the context of legal culpability is essential to establish guilt. While there is no accepted definition of intelligence, there are two prominent theories of the concept- the ability to think and reason abstractly and the capacity to learn and acquire knowledge⁸⁹. For the sake of legal culpability of children, courts are concerned about- “sufficient intelligence to know the nature and consequences of his/her conduct or to appreciate that it was wrong”⁹⁰.

⁸⁷ See similar provision in section 238(1) of the Zamfara State Shari’ah Criminal Procedure Code Law 2000, No.1 Vol. 4.

⁸⁸ Anthony Pillay, “Criminal capacity in children accused of murder: Challenges in the forensic mental health assessment” (2006) *Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health* 18

⁸⁹ R. Sternberg and J Powell “Comprehending verbal comprehension” (1983) *American Psychologist* 38 878–880

⁹⁰ C.R. Snyman, *Criminal Law* (2002) 178

Cognitive development on the other hand refers to process through which a child's perception of the environment changes as a function of age and experience and the ability to understand the concept of consequences key to determine a child's cognitive capacity⁹¹. Exposure and social competencies are contextualized within children's immediate socio-cultural environment and their ability to adapt to the demands their local environment is essential to determining their culpability.

Putting in perspective the stark illiteracy figures for states in Northern Nigeria that has borne the brunt of *Boko Haram* attacks, which is as low as 7.23% in some states⁹² and the lack of educational opportunities for girl-child in the region⁹³, how knowledgeable is the average 12-year-old girl with little or no education on IEDs and extant anti-terrorism legislations in the country. This definitely will impact the culpability of these female suicide bombers.

This group of girls used by *Boko Haram* are claimed to be drugged and hypnotised before being dispatched on suicide missions⁹⁴. One of the girls apprehended after a failed suicide mission stated that:

So, after one week, they said since I have refused to get married, I should be taken to Maiduguri for a suicide mission. So, three of them held my hands and they injected me [...] then, I never knew what was happening again⁹⁵.

These groups of suicide bombers are within the provisions of Section 51 of the Penal Code which states that: "Nothing is an offence which is done by a person who, at the time of doing it, by reason of unsoundness of mind, is incapable of knowing the nature of the act, or he is doing what is either wrong or contrary to law"

The small group of female suicide bombers who choose to join *Boko Haram* for pecuniary benefits, ideological persuasion, purpose of revenge or any other reasons informed by conscious choice are within the purview of Section 2 of the Terrorism Act, 2013 and are guilty of the crime of terrorism.

⁹¹ Ronen Feldman, *Understanding Psychology* (1987) 71

⁹² Guardian Newspaper 'Despite decades of funding, literacy level in the northern states remains low', 24 July 2017

⁹³ "Despite decades of funding, literacy level in the northern states remains low", The Guardian Newspaper, 24 July 2017

⁹⁴ "*Boko Haram* increasingly using drugged children as suicide bombers, warns UNICEF", Independent 12 April 2017;

⁹⁵ "Teenage girl sent on suicide bombing mission 'as she refused to marry *Boko Haram* leader" Express 16 May 2017, available at: <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/805221/Teenage-girl-refused-marry-Boko-Haram-terrorist-suicide-bombing-mission-Nigeria>

b. Afghan Legal Regime

Afghanistan's main anti-terrorism law is the Law on Combat Against Terrorist Offences, 2008. Article 3 of the law defines a terrorist as

a real or legal person who has committed one of the offences mentioned in this Law or designated as a terrorist or terrorist organization by Resolution of the Security Council of the United Nations, provided that the Resolution is certified by the National Assembly⁹⁶.

The main focus of the law is countering acts of terrorism intended to destabilise the government. The law's definitions of terrorism offences reflect the various conventions that Afghanistan have ratified⁹⁷. Afghanistan anti-terrorism laws criminalise membership of terrorist organisations and makes no exception for children. Article 5 states that "if the offences mentioned in this Law are committed by juveniles, the proceedings to these offences shall be carried out according to the Law on Juvenile Violations". Furthermore, the Penal Code defines a minor as "a child between the ages of seven and thirteen years"⁹⁸.

Article 76 (1) of the Afghan Penal Code states that

if the minor commits a felony which punishment is death or continued imprisonment, the court can order his quarantine in a correction House or charity organizations or corrective schools, provided its duration is not more than five years.

Article 76(2) of the Afghan Penal Code states "If the anticipated punishment for the felony is long imprisonment, the period of quarantine cannot be less than one year and more than four years".

The Afghan criminal law regime is thin on legal protection for minors particularly girls when it comes to the crime of terrorism and also the Penal Code makes no distinction for culpability.

8. Conclusion

One of the glaring areas distinction between the terror campaigns by *Boko Haram* and Taliban is the co-option and use of female operators for strategic ends. While the *Boko Haram* integrates females into its operational framework, the Taliban does not, and the differences are

⁹⁶ Law on Combat against Terrorist Offences 2008, Article 3(1), as translated into English by the United Nations Organisation on Drugs and Crime

⁹⁷ Articles 10, 11 and 13

⁹⁸ Article 70 *Penal Code*, 22 September 1976

a product of the different cultural and operational environments in which the two groups operate.

While there are both tactical and strategic benefits to *Boko Haram*'s choice of female suicide bombers. The use of female suicide bombers by the group provides easy access to targets due to deep socio-cultural practices that makes it improper to search women and the deflection of attention by security actors, as girls do not fall into *Boko Haram* stereotypes. Also, the usage of female suicide bombers creates more media headline and helps booster the group's global notoriety, and this is the main driver of the group's strategic decision to co-opt the use of female suicide bombers.

9. Recommendations

- (i) Nigerian government should endeavour to promote social regeneration in the North and break the vicious cycle of poverty, lack of education, inequalities and industrial stagnation that blight the region.
- (ii) There is the need to interrogate the doctrinal deployment of Islam among Muslim population in the Northern Nigeria, putting in perspective Nigeria's multi-ethnic and religious composition.
- (iii) In order to counter *Boko Haram* in the Northeast, a blend of 'diplomacy and police strategies' as well as intelligence work and infrastructural development should be used.
- (iv) It is the argument in this paper that women in the North-East should be empowered as the full measure of the quality and maturity of a nation's social, cultural and economic growth and overall well-being cannot be measured simply by its rate of economic growth but rather by the overall socio-economic, cultural and political status of women.
- (v) Reconstruction plans, private and public development should be the paramount concern of the Nigerian government by ensuring that they are based on a gender-sensitive analysis of the insurgency and counter-insurgency.