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## **NON-FORMAL EDUCATION OPTIONS FOR ADDRESSING SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NORTH-EAST AND NORTH-WEST NIGERIA**

**\*Murtala Akanbi Yusuf<sup>1</sup> and Lawali Zakari<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto, Nigeria

<sup>1</sup>murtalayusuf2004@gmail.com, <sup>1</sup>akanbi.murtala@udusok.edu.ng,  
and <sup>2</sup>lawalizakari99@gmail.com

\*correspondence: murtalayusuf2004@gmail.com

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### **Abstract**

The issue of Boko Haram and Banditry insurgency has been characterized by the killing, of people, abduction of school children, kidnapping for ransom, army robbery, raping, rustling of cows, destruction of houses, schools, mosques, churches, markets, security posts, health care centers, and farms has become a great security problem in northeast and northwest, Nigeria. The issue has resulted in a waste of peoples' lives and livelihoods in the two geopolitical zones. The researchers believe that Boko haram insurgency and banditry security issues in Nigeria can be better addressed through Non-formal Education options. This study, therefore, examined how non-formal education can be explored to end insecurity challenges in the northeast and northwest Nigeria. The researchers used the Google database to get relevant journal papers. The prism technique was used to get and extract data based on the known inclusion and exclusion criteria. According to the analysis, non-formal education options can be explored to address boko haram insurgency and banditry in north-east and north-west Nigeria and if non-formal education options as described in this study are adopted, boko haram insurgency and banditry will be of the past in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Banditry, Boko haram, insecurity, non-normal education, north-east, north-west Nigeria

### **Introduction**

This paper is on addressing the security problems emanating from Boko Haram and Bandits in North-East and North-West Nigeria using the instrumentalism of Non-formal Education. Insecurity is the most serious problem confronting Nigeria as far back as 1999 when Boko Haram became a deadly group that terrorizes the people of Nigeria, particularly in the northeast geopolitical zone of the country. The insecurity has been overblown today in this country everyone has no guarantee of his life and property. After decades of peaceful co-existence among people residing in the regions, the zones are now facing the challenges of insecurity occasioned by the activities of Boko Haram bandits, kidnappers, cattle rustlers, and terrorists (Amalu, 2015, Okoli & Ugwu, 2019). Boko Haram is an

Islamic extremist group very popular in North-East Nigeria, Chad, Niger, and Cameroon. The group aimed to form an Islamic State in their respective domains. The death of the group leader; Muhammad Yusuf in the year 2000s, has led to the killing of many people and terror attacks on schools, security forces, government agencies, markets, banks, motor parks, and religious places. The attacks have led to the displacement of many Nigerians. The group has also captured many Nigerian territories, particularly in Borno (Deutsche Welle, 2021), although many of these territories have been recaptured by the Nigerian security forces.

In the same vein, the North West suffered at the hands of bandits in almost all the states of the region. Banditry is referred to as a type of organized crime committed by outlaw youths typically involving the threat, or use of violence (Ugbomah, Omede & Philomina, 2022). North-west is facing the threats of herders, and kidnappers in addition to the problems of bandits. The activities of these groups particularly the bandits have led loss of human lives and peoples' livelihoods as well as displacement both within the country and outside Nigeria (International Crisis Group, 2020). In the North West area, the gangs who kidnap people for ransom attack motorists, ransack villages, and lay ambush for people on the roads. The activities are so deadly that everyone is afraid of traveling on Nigerian roads and villages that are close to the enclaves of the group have to flee their ancestral homes for the fear of brutal attacks, abductions, and killing in some cases.

The effrontery of bandits in Zamfara, Kaduna, Katsina, Niger, Sokoto, and Kebbi states in recent times is so high that not a day passes that attack on innocent Nigerians is not recorded. Kaduna state in recent days is always on the news of bandit attacks. One of the recent and devastating attacks was the Abuja-Kaduna train attack where many Nigerians, young, old, children, and women were abducted and some were killed, many sustained high degrees of injuries. It is good news to report that the government through collaboration with individuals and groups has secured the release of the victims although, ransoms were paid.

People have suffered at the hands of Boko Haram and bandits as their attacks led loss of human lives, people displacement, and human livelihoods. Women and girls have suffered in form of kidnap, rape, sexual violence, and payment of ransoms. The consequences of the evils of Boko Haram and Banditry in the country were responsible for classifying Nigeria as one of the worst states in the developing countries (Innocent & Onyishi, 2014).

Since the nefarious acts of Boko Haram and bandits became noticeable and deadly, the Nigerian government has deployed the Nigerian Police which has the statutory responsibility to maintain law and the order to combat the menace. Unfortunately, the Police cannot withstand the deadly and terrible nature of the groups' activities. This can be linked to the poor state of the Security Force to tackle the current security problems, coupled with the fact that the Police in Nigeria are grossly inadequate in number (Rosenje & Adeniyi, 2021). When it was clear that Nigeria Police alone cannot handle the situation the government engaged the Nigerian Army which has also been overstretched. In addition to these situations, Rosenje and Adeniyi (2021) argued that some Nigerian people do not trust the security agencies as many believe that the security agencies are collaborators of criminals that are terrorizing the people. This notion and mindset of people have further negatively affected the performance of security agencies in successfully fighting insurgents and bandits in Nigeria. This development has, therefore,

affected government efforts in winning the war against book haram and banditry in the regions (Rosenje & Adeniyi, 2021).

Scholars (Rosenje & Adeniyi, 2021; Okoli & Ugwu, 2019) have argued that the fact that military approach against the insurgents and bandits in north-east and north-west Nigeria has not yielded the expected results, although it is advisable to continue (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019), the right thing to do by the government is to come up with a better approach that will address the immediate and contributory factors. This approach is emended in the Non-formal Education options proposed in this paper. Non-formal Education according to Bagudo and Yusuf (2019), is an educational intervention with the capacity of addressing a myriad of problems confronting disadvantaged individuals or groups. The focus of this paper is to leverage the potential of non-formal education to address the problems of insecurity in the northeast and northwest Nigeria. In this regard, issues of Boko haram and banditry were raised and discussed, effects and factors responsible for activities of the criminal groups were reviewed while non-formal education options were identified and explored for addressing the insecurity problems in the

## Method

The researchers leveraging on Fatoni, Susanto, Pratama, and Julaihah (2021)'s study used a qualitative method of research exploring secondary data of documents review as their subjects. The documents were journal articles, book chapters, and news. The researchers read, took notes, extracted facts, and processed the documents to analyze the data to address the focus of the study. This process is regarded as an inductive review (Fatoni, Susanto, Pratama & Julaihah, 2021; Zed, 2004).

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

<b>Inclusion Criteria</b>
The journal articles are related to boko haram issues in north-east Nigeria.
The journal articles are related to the bandits' issues in north-west Nigeria.
The journal articles cover effects and causes of book haram insurgency in Nigeria.
The journal articles cover effects and causes of banditry in Nigeria.
The journal articles are <b>DOI or URL</b> confirmed.
The full version of the articles are available and be accessed online.
<b>Exclusion Criteria</b>
The journal articles are not related to boko haram issues in north-east Nigeria.
The journal articles are related not to the bandits' issues in north-west Nigeria.
The journal articles do not cover effects and causes of book haram insurgency in Nigeria.
The journal articles do not cover effects and causes of banditry in Nigeria.
The journal articles are not <b>DOI or URL</b> confirmed.
The full version of the articles is not available and cannot be accessed online.

Table 1 above showed the approach of data collection described by Zhao (2021) as a prism method following the inclusion, exclusion criteria, and extraction used. The procedure is presented in Table 1. The researchers searched the internet using google search with relevant keywords such as "Boko Haram insurgency issues in north-east", "bandits' issues in north-west" "effects and cause of boko haram in

Nigeria”, “effects and causes of banditry in Nigeria”. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were presented in Table 1.

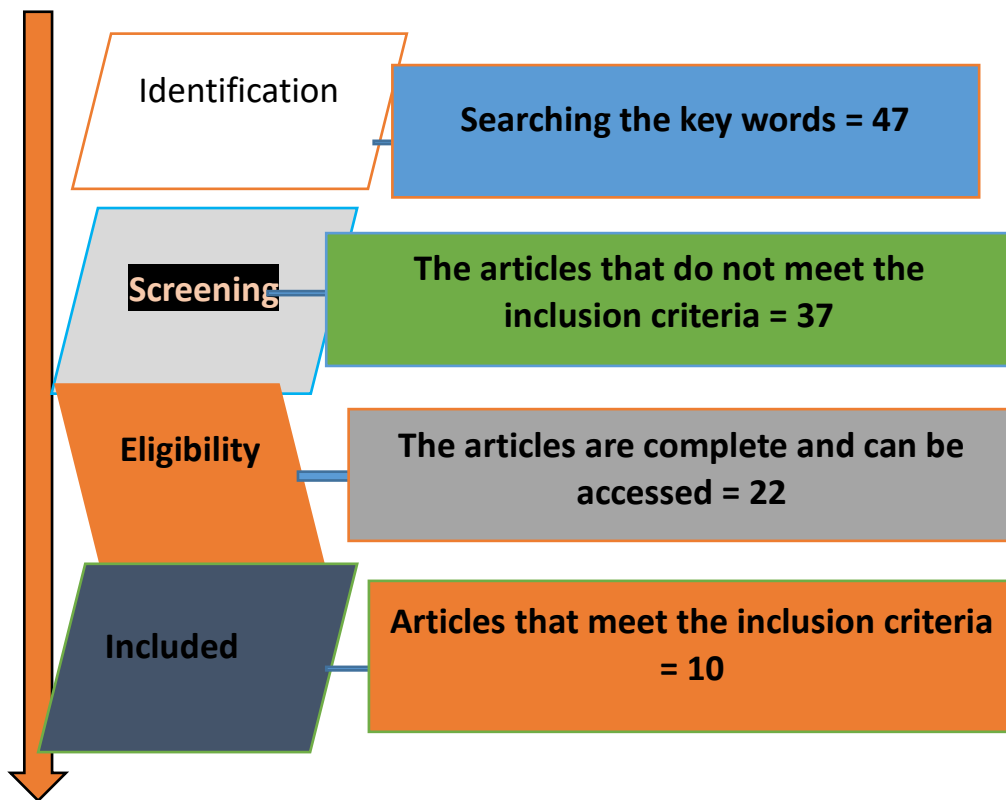


Figure 1. Prisma: The procedure of data extraction adapted from Fatoni, Susanto, Pratama, & Julaihah, 2021

Applying the Prism approach, the authors identified journal articles and sources related to the themes of the study (“Boko Haram insurgency issues in north-east Nigeria” and Bandits issues in north-west Nigeria”) on the web. The results of the search brought 47 relevant articles to the theme of the study. In the second phase, the researchers made a selection of the identified journal articles and 37 articles were found. In the next stage, the researchers further confirmed whether the articles were accessible or not. In this case, the researchers found 22 journal articles. The last phase was a more laborious selection to determine sources relevant to the researchers' requirements. This led to the inclusion of 10 journal articles as showcased in Table 2.

Table 2. List of analysed journal articles

Author	Title	DOI/ URL
(Aliyu, Moorthy & Idris, 2015)	Towards Understanding the Boko Haram Phenomenon in Nigeria	<a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ass.v11n10p307">http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ass.v11n10p307</a>
(Amalu, 2015)	Impacts of Boko Haram Insurgency on Human Security in Nigeria	doi: <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/gjss.v14i1.4">http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/gjss.v14i1.4</a>

(Innocent & Onyishi, 2014)	Boko Haram and Security Challenges in Nigeria	<a href="https://www.arabianjbm.com/pdfs/KD_VOL_3_11/1.pdf">https://www.arabianjbm.com/pdfs/KD_VOL_3_11/1.pdf</a>
(Ahmed, 2021)	Banditry Dynamism and Operating Pattern of Crime in North West Nigeria. A threat to National Security	<a href="https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350158153">https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350158153</a>
(Awojobi, 2014)	The Socio-Economic Implications of Boko Haram Insurgency in the North-East of Nigeria	<a href="http://www.ijisr.issr-journals.org/">http://www.ijisr.issr-journals.org/</a>
(Okoli & Ugwu, 2019)	Of marauders and brigands:scoping the threat of rural banditry in Nigeria’s northwest	doi: <a href="https://doi.org/10.22456/2448-3923.93808">https://doi.org/10.22456/2448-3923.93808</a>
(Adedire, Ake & Olowojolu, 2016)	Combating Terrorism and Insurgency in Nigeria: An International Collaborations against Boko Haram	<a href="https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/162155808.pdf">https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/162155808.pdf</a>
(Rosenje & Adeniyi, 2021)	The impact of banditry on Nigeria’s security in the fourth republic: an evaluation of Nigeria’s northwest	<a href="https://zjpd.com.ng/index.php/zjpd/article/download/30/33">https://zjpd.com.ng/index.php/zjpd/article/download/30/33</a>
(Ojo, 2020)	Governing “ungoverned spaces” in the foliage of conspiracy: toward (re)ordering terrorism, from Boko Haram insurgency, Fulani militancy to banditry in northern Nigeria	<a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/19392206.2020.1731109">https://doi.org/10.1080/19392206.2020.1731109</a>
Verjee & Kwaja, 2021).	An epidemic of kidnapping: Interpreting school abductions and insecurity in Nigeria.	<a href="https://asq.africa.ufl.edu/files/V20i3a6.pdf">https://asq.africa.ufl.edu/files/V20i3a6.pdf</a>

Table 2 showed the 10 journal articles that were used to analyze the issues raised in the study. The sources of the articles for reference purposes as links in terms of DOI or URL were provided.

## Findings and Discussion

### *Boko Haram security issues in north-east*

North-east is a geo-political zone consisting of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe states. It has less than one-third of Nigeria’s total area with an estimated population of 23, 558, 674 in 2011 (Nyaku, 2021). The majority of the population are people Fulani while Borno people in the region are mainly Kanuri people a majority with more than 100 minority groups. The zone used to be described as the most peaceful zones in Nigeria. The emergence of insurgency in the Zone has made the Zone be referred to as the epicenter caused by the Boko Haram sect. This sect is often referred to as Jama,atul Ahlul Sunnah Lidda’ Wati wal Jihad, or a group of people that are known to spread the gospel of Prophet

Muhammad (SWA). The group was established was first noticed in Maiduguri, Borno state as Boko Haram (Abolurin cited in Amalu, 2015). The word 'Boko' (Hausa) means 'book' considered to be western and Haram (Arabic) means sin or forbidden. Therefore, the interpretation of Boko Haram in the Hausa language is 'western education is a sin' (Gilbert cited in Amalu, 2015). Boko Haram started as an Islamic Movement group that intends to change the government structures that do not follow the Islamic way of life (Idowu cited in Amalu, 2015). There is no complete information about the origin, leadership structure, and sponsors of the group, but the actions of the group over the years showed what its ideologies are. For instance, the group does not have respect for constituted authorities, laws, rules, and institutions. It was argued that the group shared similarities with the Maitatsine religious sect of the early 1980s. They equally believe that 'anyone who is not ruled by Qur'an is among the transgressors as stated in the Qur'an. The group has an idea that Muslims shall not involve in political, or social activities that relate to western civilization or ideas (Aliyu, Moorthy & Idris, 2015). The ultimate goal of the group is to be ruled by the Qur'an and Hadiths of Prophet Muhammad (SWA) while justice and fairness are upheld (Campbell, 2014). At a later time, it was very clear that the group was on the wrong ideology and Islamic fundamentalism.

The major strategies of the group included flexible violent dimension in form of a traditional hit-and-run strategy, attacking and killing security agents in their duty posts and homes as well as destroying security installations and facilities. Other methods of attack are drive-by shootings, targeted assassination, suicide bombing, the use of Improvised Explosive Devices, and kidnapping (Amalu, 2015). These attacks have led to the killing of people, and mass abduction including the kidnapping of 276 school girls in Chibok in 2014 (Wikipedia, 2021). In 2017, the group killed 900 people in 150 different attacks. Similarly in 2018, 1,200 people were killed by the Boko Haram sect (Human Right Watch, 2018). Campbell (2014), stated Boko Haram got their finances from bank robberies, kidnapping for ransoms, and theft of weapons from government armories. This makes it very easy for the group to carry out its activities in all the states in the region and even some parts of the country including Abuja, Kano, Niger, Plateau, and neighboring countries such as Niger, Cameroon, and Chad.

Therefore, Boko Haram became a serious security challenge not only North East but the entire of Nigeria, as its activities affect the national economy and develop fear among Nigerian citizens and foreign investors living in Nigeria.

### ***Banditry security issues in north-west***

The North-west geographical zone of Nigeria has 7 states. The states are, Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara. It covers an area of 216, 065 square Kilometers or 25.75 percent of the total country's land mass (Brussels, 2000). The major ethnic groups in this region are Hausa and Fulani, although, there are people who are from other tribal groups in states like Kaduna and Kebbi. The zone has a total population of 33 million based on the 2006 census. The majority of the inhabitants of the area are Muslim having farming as the major occupation with some number of the inhabitants as herders.

The zone enjoyed a long time of security and was called the most peaceful zone in the country, until very recently in 2011, when the banditry activities started in Zamfara state and later spread to the neighboring states of Kano, Kaduna, Katsina,

Sokoto, and Kebbi in North West and into Niger in North Central. Banditry according to Okoli and Okpaleke (2014) means the occurrence or prevalence of armed robbery or violent crime. It has to do to rob rape or killing. It is a crime against persons. It consists of acts of armed robbery, kidnapping, cattle rustling, rape, insult, etc. (Okoli & Okpaleke, 2014). Okoli and Ugwu (2019) classified banditry based on underline intent or motive:

Social banditry: It mostly happens when people want to show anger against the injustice done to them or their communities. Similarly, there is another form of banditry that principally occurs as a result of political or economic gains. Banditry can be mercenary or autonomous depending on how people involved carry it out. Mercenary banditry is carried out by hired groups working for a master, while autonomous bandits are carried out by individuals for personal gains mainland (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019). Organized banditry: this happens on a platform of people who are highly organized, while petty banditry happens by individuals or groups of people are not so coordinated. Roving bandits are itinerant bandits who move from one camp to another while stationary bandits are stationed in one place. Maritime banditry is offshore robbers (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019).

Since the past decades, due to economic, political, and other reasons based known by bandits, banditry and other crimes have become an appealing method of income generation in northwest Nigeria, where weak governance, youth unemployment, high level of poverty, inequality, mismanagement of Public fund have left the majority of the people, especially youths with depleted options of livelihood. The impacts are in form of cattle rustling and theft including inflicting injuries on pastoral communities in the zone (Rufai, cited in Ahmed, 2021).

The history of cattle rustling in northern Nigeria was on a small scale before 2013. The hit of cattle rustling was carried out by highly organized and coordinated bandits based in the Kamuku forest in Kaduna, Falgore forest in Kano, Dansadau forest in Zamfara, and Dajin Rugu forest stretching through Kaduna, Katsina, and Zamfara states (Africa Report No. 288, 2000). The groups have harm and ammunition. The weapons made it easy for the groups to carry out their nefarious attacks in terms of cattle rustling, kidnapping, and killing of people. The herders later came out to defend themselves. They were able to acquire weapons for self-defense. Ahmed (2021), reported that some of the animals rustled by bandits are either sold or kept in the forest zones. They sold most of the cattle rustled to purchase sophisticated weapons. The major sources of funds for bandits come from kidnapping for ransom and looting of communities' assets and livelihoods. The targets of bandits mostly are well-to-do individuals in the community who are mostly farmers and businessmen. Many times communities used to be threatened with attacks by bandits or sometimes given conditions of paying taxes by communities if they want to have access to their farms (Africa Report No. 288, 2000). The popular attacks of bandits include 333 students kidnapped by bandits in Kanakra Local Government Area of Katsina state (BBC, 2020). Similarly, 279 girls who are students were kidnapped by bandits in Jangebe, Zamfara state (Sky News, 2021).

### ***Effects of insurgency and banditry***

Since the beginning of Boko Haram and Banditry insurgencies in North-East and North-West, Nigeria, human lives have been lost, and livelihoods worth a chuck

of foreign currency have been lost. Up till today, nobody escaped from the attacks of Boko Haram and bandits (government officials, security agents, traditional and religious leaders, and other fellow citizens of the regions). For instance, over 30,000 people have been killed and more than two million are displaced by Boko Haram in North East, according to the Council of Foreign Relations (Egbejule, 2019). Thousands of people are being killed and kidnapped for ransom in North West almost every day. For instance, in February 2021, there were two mass abductions. On 17 February 2021, the report that 42 community members and 77 students, were kidnapped from the Government Science College in Kagara, Niger State while a student lost his life in the attack (Mbah, 2021). Similarly, between 279 and 317 students were reported to have been kidnapped by bandits from the Government Girls Secondary School in Jangebe, in Zamfara State on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021 (Verjee & Kwaja, 2021).

It is important to report that, the major aim of Boko Haram and bandits is to instill tension, fear, and chaos in the communities so that people could feel insecure. Many people in the northeast and northwest are now living in tension and fear of being attacked or kidnapped by insurgency groups. The groups have succeeded in creating fear in the minds of all Nigerians as people in other geopolitical zones are afraid of the nefarious activities of the groups. Reports showed that Boko Haram has hoisted their flags in Kaure and Shiroro local government areas of the state (Obaji, 2021).

Educationally, insurgency and banditry have also affected the education sector in all the two regions of the northeast and northwest. It brought the destruction and closure of many schools, killing many teachers, and displacing millions of children in Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Zamfara, Sokoto, and Katsina states. Reports showed that about 910 schools were burnt and 1,500 were closed down. This situation has further aggravated the problem of out-of-school children in the geopolitical zones. (Segun, Adedeji, & Donnelly, 2016).

Economically, activities of insurgency and bandits have negative effects on the economy and livelihood of Nigerians, particularly the people and governments of the northeast and northwest geopolitical zones. The damage to the economy of the regions is so serious that it will take years for the regions to come back on their feet economically (Awojabi, 2014). Reports showed that the popular Maiduguri Monday market was closed and shop owners closed their businesses and relocated to safer places (Awojabi, 2014). Farming activities have also been affected by the activities of insurgency and bandits in the regions.

Politically, Boko Haram insurgency and banditry have created mistrust between political elites of Nigeria's geographical zones, especially between the south and north. The politicians also used insurgency and banditry to advance their political activities. The politicians accuse each other of sponsoring Boko Haram and banditry. For instance, Northern politicians elites accused the federal government under President Jonathan, a southern politician of using the insurgent group to decrease the population of the north particularly Muslim, and destroyed their economy to retain their bargaining powers against the 2015 political election (Aliyu, Moorthy & Idris, 2015).



### ***Factors responsible for insurgency and banditry***

There are many factors responsible for insurgency and banditry activities in Nigeria, especially north-west where the majority of the population are small-scale farmers living in the typical rural areas, among which include the following;

#### *Religious motivation*

People have different values, interests, and opinions. Some people value their religion better than any other thing; as a result, some people react toward defending their religion. Hoffman cited in Adedire, Ake, and Olowojolu (2016) argued that many terrorist organizations in Africa have opted for terrorism as a result of religious understanding. It must be made clear that Islam does not encourage terrorism in any form although there are groups who claimed to be Islamic that use the name of Islam to preach radicalism and religious fundamentalism that are violent and irrational. Islamist fundamentalism is not alone in Nigeria as evidence of extreme-right Christian groups is known (Adedire, Ake & Olowojolu, 2016).

#### *The proliferation of weapons of war*

Scholars such as Adedire, Ake, and Olowojolu (2016) submitted that the proliferation of light and hard weapons including weapons of mass destruction and or disruption, namely, chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons have continued to promote terrorism in a different part of the world Nigeria inclusive. The authors added that the inability of the Nigerian security forces to checkmate harms smuggling into Nigeria, especially through her neighboring countries of Niger, Chad, and Cameroon has made it easy for criminals, terrorists, and bandit terrorists to access weapons uncontrolled in northern Nigeria. This access has made it possible for bandits and terrorists to unleash unlimited terror on Nigerians.

#### *Corruption*

Corruption is believed to have promoted the activities of terrorists in Nigeria. Nigerian officials are engrossed in corruption as in the past and the ruling governments have failed to perform their duties because politicians and government functionaries have cornered the resources that are meant for the general public. People living in rural areas are more at the receiving end of the corruption as resources meant to develop the areas have been diverted by a few individuals that are charged with the responsibility of improving the living standards of people. Many people especially youths in Nigeria involve in insurgency and banditry as a result of the corruptive nature of Nigerian public officeholders (Ojo, 2020) that they must get their share of the national cakes anyhow.

#### *Unemployment*

There is a belief that terrorism started as a result of unemployment (Adedire, Ake & Olowojolu, 2016). People say the idle hand is a devil's workshop. Getting jobs after graduation from tertiary institutions is one of the serious problems confronting Nigerian youths. Naturally, when the job does not forth come after graduation, frustration may set in and this encourages youths to indulge in criminal acts that are detrimental to society.

### *Poverty*

The vicious cycle of poverty continues to make lives unbearable for many Nigerians as a large number of people could not meet up with their daily basic needs including food (Yusuf, 2019). Campbell and Bunche (2011) said it clearly that the living standards for the majority of Nigerians have slightly altered since 1970. According to the National Bureau of Statistics cited in Olowojolu, (2016), in 1980 about 25% of the Nigerian people wallow in poverty and this statistic must have jumped to 72% in 2010.

The issue of banditry has become a very serious problem in Nigeria, especially in the northwest zone, as it affects almost all aspects of societal life, including education, health, agriculture, transportation, and other social activities. The government has deployed Special Forces in the country's North-west to combat kidnapping and bandits, but despite all of these efforts, insurgents, and bandits are still carrying out their operations in all the affected states of the region hence something new must be explored.

### *Non-formal education options for addressing insurgency and banditry in Nigeria*

The fact that the military approach against the insurgents and bandits in north-east and north-west Nigeria has not yielded the expected results, although it is advisable to continue (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019), the right thing to do by the government is to come up with a better approach that will address the immediate and contributory factors. This approach is emended in the remedial options proposed in this paper as presented below.

### *Addressing uneven development in Nigeria*

It has been reported that uneven development exists between and across regions, as well as within communities in Nigeria (Jaiyeola & Choga, 2020), between rural and urban areas (Yusuf, Ladan, Idris & Halilu, 2013). The rural area of Nigeria has not witnessed a significant level of development (Ugwuanyi & Chukwuemeka, 2013) when compared with the urban area. The neglect of rural areas is now a threat to the security concerns of Nigerians. Okon, Henry, and Washington (2018) submitted that people's dissatisfaction with the state of governance which fuels violence could be ascribed to state failure. Lending credence to this, Ojo (2020), decries the high level of social injustice and uneven distribution of national resources which he said has aggravated recurrent insecurity across the geopolitical zones. The situation is worst in the northeast and northwest as insurgency and banditry are the orders of the day. The government must deploy resources and attention to rural development activities to make development even. This requires that the government makes a governance presence where a governance vacuum is obvious, particularly in rural areas where poverty, lack of amenities, and ignorance are glaring. Government rural development interventions such as community development, self-help, rural electrification, rural water scheme, and rural livelihood sustainability must be revived and reached the main targets to bring development to the doorstep of the rural populace.

### *Fighting poverty*

Poverty has been identified as a significant contributory factor to crime and violence (Olowa, 2012, Oko, et al., 2018) in Nigeria. There is this analogy that poverty tends to make poor countries vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders. This analogy was credited to the United State of America's Former President, George W. Bush (Khan & Cheri, 2016). Describing the Nigeria situation, Amaechi (2017), laments that as the income gap widens, many Nigerians are wallowing in abject poverty with the increase in crime rate, thus the government must fight poverty with sincerity if the problems of insurgency and banditry are to be addressed in Nigeria. The poorest region in Nigeria is the most endemic in instability and security threat. North-east and north-west are the worst poverty-stricken regions in Nigeria with 77.7% and 76.3% respectively (Jaiyeola & Bayat, 2019). Therefore, there is a need for government to embark on viable poverty reduction programs and initiatives that will target different vulnerable rural populations, particularly the unemployed youths who are perpetuating the act of insurgency and banditry in the northeast and northwest respectively. Specific efforts must be made by the government in partnership with private sectors to initiate special programs that will boost the informal economy and employment in the regions to productively engage the youths such that they will not be vulnerable to recruitment into insurgency and banditry. Programs such as the provision of soft loans for agricultural businesses, and small-scale enterprises, and support for agricultural mechanization and security will boost the economy of the regions and help reduce poverty and fight insurgency.

### *Restructuring Nigerian security apparatus*

It has been argued that the confrontational nature of the Nigerian security apparatus in fighting insurgency and banditry is not yielding the expected results (Oko, et al., 2018; Okoli & Ugwu, 2019). The war against insurgency has been confrontational and emphasis has been on the use of firearms in the regions with little attention on intelligence gathering. This situation must change as Nigerian security outfits must be reinvented into ones that will emphasize more on intelligence over firearms. The report from the Nigerian government has indicated that there was no serious and organized intelligence gathering and deployment to fight insurgency in north-east Nigeria (Oko, et al, 2018). Firearms are important but intelligence is more important, without information no matter the firepower you can misdirect your firepower. So, security needs to be restructured and reinvented in a way that will generate credible intelligent information and make the best use of that information to address the problem of insecurity. Community Integrative Conflict Management Approach can also be explored by Nigerian security forces fighting insurgency and banditry. This is an approach that recognizes different important stakeholders within the community in the management of conflict. The approach involves consultation, dialoguing, engaging, and seeking cooperation with community actors, who constitute important stakeholders within the community to seek a lasting solution to the insurgency and banditry. It is believed that if the Nigerian Army partners with traditional, religious, and socioeconomic groups as well as civil society organizations within the regions with sincerity success shall be attained.

*The provision of education for all is urgently required*

If the war on insurgency and banditry should be won education must be provided for all. A high level of illiteracy among different age groups and gender has been noted to have contributed to the thriving of insurgency in the northern part of Nigeria (Oko, et al., 2018). An ignorant population is a vulnerable population and the inability of the government to provide education will build resentment in the minds of these vulnerable people to take arms against the people and the state. Khan and Cheri (2016) reported that the northeastern region has the lowest male literacy rate and is second to the northwest zone with the highest female illiteracy among the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. This refusal of the government to give her youths sound and functional education has made them very vulnerable to recruitment into all forms of crime including deadly Boko Haram and banditry. The government must invest in education in such a way that children, youth, and adult illiteracy will be properly addressed. One of the best ways to do this is to subscribe to Adult and Non-formal Education programs to provide second-chance opportunities for youth and adult illiterates as well as adolescents who might have missed the basic educational opportunities and could not be accommodated by the existing formal schools. National orientation programs in the northern part of Nigeria must be intensified and be focused on enlightening the general public about the importance of education in such a way that the region will embrace and pursue functional and sound education for all in the zones.

*Unity of Nigeria elites*

Unity of Nigerian elites is another way out of addressing insurgency and other security challenges in Nigeria. Nigeria elites are factionalized along the region, religion, tribes, sects, and political parties. The deeper fictionalization of Nigerian elites is a very stricken symptom of a failing state. This situation is one of the major causes of the inability of the government to have a coordinating point for Nigeria's state including addressing insurgency and other security problems in the north-east and north-west. Nigeria elites must be united and patriotic regardless of party lines, regional backgrounds, and religious affiliation to win the war against insecurity in Nigeria. The National Orientation Agency and Nigerian media must continue to preach about one united Nigeria nation where everyone's values, culture, and beliefs are respected and showcase the benefits of being honest and patriotic to one's country and act by the values that will promote development and growth irrespective of one's affiliations.

*Taking over control of forest reserves*

Taking over control of forest reserves is one of the remedial options for tackling insurgency and banditry in Nigeria. There is a huge ungoverned space in the Northern parts of Nigeria. The northeast and northwest zones are characterized by vast forestlands, hinterlands, and borderlines and are grossly ungoverned which makes them strategic hideouts for criminal groups (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019). The government must learn its lessons from abandoning forest reserves and make efforts to revive the forest reserve activities to take charge of them and explore them for economic and tourism development. The government with the support of the international community can deploy relevant technology to take over the occupied

forests by the different criminal groups and make the forests beautiful sites of tourism.

### Conclusion

Based on the above discussions, the paper concluded that Boko Haram and Banditry are the most serious security challenges affecting not only North East and North West but the entire country. The activities of the two criminal groups have led to the killing of innocent souls and the kidnapping of thousands of people in the regions and other parts of Nigeria as well as neighboring countries of Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. It has led to the loss of economic activities of livelihood of people and governments. The closure of many educational and economic institutions and the destruction of properties worth billions of Naira as well as government buildings among others have left serious problems for Nigerians to contend with in the twenty years if not more. Mitigating the effects and addressing the problems of insurgency and banditry in the north-east and north-west Nigeria will sail through via explorations of the potentials of non-formal education options. The options presented here are addressing uneven development, fighting poverty, restructuring the Nigerian security apparatus, provision of education for all, fostering the unity of Nigerian elites, and taking over control of forest reserves.

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