

WOMEN AND TRAUMA: THE IMPACT OF BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN MICHIKA ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to find out the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on women survivors in Michika Adamawa state, Nigeria. Boko Haram insurgency has caused heaps of havoc and negative impacts on Nigerian societies. Many women have become widows. They were sexually abused, raped, oppressed, displaced, forced into marriage, and forced to accept other religions; some even witnessed the assassinations of their husbands and were traumatised. This paper adopts both narrative and library sources through the use of interviews and focus Group Discussions. This study has investigated and observed the severe impact of Boko Haram activity's negative effects on women. The study hypothesises that holistic trauma counselling is an effective therapy that will cure the soul and provide relief to the mind of the traumatised. The study finds out that many women have experienced different forms of trauma. The study concludes that many women and girls in our culture may appear to be fine on the surface. Still, they silently suffer from melancholy, tension, and hopelessness due to their encounters with terrorists. Pastoral caregivers should work with therapists from diverse areas to establish a strong trauma healing team capable of dealing with all trauma cases. This paper recommends that religious leaders have a greater role than anyone else in providing comfort, recovery, empowerment, and fairness for the survivors.

Key terms: Boko haram, impact, insurgency, trauma, women.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Throughout the Boko Haram conflict in Nigeria, trauma among women has gone unabated. Although some efforts are being taken by various church organisations, NGOs, the government, and pastors who are also attempting to bring healing to survivors, a huge number of women remain traumatised and unhealed. The moniker "Boko Haram" means "Western Education is Forbidden" in Hausa. "Boko" refers to education, particularly Western education, whereas "Haram" refers to prohibition. Western influence is sinful, unlawful, and sacrilegious to Islam (Dunn, 2018, pp.3; Ojaide et al., 2019, pp. 1; Agbiboa, 2013, pp.1). Boko Haram "officially calls itself 'Jama'atul Alhul-Sunnah Lidda, Watiwal Jihad,' which means the people devoted to the propagation of the prophet's Teachings and Jihad," Agbiboa (2013, pp.145). Its devotees and propagators use a violent method in their teaching to eliminate non-Muslim believers whom they see as infidels, even moderate or liberal Muslims are not immune to their terror. Their principal goal is to build an Islamic Caliphate modelled after and administered following the Qur'an and its law. It is based in North-Eastern Nigeria, specifically Maiduguri, Yobe, and Adamawa. This cult has wreaked devastation on Nigeria as a country and the lives of innocent people by spearheading several violent attacks in Nigeria, particularly in the north. Boko Haram rose to prominence following the death of its commander and founder, Mohammed Yusuf, in 2009. On September 7, 2014, the Boko Haram insurgency targeted the Christian community of Michika. The ferocity of the insurgents' destruction brought worldwide attention to this attack. The fallout is catastrophic, and the loss is irreversible. Many people were killed, property was taken and is still being looted and church buildings and houses were demolished and destroyed.

Many women were widowed, assaulted, and forced to marry off as war rewards. Many youngsters have become orphans. The problem is not limited to women. Thousands of people have been uprooted and live in IDP camps while their enterprises have been completely plundered. The plight of women and girls, on the other hand, is the most heinous. It was and continues to be a grave abuse and violation of basic human rights, not just of fragile and endangered human species, notably women, but also of humanity. Such heinous brutality is unparalleled. This heinous practice, which began with the kidnapping of the Chibok girls in April 2014, continues virtually every week. "Since the beginning of 2021, more than 700 students have been kidnapped in Northern Nigeria alone, with the abduction of 300 students of GGSS in Jangebe, Zamfara state, 27 Kangara boys in Nigeria, 156 students of Salhu Tanko Islamic school in Niger state, and 80 Islamic students in Katsina" noted by Roots TV(June:18). On July 2, 2021, a terrorist organisation raided Bethel Baptist Secondary School in Kaduna State, Nigeria, and kidnapped 166 students, only 26 of whom escaped; the rest 140 are still in their captivity. In the same state, another squad of terrorists broke into Leprosy Hospital and abducted new-borns and nurses on duty, to name a few victims (BBC News, 2021).

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding Trauma

Medical practitioners, psychologists, and religious counsellors have all published extensive literature on the issue of trauma. This study briefly engages with a few works of literature that address the subject of trauma and counselling to traumatised people in this section. Because the current researcher lacks medical and general psychology training to produce a study from such a perspective, the current paper is from a religious perspective. It so relies heavily on a theological understanding of trauma. Many individuals have

been traumatised by wars, ethnic conflicts and civil disturbances, criminality, and natural disasters in many regions today. Many of them have gone through, and continue to go through, horrific experiences such as the loss of loved ones, bomb explosions, forcible rape, and rapid displacement, among other things. As a result, they are in desperate need of assistance (Hill et al., 2016, pp. 7). "Trauma is an event that involves the confrontation with war, violence, tragedy, sudden loss of a loved one, serious illness, and other overwhelming and unsettling events," according to (Kleber, 2019). Trauma can also refer to the victims' sense of powerlessness and the disruption of their beliefs and expectations. In this instance, the victim may lose complete control. Trauma is a genuine reality that victims of heinous situations face daily. In the context of this study, trauma is associated with the constant struggle of victims who cannot help themselves from unpleasant conditions.

Bible and Trauma

Humans have become hideously evil, heartless, and their own worst adversaries. In general, the Bible is replete with stories of tragedy experienced by a nation or an individual. During the Babylon exile, when Judah had awful experiences, the destruction of Jerusalem, several trauma survivors bear witness to traumatic events such as battle and rape, to name a few. This experience extends from Noah's time to the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to the twelve tribes of Israel, and to the New Testament Church (Garber, 2015, pp. 1). In my opinion, the tale of Adam and Eve in Genesis marks the beginning of human traumatic experiences. The tale of Tamar's rape in 2 Samuel 13:22-23 is pertinent to this paper. Tamar was King David's daughter and the lovely sister of Absalom and Amnon, her half-brother. She was a virgin, constantly dressed in her long robe and sleeves, as is customary in Israel. Her brother, on the other hand, raped her in her father's house. Amnon's actions are inexcusable, and one can only imagine the horrible experience Tamar must have gone through after being raped and silenced by a member of her family.

The most unacceptable component of the story is her father's silence and the culture in which she lives. Is she not her father's child in the same way that Amnon is? Isn't she supposed to be safeguarded in her society like any other human being? Why is there such silence on both sides? And why, even now, is the condition of women and girls not taken seriously in both households and society? These issues can be reliably answered by saying that it is due to traditional/cultural and religious segregation of women. Tamar finds herself in a male-dominated culture that disregards the worth of women and makes no attempts toward gender equality, justice, or inclusivity. Furthermore, this society dismisses the significance of Genesis 1:26-30, particularly verse 27, which declares, "So God created mankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (NIV).

The story of David and Bathsheba is another biblical trauma narrative. It is one of the most depressing stories in the Bible. It is a story that deals with questions of authority, privacy, and consent. Bathsheba was a married woman, and her husband Uriah was fighting in the war, but King David used his power to summon a married woman, expressly stating his desire to have sex with her and murder her husband. Women were abused in these two biblical stories, and their dignity was sacrificed for personal gain.

Women and the Impact of Boko Haram Insurgency in Michika

During an interview and Focused Group Discussion conducted on August 2022, WSBHI narrated that when Boko Haram attacked Michika Local Government Areas on September 7, 2014, ladies became a landmark due to Boko Haram's operations. They suffered greatly in many cases of trauma and other emotional and psychological disorders, and trauma treatment became extremely rare for them as Boko Haram usually abducted them. The victim further narrates that many women suffered from various trauma; many severely affected since their husbands fled, putting them in the hands of militants who were only searching for men to kill. As a result, many women and children were kidnapped, and some were slain. Both mothers and daughters were forced to marry as war prices by terrorists to their generals, and women and girls suffered due to such atrocities. Many people were economically disadvantaged. As a result, many women and girls are not only unhappy but also traumatised and suffering from PTS in various forms. In Michika, the insurgency is gradually having a detrimental influence and inflicting harm to lives and assets worth millions of Naira. Many people have lost faith in God, while others have little hope for the future.

According to Human Right Watch (2015 pp.1), News and Press released in Abuja on March 26, reported that hundreds of women and children had been kidnapped and subjected to forced conversion, forced marriage, and other torture. Perrin et., al (2019, pp.1) states, "Women have observed physical, psychological, or mental pain or suffering, as well as denial of liberty when abducted, as well as spiritual abuse. They have been kidnapped and murdered, as well as displaced, sexually assaulted, and raped." They are in danger of getting sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Gonorrhoea, and syphilis, according to Perrin et al. (2019, pp.6). Violence against women has affected all facets of their lives, from the physical to the spiritual. Many survivors, particularly women and children, have wondered if God is still on the throne. Rape and violence against women, particularly girls, have resulted in unintended teenage pregnancies.

Despite the fact that the insurgency has had a significant detrimental impact on all people of this impacted area, regardless of gender, this study focuses on traumatised women survivors of the Boko Haram insurgency in Michika because armed violence and crises affect men and women differently. Women are always the most defenceless and the victims of abuse. As a result of their higher and natural proclivity to be more emotional than their male counterparts, they are more damaged. Knowing the traumatising events that the survivors of terrorism in Michika go through, the question of how they cope, adjust, and find meaning in life immediately comes to mind. This cannot happen by chance; instead, concerted efforts must be made by counsellors, organisations, and the Church, as well as survivors' willingness to be assisted in finding meaning in life. Pastoral and trauma counsellors, in particular, should consider the biblical and theological foundations for counselling these survivors. The significance they discover inspires their response to their suffering, as described in the scriptures.

However, it appears that the Church has yet to implement an effective system for trauma therapy, healing, and rehabilitation of survivors. Some survivors who are not treated may suffer post-traumatic stress disorder their entire lives. This is because trauma has debilitating effects on the minds of humans, and if left untreated, it will subsequently impact the function of the survivors. Given how women have been

forced into marriages by the Boko Haram cult and to convert to Islam and other traumatising experiences, the Church has yet properly situated itself in this region. Professional trauma counsellors are needed, as are new creative techniques for reaching out to survivors in an unpredictable context like Nigeria's North East, particularly Michika. The few efforts made by secular counsellors are devoid of sound biblical truths and counselling principles, which are not opposed to one another but can be submerged to the end of reintegrating insurgency survivors, prompting this study to investigate the integrative approach to trauma counselling. According to Ikenye (2002, pp.5), the proposed approach to pastoral counselling and psychotherapy aims to liberate, empower, support, guide, and facilitate the healing of survivors by allowing them to embrace faith (the journey of exploration and willingness to accept beliefs, undergo personal change, and foster growth) and in truth (constant transformation and development in recognising one's abilities, assets, talents, and potential).

Women's Narratives of Trauma in Michika

This study describes the real-life experiences of women survivors who recounted their testimonies about the Boko Haram insurgency attacks in Michika/Mboro LGA during a focus group discussion and an interview. Kwatri (actual name withheld) stated, "I had seven children before the Boko Haram attack. My husband was an educator. On September 7, 2014, we attended a church service when Boko Haram stormed Michika. I rushed for my life, without any of my family members, to Mboro and then up the mountain. That evening, I had a dream about my spouse being murdered. He was executed by beheading. I spent three weeks on the Mountain with other Mboro residents. I struggled greatly on the mountain without food, water, or clothing. On the mountain, many children and elderly ladies died. The women and girls who descended from the mountain in search of food never returned. They were kidnapped, raped, and forced to marry Boko Haram militants. We seldom ever slept. Snakes bit some of us, while others became ill with various diseases. There were no therapy options. People were dying in large numbers. After Boko Haram had left Michika, I returned to see my husband's bones. During the attack, our house, belongings, and livestock were all destroyed."

Another narrator, Vaje (real name withheld), recalls how Boko Haram attacked them, "When Boko Haram invaded on September 7, 2014, I was only able to flee with two of my children, having no idea where my other children were or had fled to. My husband was in Chad at the time of the Boko Haram attack. As a result, I was the only one left to care for my children during that period. Many people were killed before me, including neighbours and close relatives. Some ladies were kidnapped, abducted, and raped. My sister's daughter had been raped. The difficulties persisted even after we returned to our original location. Inadequate clothing, shelter, and food have been provided. We were not offered any counselling services."

Finally, Kwada (full name withheld) narrated, "When Boko Haram arrived in the area, I fled to the Mountain. After a few days, I came down from the mountain to get some food. Then I met the Boko Haram in my residence, where I had escaped from them. After a few days, my brother's child was murdered, and his daughter was taken. The girl is still being held captive to this day. His house was fire, and my properties were looted and ruined. My husband died, leaving me with six children, five of whom are boys and one of whom is a girl. I'm only surviving by God's mercy. Then there was insufficient trauma counselling and assistance provided to me." One can only fathom these women's horrible experiences due to the Boko

Haram insurgency. The question that naturally arises is how one might rehabilitate and provide trauma counselling to these survivors. Women and girls in Michika have experienced and continue to experience severe pain and suffering. Their circumstances are pitiful, and their trauma experience is obvious. However, the current government coddles and ignores the public outcry against terrorists.

Causes of Trauma on Women

Why do people find themselves in traumatic situations so frequently? This is one of the most challenging issues in the world, with no satisfactory answer. Thousands of people in Nigeria and around the world have been touched by trauma. When people understand the causes of severe injuries, I believe they can make safer choices and avoid unpleasant judgments. However, certain trauma causes are not caused by the individual and cannot be controlled. According to Collins (2007, pp.763), "For many years and in many parts of the world, terrorism, guerrilla warfare, and mercenary activity had impacted millions of people and held them in the grip of poverty, hunger, and fear." Military invasions, political upheavals, floods, cyclones, earthquakes, and forest fires/fire catastrophes can also cause trauma. Boko Haram attacks, activities of Arm Bandits, Fulani militias, political terror and upheavals, ethnic and disease outbreaks like the recent outbreak of COVID-19 and communal clashes, and other natural disasters like floods, oil spillage around the Niger Delta, thunderstorm Rainstorm, drought, and plant blight are major causes of trauma for us in Nigeria.

It should also be mentioned that each location has its unique difficulty that has been a major source of trauma. Boko Haram has encroached on the Northeast, while Fulani herdsman militias have devastated the Middle Belt. The Boko Haram insurgency is a twin to the Bandits/Fulani insurgency, and the two have wreaked more damage on families across the country than any pandemic Nigeria has ever experienced aside from the civil war. They have shed the blood of innocent individuals, particularly Christians, and the Nigerian government is incapable of protecting its citizens' lives and property. According to an Africa-focused market intelligence and communications consulting firm, Fulani herdsman attacks provide 44 per cent of the security difficulties, with 1,425 fatalities, compared to Boko Haram, which accounts for 38 per cent with 1,240 fatalities (144). After killing their victims, Boko Haram and Fulani herdsman frequently burn houses, businesses, and properties worth millions of dollars. Imagine the anguish, grief, pangs, aches, and grift these people experience; they are traumatised and injured beyond measure, and their lives are bleak, devoid of joy and peace of mind to face the future. In such a scenario, unless individuals are assisted via good pastoral care and counselling, comprehensive personal and community growth is impossible, as victims remain beclouded by uncertainty.

3.0 METHODS

This paper employed the Library, and Narrative approaches as the primary and secondary sources for data collection. A narrative is a research approach that describes the nature of a phenomenon by exploring it from the perspective of those who have experienced it through the use of in-depth interviews and focus Group Discussion and also some observation since the researcher was also directly affected by attacks of the insurgents. It focuses on the commonality/stories of a lived experience within a particular group. The fundamental goal of this approach is to describe the nature of the experiences of such a group of people or the description of personal stories of the survivors. The researcher used the library because it contains books, available pieces of literature from academic journals, and magazines that are relevant to the subject

under examination. The qualitative Descriptive research design was adopted to explore the impact of the Boko Haram Insurgency in Michika with multiple ways of data collection through interviews and focus group discussions. The paper used purposive sampling as the sampling technique with a sample size of 20 women respondents. The researcher wishes to draw from this understanding to study and analyse the experiences of the survivors of insurgency to provide holistic healing.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Impacts of Trauma on Women Survivors in Michika

Trauma has several ramifications for humans; it can have long- and short-term repercussions on sufferers' well-being. If the symptoms remain and do not improve, it may signal that the trauma has progressed into a mental health illness known as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). However, four effects will be discussed:

Fader (2021) says that trauma physically changes the brain and psyche of persons affected by war, violence, and other factors, and he suggests various treatments for trauma, including trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy, psychodynamic psychotherapy, and eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR). In many traumatic situations, affected persons find it difficult to manage and continue their lives as they were; some may not remember the events that led to the trauma. Traumatized people struggle to forget the trauma because such heinous memories are stored in the limbic part of the brain, where they continue to provoke stress reactions, flashbacks, short-term memory, nightmares, and anxiety. As a result of the incomplete treatment processes, the patient may develop Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), worsening the problem. This paper is a critical investigation of the effects of the Boko Haram Insurgency on women survivors in the Michika Local government area in examining the effects of the insurgency on survivors in Michika LGA.

Psychological Effect

This refers to the effects of trauma on a person's mind, will, intelligence, and mental cognitive abilities in the face of adversity and suffering. In times of bereavement for a deceased relative or friend, tragedy, accidents, rape, crisis, kidnapping, pandemic outbreak, terrorist attack, and the like. People experience psychological symptoms and warning indications. Collins (2007, pp.765) claims, "In the aftermath of the September 11th attacks, there was widespread anxiety, concerns about safety, depression, anger, nervousness, prevalence, and even distrust. For some people, this developed into post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)."

On August 20, 2022, WSBHI reported, "I am a married woman and a victim of the Boko Haram insurgency in Mboro. Before Boko Haram arrived in our area, my husband and I were farmers and small business owners. On September 10, 2014, Boko Haram attacked us. I was feeling under the weather at home. I was resting in my room when I heard shouts of "Run, run, Boko Haram are coming to the Michika area." Before I could flee, the militants had burned down our house and everything we owned. Our property was destroyed. Boko Haram also kidnapped my auntie's daughter, who is still held captive today. I was traumatized by the situation. I am affected psychologically, physically, spiritually, and fiscally. I had never experienced trauma before the Boko Haram attack, and no help has been offered to me or my family."

The traumatised victim suffers from serious negative consequences that impair their well-being. A similar situation occurred in Nigeria's North-Eastern area following the Boko Haram insurgency in 2009. Mohammed Yusuf and his crew terrorised during the day, resulting in multiple deaths and losing important properties. An ongoing lack of peace has plagued Nigeria since then. The psychological impact of such traumatic situations is frequently visible and publicly acknowledged. Increased muscle tension, adrenaline levels, and emotional reactions such as fear, wrath, anxiety, restlessness, headaches, nausea, and impulsivity can all be symptoms. These symptoms may occur soon following the catastrophe or years later. However, depending on an individual's ability to appraise, accept, and cope with their situation, these pains and symptoms may lessen over time (Collins, 2007, pp. 767).

Some people may suffer from Acute Stress Disorder (ASD) for a few days or weeks, seeming bewildered and unable to recall particular facts from the past. They may also have difficulty concentrating, sleep disorders, an unwillingness to interact with people (loneliness), irritability, and a desire to avoid anything that reminds them of the trauma. Individuals who have endured stressful experiences, abuse or violence, emergency responders such as ambulance drivers and firefighters, and other professionals routinely exposed to terrible situations are more likely to suffer from this traumatic stress.

Neuro-Biological Effect

The human brain comprises billions of linked neurons and is a complex and delicate organ. According to Collins (2007, pp.769), Siegel can be separated into three major sections. To begin with, the brain stem, located at the brain's base, conveys information from the body to the brain and regulates sleep-wake cycles. Second, the limbic system, which is in charge of emotions and memory formation, is further subdivided into three parts: the hippocampus, amygdala, and hypothalamus. As long-term memory, the hippocampus processes and stores feelings, memories, and ideas. However, it fails to work effectively amid acute traumatic stress, causing information to be remembered only temporarily, resulting in defective long-term memory. The amygdala, shaped like an almond, assesses incoming stimuli and initiates emotional reactions such as anger, fear, and pleasure. Trauma can damage the amygdala, resulting in a malfunctioning early warning system that identifies possible threats before conscious recognition.

Economic Effect

Poverty and economic troubles are unavoidable in a nation or society plagued by widespread war, violence, child abuse, terrorism, and other negative behaviours that can result in trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. People frequently lose loved ones and possessions during natural or man-made disasters such as war, terrorism, and similar occurrences (Collins 2007, pp.674). Unfortunately, the government and other relevant authorities assisting victims of such atrocities rarely assist them in retrieving their lost assets and riches. As a result, the impacted persons face financial difficulties. Farming communities are sometimes displaced as a result of terrorist acts such as Boko Haram, bandits, Fulani herdsmen, or natural disasters such as floods, resulting in a decrease in food and human resource production due to the change in location and the physical and emotional distress inflicted on the victims. Nigeria currently has millions of internally displaced persons living in camps, which greatly influences the country's economic productivity. Abused children and mentally unstable persons require regular access to healthcare services for rehabilitation, which incurs large expenditures and hurts family financial stability.

Trauma can potentially harm victims in all aspects of society, including mental health services, child welfare services, healthcare systems, and the production of goods and services. It can reduce the pool of economically capable individuals who could contribute to the nation's economy.

Social Effects

Collins (2007, pp. 167) asserts that victims of traumatic situations are always socially influenced. He further argues that, the exhaustion, uncertainty, depression, anxiety, violent behaviour, confusion, and dissociation can all result from prior trauma. Some trauma patients prefer to avoid contact with others and dislike crowds and rituals. Such isolation is caused by the neurobiological, psychological, or emotional effects of the injury, wounds, and trauma stress, which can result in fear, anger, despair, and guilt, negatively impacting the family and life. When trauma goes ignored, hurt people continue to injure others; they engage in violence and claim they are depressed state as justification for such actions. As a result, it can infiltrate civilisations and generations, weakening people's social coexistence.

Boko Haram Insurgency and its Effects on Women

Northern Nigeria has formed a patriarchal structure, a common feature of traditional civilisations in which men retains dominating positions and exert control over all parts of society, frequently to the disadvantage of women's well-being. Women in this region were relegated to domestic tasks before the rise of Boko Haram; their voices were suppressed in public, they had limited access to education, and they were ignored and kept in their homes. They were essentially supposed to play the roles of mothers, spouses, and men's property. Women, in particular, were seen as cheap labourers and the property of their husbands in the Kamwe society.

Women and girls in the Michika local government region still suffer from great agony, pain, and persistent trauma. The presence of the Boko Haram insurgency exacerbates the problem. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by the negative effects of terrorism, making them vulnerable and disadvantaged. They have been subjected to a variety of heinous brutality and sexual abuse. This man-made disaster has highlighted the vulnerability of women and girls more than ever before. As a result, they confront poverty, a lack of protection, and trauma.

There are four impacts looked into by the study, which are as follows:

The first impact is sexual and gender-based violence. Gender violence as a global challenge facing women and the girl-child today has increased the risk of unwanted pregnancies and other sexually related diseases. The large abduction of women and young girls from various communities and schools has fuelled this. A victim who escaped from Boko Haram in 2022 explained how some girls were forced to convert to Islam, get married to the fighters, or were mercilessly raped, while others were forced to take part in military operations such as suicide bombing missions. In her case, four to five terrorists had sex with her daily, and she managed to escape through God's grace. Many girls in Michika LGA have children with unknown fathers due to the ungodly encounters with the insurgents. Some of these children may continue with the atrocities of their fathers since the insurgents still lure and recruit poor and innocent youths openly while the Government says nothing.

The next impact looked at is widowhood and orphans. Many widows and orphans are in Michika due to the Boko Haram terrorists. A lady confirmed that when the Boko Haram insurgents killed her husband, her late husband's relatives packed everything. Her neighbour took advantage of her and raped her, and nobody came to her defence. When they were finally moved to the internally displaced camp, one of her daughters was raped. She ended up being a commercial sex worker to earn a living. Only the grace of God in the process of holistic trauma counselling may bring relief and healing to the victims of insurgency (Kore, 2014, pp.1-2).

Finally, the educational effect is one of the impacts. Before the emergence of Boko Haram, female education at Michika was not yet at its best due to segregation against women. Culturally and traditionally, they were treated as unimportant and unequal to men and; were viewed as willing sex objects. Educationally, the woman's certificate only ended in the Kitchen and was equally a child-producing machine. The emergence of insurgency has aggravated and not only widened the gap between women and me, but the girl also-child is out of luck educationally more than the boy.

The girls were used as sex toys and suicide bombers. Despite these, the government did little or nothing to immediately rescue the girls. Leaders of Boko Haram are said to have been killed mostly women and children and a few elderly people. Many girls have remained illiterate since Boko Haram terrorists are against Western education. Academic activities in the Northeast, especially in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe States, have been disrupted since 2014; many students stay home, and some are on the streets. Some girls are traumatised at returning to school, thinking they may be killed or kidnapped on their way or in their hostels. The exposure of the children, especially the girl-child, to traumatic experiences such as the killing of their loved ones in their presence and displacement has detrimental consequences on their mental, psychological and emotional well-being.

Lastly, the Girl-Child is Boko Haram's New Weapon. Boko Haram terrorists started operating in north-eastern Nigeria in 2000 to antagonise Christian and Western education, establish an Islamic Caliphate and impose their version of Islam in the Northeast of Nigeria and beyond. Their recruitment strategies include attacking banks and communities, killing military bases for weapons, and abducting young men, women, and children. Since 2014, girls have been used to carry out suicide bombings in crowded places, killing and injuring people in large numbers. By abducting the Chibok girls and other females and their deployment as suicide bombers, Boko Haram demonstrated their cruelty, ruthlessness, hatred and heartlessness for humanity. Today, other allied terrorist organisations in Nigeria are doing the same thing: kidnapping students, raping both the boys and the girls then asking for ransom in some cases.

Pastoral Trauma Counselling Strategies for the Women Survivors of Boko Haram Insurgency for Holistic Restoration

Pastoral counselling for the traumatised comprises the efforts of the Church, Christian groups, and mature Believers in Christ to support and advise those suffering difficulties and obstacles in life based on Christian principles. Pastoral counselling, unlike other types of counselling, addresses difficulties in a way consistent with biblical teachings. Ikenye emphasises four major elements influencing biblical counselling work in the current African context: self-awareness, cultural background and upbringing, professional practice, and the

significance of scripture and Christian tradition. These dimensions are critical because they allow counsellors to successfully assist trauma survivors. The cultural background and professional practice aspects are important because they directly impact how individuals experience and interpret their trauma. Connecting an individual's understanding of trauma and Bible teachings to someone who has been traumatised is heavily influenced by the cultural context that moulds their worldview (Ikenye, 2002, pp.8-10).

Trauma Counselling Strategies

According to field statistics, women in Michika Local Government Area have gotten little or no counselling. Those lucky enough to obtain counselling described some of the tactics they used. It should be noted, however, that these counselling services were predominantly delivered by pastors, the vast majority of whom are not licensed counsellors. Despite this, several respondents reported receiving no counselling at all. On August 20, 2022, one survivor reported receiving no assistance or support from the government, government agencies, or the Church since the catastrophe. One thing that all insurgency survivors have in common is the trauma they feel as a result of perceived injustice and desertion. While justice alone will not suffice to heal them, it is one technique that, if adopted by key parties, can help them recover. Unfortunately, neither the Church, the government, society, Human Rights Organisations, nor non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have punished the perpetrators.

Regarding the Church's approach to counselling women, respondents and many others believe that, despite some efforts, the Church has not done enough. On August 20, 2022, several pastors, including Pastor Peter Drambi, Joshua Tari, and Pastor Danlandi Tumba, expressed concern about the difficulties in counselling and holistically reintegrating women back into society due to a lack of unity within the Church. While some churches have intervened, their efforts have been dispersed and have not had the desired impact. As a result, pastors in Michika Local Government are advocating for church unity to position themselves better to provide trauma counselling to female survivors of the Boko Haram insurgency. As a result, when counselling them, the following tactics should be considered: spiritual therapy, discussion, restoration, rehabilitation, and reconciliation, as well as forgiveness.

Spiritual Counselling

Pastors have visited women who have survived the Boko Haram insurgency, provided prayers and shared religious lessons with them. Many pastors believe that praying and studying religious texts is the most effective way to assist these ladies. Trauma upsets the balance of life and jeopardises the development and evolution of survivors. It is critical to approach trauma from both a biblical and theological standpoint. According to Ikenye (2014, pp.54-55), pastoral counselling entails conveying the deep meaning of the Gospel and encouraging an experiential encounter with God's love within a caring relationship. Pastoral therapy assists people in experiencing God's love as seen through Christ. Ikenye goes on to say that pastoral counselling should address people's needs on three levels: showing sympathy and compassion, empathising by entering the traumatised person's world, and engaging at an interpretive level that takes into account thoughts, interpersonal dynamics, and behaviour in the context of ethnicity and culture. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a crisis experienced by survivors of natural and man-made tragedies such as famine, rape, or the loss of loved ones. Because this study focuses on the Boko Haram

insurgency, which has instilled fear, confusion, and grief among the people of Michika, particularly women, trauma counselling strategies must be used to help them heal from the hatred they feel and rebuild their lives in the face of displacement and insecurity.

These women survivors also tend to have faith problems, necessitating a method to handle this element of their lives. Face-to-face discussions between individuals or groups to solve problems, make choices, and reach shared viewpoints or solutions are involved in the dialogue. In coping with trauma survivors, dialogue is a crucial method. Boko Haram's devastation in Michika has left a profound wound that must be healed. The militants have shattered the community's sense of oneness, causing mutual hostility among the inhabitants, particularly suspicion among Muslims and members of the same religious group. People fear each other even inside their community, assuming that Boko Haram has penetrated their ranks. These thoughts have enslaved them, and the few voices crying out for help are pleading with church and community leaders to help them mend their wounded hearts. Michika women cannot prosper in these conditions since they are historically hardworking and conduct commerce with people of many religions. Their fear and suspicion, however, impede their economic, social, and spiritual life. This situation necessitates a debate on the value of roundtable discussions and a group counselling method that involves elements of interpersonal, interethnic, and interreligious dialogue. Such a campaign should seek to identify the true opponent, not to incite hatred, but to promote forgiveness and healing. Special consideration should be paid to creating a safe area for survivors to vent their emotions. On August 20, 2022, a lady survivor emphasised during a focus group session that they need to be heard. This is precisely what dialogue enables: the ability for people to express themselves and be heard.

Rehabilitation

Reviving and restoring something to its original state is known as rehabilitation. It helps to rebalance life, especially when faced with the upheaval of trauma. In Luke 10:36, we see an illustration of rehabilitation: a guy whom thieves have attacked receives support and care, symbolising what rehabilitation should mean in our current circumstances. Similarly, many women have experienced significant physical, mental, and cultural harm. While government institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have tried to give interim relief and counselling, just a few have gone beyond these first measures. True rehabilitation requires a long-term, all-encompassing process of restoring and reintegrating these women into society. The Church can help these survivors heal their wounds by providing long-term therapy and support to aid their recovery. The Church's approach is similar to the effective trauma healing model used following the Rwandan genocides, which recognised the need for long-term healing to overcome the long-term impacts of trauma.

Restoration

Many women have become disillusioned and despairing due to the Boko Haram insurgency. These women's bodily and spiritual well-being has suffered considerably, resulting in trauma and greater hostility. A loving approach must be applied following Jesus' command to repair these damaged survivors. Physical, social justice and material restoration are all important parts of restoration in this setting. Providing medical care to address the psychosomatic ailments many of these ladies suffer from is critical. Counselling attempts will be useless unless proper medical assistance is provided. Material restoration

focuses on retrieving the possessions that these women have lost to economically empower them and prevent their vulnerability from being exploited. To meet their requirements, vulnerable females have turned to sex work, while young men have turned to illegal activities, compounding the problem.

Another important aspect of the healing process is restorative justice. It is critical to handle the conundrum of teaching these ladies forgiveness while yet seeking justice for the heinous actions perpetrated against them. It becomes critical to strike a balance between charity and justice. Is it true that teaching forgiveness makes them passive in their situation? Does this mean they shouldn't seek justice through the judicial system? Should criminals not be held accountable for the harm they create when they are held accountable? The struggle for justice may not be won immediately or at all, but attempts must be made to fight for justice as a preventive measure and deterrence to future actions.

Reconciliation and Forgiveness

Michika residents are filled with rage and hate, not only toward Boko Haram militants but also toward Islam in general. The link between terrorism and Islam has become profoundly embedded in their thoughts, resulting in a fixed attitude. This antagonism has become part of their history, and future generations may continue it, potentially leading to Muslim terrorisation. If nothing is done to change their minds, the answer to this question may be a resounding yes. According to this survey, many people in Michika have been disillusioned with Christianity's benign teachings and have resorted to Traditional African religion for protection or to prepare for an attack on the Islamic community without feeling terrible about it.

Women's disenchantment with mankind and resentment toward God is a serious issue that should be addressed in a complete counselling plan for reconciliation. They may also feel terrible about the entire experience, with one respondent blaming herself for failing to safeguard her children during the insurgency. As a result, reconciliation should be promoted on three levels: with oneself, humanity, and God. The trauma counselling technique should not only assist women in coming to grips with whom they have become due to the trauma, but it should also allow them to question God while keeping reverence for Him. As evidenced in biblical examples, people have asked God questions in times of sorrow to seek understanding and find peace in His responses. Restricting women's ability to question God would only remove them from Him. Counselling that allows individuals to mourn, lament, and engage in dialogical prayer with God is critical. God reacts when we share our thoughts with Him. He is not upset when we are angry with Him, but He wants us to bring our feelings to Him so we can reason together.

Trauma fosters chronic mistrust, which has an impact on relationships. As a result, another part of reconciliation is with other people.

The counsellor must assist survivors in developing trust in safe places where they can communicate their feelings and understand where they came from. Reconciliation between Christians and Muslims, as well as among Christians, is also required. The concept of reconciliation has been distorted, resulting in guilt and a desire for vengeance. People frequently conceal their pain until it explodes, resulting in life-threatening retaliation. A good therapy method should include reconciliation techniques such as narrative, sorrow, and forgiveness. In Michika, women have been encouraged to forgive and forget, as if it were easier said than

done. As a result, the counselling technique should recognise that reconciliation takes time and that not everyone will recover simultaneously or completely. Conversely, women must be urged not to give up on themselves because healing from grief takes time but ultimately leads to victory. This process necessitates self-sacrifice, similar to how Christ offered Himself for us. The Bible teaches forgiveness for our offences to be forgiven, and it reminds us that vengeance belongs to God. We are supposed to live in peace with all people and exhibit Christ's love even to our enemies by praying for and loving them.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion: Early intervention is critical in treating trauma before it develops into acute or chronic conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder, which can have serious consequences for the victim's physical, psychological, and emotional well-being. Many women and girls in our culture may appear to be fine on the surface. Still, they silently suffer from melancholy, tension, and hopelessness due to their encounters with terrorists. Pastoral caregivers should work with therapists from diverse areas to establish a strong trauma healing team capable of dealing with all trauma cases. Trauma is devastating, shattering people's ambitions, particularly women's and impeding their capacity to live the abundant life intended for them; as stakeholders and partners in trauma healing, the Church, clergy, individuals, para-church organisations, non-governmental organisations, and the government play critical roles. Suppose these entities carefully carry out their tasks in the caregiving process. In that case, humanity will improve, women and girls will be acknowledged as equals to males, and the world will become a better place following God's original plans.

Recommendations: The Church, as Christ's body, must take its mandate of human restoration and rehabilitation seriously and teach the holistic Gospel of salvation, avoiding the dichotomised Gospel of separating its responsibility of ministering to the body physically and spiritually. Individuals should provide financial and human resources to the Church and other relevant organisations to restore troubled people because the task and obstacles that pastoral counsellors and other stakeholders face in trauma healing are immense. Theological institutions should focus more on building trauma-healing curricula. In addition, two to three trauma healing courses should be made mandatory for all pastoral training students and religious institutions. The Church cannot continue to ignore women and girls as it did in the Old Testament, as demonstrated in the Tamar story. The Church and society must do more than ever to defend women and girls. Every church denomination should establish trauma healing departments and centres where all trauma cases will be treated, and all pastors should be sponsored to attend educative on coping with trauma in order to be equipped with world-class trauma healing guidelines, principles, and practices. Local pastors can simply pass on such knowledge to their congregation members and assist them in dealing with trauma.

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