

The Politics of Sara Suka and Youth Involvement in Bauchi State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Most of the politicians in Nigeria have been seen to depend heavily on political violence in a form of thuggery (Sara Suka) for winning elections in the attainment and maintenance of their position. This study tends to examine the factors that influenced youth participation in thuggery (Sara Suka) activities in Bauchi State. To achieve these, the study used a qualitative method based on a case study approach. Data were collected primarily from interview and observation while secondary sources were used to validate the information obtained from the primary sources. The interviews were obtained exclusively from the Sara Suka members, academic expert, NGOs, community heads and vigilante groups in the state. The study reveals that politicians, illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, parent role, passion, drugs and financial attractiveness are accounted for the increase rate of youth involved in Sara Suka activities. Therefore, based on these findings, the study recommends that government should pass a law that will sanction any politician who recruited youth to serve as thugs, as well making them to sign undertakings that would avoid them from taking the advantage of unemployed youth in the process of achieving their personal gain in the campaign or election. If any found should be punished according to the law provided.

Key words - Government, youth, thuggery, Sara Suka, election.

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Introduction

Most developing countries of the world these days are faced with series of developmental challenges such as poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, conflict and diseases, and Nigeria is not an exception to this developmental challenges. As such, these challenges have eaten deep into the marrows of the Nigerian political space which contribute greatly to the challenges of the very existence of individuals in most societies in Nigeria (Shehu, 2012). In the year 1999, Nigerians were privileged to witness the transition of power from military rule to democratic government. The expectation from the people was that of good governance, improved standard of living, and a better life. In reality, the majority of people in most societies of Nigeria, especially in Bauchi and other areas like Zamfara, Jigawa and Katsina are suffering from abject poverty and severe hardship. This is as a result of the increase marginalization of youth and failure to fulfill the basic socioeconomic needs of the people. Hence, leading to frustration, and high rate of insecurity among the people of the country, especially Bauchi state, (Wunti, 2012).

On foreseeing the effects of such marginalization tendencies among the youth in the state, Shehu (2012) opined that the effect of these unemployed youth could easily be lured into negative tendencies and are in fact ready to be recruited for any anti-social act. These situations are more deserving in a state where the elites negate the values and ethics of democracy. It is as a result of these negations of democratic ethics that others believed that the Nigerian politics have turned into a do or die affair. In addition, Haruna & Jumba (2011) observed that denial of any part of democratic process in society normally led to thuggery act that later transform into political violence, which seems to have hindered free and fair election and consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. Ehiobhi & Ehiomore (2011) on the other hand added that the nature of political violence, though started long ago has now become the only means of gaining and retaining power. They further argued that the success of the use of violence through recruitment of youth as thugs, at the period of campaign and election process, has also become the real prototype for subsequent method of retaining and gaining power by political elites. And this is the same reason that led to the formation of Sara Suka activities that people are witnessing today in Bauchi state.

On the other hand, Lawanti, (2009) makes it clear that 'Sara Suka' is a compound of two house words 'Sara' and 'Suka' which literally means cutting and stabbing respectively. The name was formally given to a group of unemployed youth who engaged themselves in thuggery activities in Bauchi state. Their ages fall within 8-30 years; some of them were in secondary school, and some were school dropout, while others never attended school. Similarly, there were all drug addicts and perpetrators of violent. These groups of youth are usually induced by politicians for their political gain. This means the politicians recruit them during campaigns and election to serve as political or party guards. Furthermore, their main task is to intimidate, harass, assassinate, and victimize political opponents. So, as their masters are declared winner, they get compensation. While some would be put on monthly allowance, others would be left with nothing. As time goes by, when their sponsor are done with them, they dumped them. Consequently, they become financially crippled. Hence, they turn their attention to the people by killing, intimidating, robbery, rape, and destruction of properties. Sara Suka is now the dominant criminal group in the state

and their activity increases on a daily basis, basically, resulting to chaos, and doom. Since, life and properties are no longer secured. People live in fear and this restricts their movement and other activities they enjoy. The utilization of Sara Suka in Bauchi and its implication has been a source of worry in recent years among the indigenous of Bauchi at large.

Hence, Infonaturale, (2009) added that Sara Suka group and their sponsor are not only seen as a threat to democracy, but also to the survival of the society at large. It is discouraging to see youth engaging in all sorts of criminal act that led them to a series of problems to their livelihood and its attainment consequences to the detriment of their future aspirations and dreams. The worst is the behavior of their sponsor who is whole worse than the Sara Suka members' themselves.

Therefore, this study focuses on such group in order to understand the real problem of our youth today. Though, there have been other attempts both by the government and academicians in trying to understand the problems associated with this concept, but the central point of concern here is, why is it that the activities of Sara Suka on the increase, as well as high rate of youth involvement in Sara Suka on daily bases? Thus, this study looked at Sara Suka problems in relation to youth marginalization, unemployment, illiteracy and poverty which led to the formation of Sara Suka by elites in the state.

Literature Review

Historically, political thuggery in Nigeria is dated back as colonial rule. Koko, (2011) opined that the history of political thuggery in Nigeria is as old as the history of modern Nigeria dating back to the late 1950s, when the British colonial masters allowed local Nigerian politician to partake in local member political activities within their geopolitical regions, all manners of political violence, political mobilization were deployed by local politicians. Lawanti (2009) believed that political thuggery (Yan-Daba) started in Kano in the first republic where the Northern People's Congress (NPC) recruited youth (Yan-Daba) to check the activities and election outcome of the rival party, the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU). To him, as the situation extended to other state, the exact reason that mark the emergence of Yan-Daba in Kano, accounted for the emergence of Sara Suka in Bauchi, Kalare in Gombe and Ecomog in Borno state, respectively. As regards to post democratic emergence of such group, he argued that the group was created by (the present governor) supporters basically to counter (the immediate past governor) in 2003 and 2007. The past administration as at then made use of the governmental powers to deny the present administration from contesting, and this is one of the reasons why the state is experiencing a series of Sara Suka activities.

Garba (2009) also believed that, the rate of Sara Suka activities and other crime in Bauchi are on the increase since the advent of democracy in the year 1999. The establishment of democratic institutions that provide certain fundamental rights such as freedom of expression, movement, religion and association give the room for some youth in the state to utilize this privilege and form an association called "Sara Suka". It is important to note that this association is not a formal rather it is informal,

that gain its support from the politicians during election and campaigns. The group at that period engages in intimidating the political opponents who pose a threat to their master's victory. Moreover, shortly after the 2003 general election, particularly in Bauchi state, this group resorts to all kinds of criminal activities ranging from thuggery, robbery, extortion, Sara Suka, drug addiction and even rape of women in order to earn a living. The situations become unbearable after the 2003 general election, until 2007 when the group lost their founding father Alhaji Abbas.

Theoretical Explanation

As a framework for analysis, the study used the elite theory and the sociological theory to explain the research work. The elite theory explain the connections between the thuggery groups and the politicians (elites), whilst the sociological theory examine the social problem of youth that led them to participate or acts negatively in the society. The elite theory analysis would be based on the works of Putnam (1976) Bottomore (1993), Dye (2000), Gonzalez (2012). Higley & Burton (2006) stated that, the elite theory was originated in the writings of Gaetano Mosca, Vilfredo Pareto, Robert Michels, and Max Webber. It emanated to challenge the Marxist theory of class in a state. The elite theory seeks to explain power relations within state systems. Being a theory of the state, it points that in every state, there's always a small minority that are economically powerful, they take decisions for the state, and are always very powerful in relation to other groups in society. Among the outstanding scholars of the elite theory is Vilfredo Pareto, who emphasized the fact that, the elite have more resources and are intellectually superior. Gaetano Mosca emphasized the characteristics of elite that makes them superior to other classes and that the elite are an organized minority, unlike the masses that are unorganized majority. Mosca, also posits that the ruling class is made up of sub-elites and ruling elite. The other theorists of the elite theory include Robert Michels, who explained that organizations are run by few individuals whose positions are stabilized by three basic principles. These are, the need for specialized staff, utilization of facilities by leaders of their organization and the fact that the elite have a lot of resources. The economic power of the elite, according to the theory affords them the opportunity to gain positions in state corporations and corporate boards; this gives them the opportunity to influence policies and policy-planning networks through donations, financial support of foundations or positions with policy makers. This affords them the power to determine policies of government. Moreover, the rest of the other groups in society are believed to be, or are incompetent, lack abilities to govern and less resourceful. When governments fail, the elite will lose because of their vested interests in government. Consequently, central to the elite theory is the fact that, in all societies, there are small minority groups (the elite) that do not only control the activities of other groups, but also have the power and will to compel, cajole, and influence others to do things the way they desire and to their advantage. The elite theory is thus very important in our study because, it is this minority that controls other groups like the thugs in Bauchi State, Nigeria.

On the other hand, the sociological theory postulates that social factors such as unemployment, hunger, poverty, illiteracy, stress, diseases and isolation are always the reasons for aggression and violence in the society (Osarenren 2000, Ortese 2004 & Akinde 2005). It is believed that most of the youth who engaged in thuggery acts in Bauchi state are either illiterate, unemployed, poor among other factors, and the most prevailing problem of youth in the state is unemployment and illiteracy. Therefore, this theory becomes important in analyzing and explaining the social reason on why people, especially youth act violently or engage in social disorder. Sara Suka is a group of thugs whose main act was to kill, assassinate, intimidate and rape while the youth got caught up in such acts as a result of lack of social factors in the societies where they are living. As employment continues to be a difficult thing to unemployed youth, Sara Suka remains the only alternative for survival. Until the question of high rate of unemployment, illiteracy and poverty among youth in Bauchi state is critically addressed, then the issue of Sara Suka and its insecurity threat would be mitigated.

Methodology

This study is based on qualitative case study method. Since the study is aim at exploring the Sara Suka menace in Bauchi. Patton (1985) stated that a qualitative research is an effort to understand a problem in their uniqueness as part of a specific context and the interactions. This means the qualitative method will help in exploring and understanding the main reason on why youth involved in Sara Suka activities in Bauchi. Though, the reason for chosen the qualitative approach is, thus, the research question start with “why and what” which means, why youth involve in Sara Suka and what are the possible way to prevent youth from such act in the state. Secondly, the topic needs to be explored by corroborating it with theoretical assumptions. Meanwhile, on the other hand, Zucker (2001:1) posited that case studies are research that focus on and gather in depth information about specific phenomena. Hence, the case study method utilizes in depth data gain from different sources and provide a certain and essential approach of explaining the problem of interest to the specific topic. The reason why the study choses the case study approach is because it provides very detailed information about a particular phenomenon and its utilization of multiple sources in the process of gathering the research information. Based on this reason, the study uses the Creswell four steps in designing the case study research. Creswell (1998:39) identifies four major stages in chosen a case study approach, and these are: The identification of the case, which is Sara Suka. The case is bounded by time and place. The time here is from 1999 - 2013 and the place is Makama B ward in Bauchi, Nigeria. The information gain comes from various sources (interview, observation and documents).

Sampling

A case study focuses on a system of sampling, which is bound in respect of time and place. Therefore, the boundaries of this study involved the geographical setting in Bauchi state and the time range 1999-2013. The specific setting or unit of analysis of the study is political thuggery (Sara Suka). In order to meet up with the research objective, the study identified six different groups of Sara Suka in the study area, and one active member of each group was purposively selected and interviewed on one on one, based on the position they occupied in their respective group. The informants of these group of Sara Suka can be recognized in this study as informants A, B, C, D, E and F respectively. Further more, in order to validate the information obtain from the Sara Suka members, the study also used snowballing to select one informant based on character and experience from these categories; academic expert, community head, vigilantes group (Yan Gora), Governmental and non-governmental organization officials (GO'S/NGO'S), also they can be recognized as informants 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively. (Refer to table 1 and 2 in appendix for the background of the informants). Saturation in this study becomes saturated after interviewing the first group (Sara Suka) but the study went on to add the second categories in order to add more and validate the information obtain from Sara Suka. The sample involves these categories in gathering data of the Sara Suka problem in Bauchi state, in order to avoid excessive information and to advance our perspective and understanding of the topic.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection was conducted in this study in two formats; the primary tool (interview and observation) and previous literature which was used to validate the information obtain from the primary sources based on qualitative method. Interviews were conducted on one on one interaction between the researcher and the informants. After the data was collected from the interview, then transcribing and coded process were employed for analysis and interpretation.

Therefore, the analysis and interpretation of this study involved a description of the context and setting of the area where the study is conducted. In regards to this, the context cases in this study include the understanding of both the historical and physical setting of Bauchi. With the above point of view, therefore, it can be understood that Sara Suka is a general name given to a group of thugs in Bauchi State, as such each group of these thugs has its own name which they use to identify their members, for example, we have the Yan Kwanan Kwaila, Hungry Lion Boys, etc. Due to the limited time for the study, the study would only choose three sub wards of the state, as a case. These wards, include the Kofar Idi, Karofin Madaki and Kofar Dumi, all in Makama B ward, in Bauchi state. The study, therefore, uses case study type of qualitative research to explore and describe the Sara Suka problem in the state. Gilham (2000:102) concluded that a case study approach normally brings about change in regards to social and economic aspect.

Findings

This area covers analysis and discussion of information gained from the individual respondents based on designed research questions, which aimed at finding out the causes on why youth involved in Sara Suka activities in Bauchi state, Nigeria. After scrutinizing and sorting the obtained information based of categories, the study comes up with the following themes of the research objectives.

Factors that influence Youth Participation in Sara Suka

There is no cause without an effect, and vice versa. Our intellectual capacity demands that we view situations from all ramifications in order to arrive at a proper conclusion. As a social problem, there must be reasons on why such things happen. So, the study identified the following as the major causes on the increase involvement of youth in Sara Suka in Bauchi State for instance.

Politicians

The fundamental cause to this present situation of Sara Suka menace and the reason why youth involves in it lies in the hand of Politician's (elites). Respondents believed that politicians play directly or indirectly role to youth involvement in Sara Suka. To some extent they strongly believed that politicians are the initiators of such groups. In similar view, Informer 1, believed that the real cause of youth involvement in Sara Suka are the politicians.

“Let me start defending my argument by giving you instance example: in recent time, some of the youth (Sara Suka boys) who happen to be hopeless in the society began to own tangible things. And they normally gain those things before or during elections as we normally see them driving a good car, spending money anyhow, please tell me? Where do they get all those things? And remember the resources are in the hand of the politicians (elites). Therefore, this clearly shows that the politicians give them such things, because they (politicians) want to get something in return from those youths. To me politicians are the first and fundamental causes to youth involvement in Sara Suka” (Informant 1).

The argument above stresses that politicians used their wealth to attracts the attention of youth, especially those youth with high ambition in the society. To further, Informer 2 also opined that:

“Absolutely yes, and I can say this, the political elites or so called politicians turn the Nigerian democratic system into do or die affairs, and they achieved this through recruitments of unemployed youth. Because some of them (politicians) know that they are incapable of winning an election or they cannot retain their position, as such they become interested in those jobless youths so that they can instigate them into any form of social act. Believe me; the politicians are doing this all because of their selfishness, political gain and nothing more” (Informant 2).

This point according to informer 2, pinpointed that because of the high interest and too ambitious of the elites to rule at all cost led them with no option than to recruit youth in a form of thugs to help them achieved their political and economic interest in the society. Moreover, Informer 3, also argued that

“Although the Sara Suka is highly and directly connected with politicians because sometimes we often witnessed situations where by or when these politicians refused to compensate or fulfill the promised they made to those groups (Sara Suka), the group even turn against the politicians themselves, through verbal harassment, intimidation and even destruction of properties. Therefore, it is clearly out that it is a win-win contract or agreements between them” (Informant 3).

With the above point of view, therefore, it is clear to speculate that politicians (elites) have played a vital role in Sara Suka menace and its emergence in the state and the country as a whole. Most important thing, here is to understand the reason why the politicians formed the group and how connected the Sara Suka groups are with the politicians (elites). The above assertion of the respondents demonstrated that there is a high linkage and connection between the elites and the Sara Suka group. Lawanti (2009) was on the view that recruiting youth under the flag of thugs in most societies in Nigeria have become a fashion to the elites in an attainment of political and economic interest. Shehu (2012) concluded that the elite and the youth should not be blame entirely but also the situation youth happens to find themselves, which most of them live in illiteracy and under poverty. On this note, therefore, illiteracy becomes one of the social forces that engendered and influenced the high rate of youth participation in social menace.

Illiteracy

In general, the concept of illiteracy is one of the social problem dwindling the developmental progress of most societies in Nigeria and Africa at large, though the concept cannot be limited to some continent, rather to the entire developing countries of the world. Therefore, illiteracy has remained as one of the fundamental problems of youth in most of societies Nigeria. Nigerian watch (2014) reported that Nigeria is one of the highest numbers of children out of school in the world, that is about 10.5 million out of 61 million children that are not attending school are from Nigeria. This means that illiteracy has become one of the greatest challenges to both the federal and state government and this has contributed immensely to the high rate of youth involvement in Sara Suka. Also, NEDS (2010) mentioned that there is a high rate of children between the ages of 6-16 years who are unable to read and write in Bauchi, with 52% who never attended school. UNESCO (2012) added that only 34.1% are literate within the ages of 6 and above in Bauchi. And this clearly shows that most of youth in the state, are living under illiteracy. Informer 1, accused the level of illiteracy among the youth as one of the major causes to their involvement in social crime.

“If our street is seen, the only thing that can be sighted is youth mingling themselves up and down during school hours. On several occasions many were invited to be questioned on why are they not in school and they always give different excuses. I believed this situation has a long consequences that would affect not only them, but also their junior ones” (Informant 1).

Informer 3, also noted that the high rate of illiteracy facing youth in the society always led to the evolvment of social vices, and these issue remain the important aspect of social phenomena that need an urgent attention by the authorities.

“Oh yes! The increase rate of illiteracy in the state is a serious issue that needs to be addressed, and the implication is that these youth can be convinced with little word as they don’t know what is good to them as a result of their illiteracy” (Informant 3).

On the bases of these informer 4, added that the implications of youth under illiteracy line is that these army of youth can lured into any social tendencies,

“Looking at the nature of the Nigerian society, the level of illiteracy, increases especially among youth. This is as a result of parent carelessness for not making sure that their child goes to school every day. The worse is the parents that send those children to “Talla” (small sales). And this kid would end up rooming about the street in the name of “Talla” instead of being in the school and that can create a lot of problem to the family and the state in general” (Informant 4).

Informer 2, also believed and concluded that illiteracy played a very significant role in youth involvement in Sara Suka. And illiteracy is not just a problem for the youth, but also to the society as a whole (Informant 2).

Therefore, illiteracy is to some extent the total and backbone to Sara Suka syndrome and why youth participate in such social vice, though the abject of poverty, was the first reasons for the parent who could not cater for the basic needs of their families let alone paying school fees for their children. Hence, the higher the rate of illiteracy increases among the youths, the more chances of securing a good job is blocked which led to high level of youth unemployment.

Unemployment

Unlike the illiteracy, unemployment also contributed the low speed of developmental chances, so also increases the level of youth participation in social vice in societies. Hence, the concept of unemployment was viewed in some direction as social whilst other sees it as economic, none the less the most important thing here is that whether it is a social or economic factor, it all led to high rate of social disorder in society. Having clearly understanding upon these, it can portray that unemployment is another aspect that hinders and increased youth participation in Sara Suka. As of 2012 there is a high rate of unemployment occasioned by lack of skills among youth.

The national bureau of statistics (2010) reported that as of 2010 the state was among the three least unemployed state of the country. The state has about 41.4% rate of unemployed youth. And all the members of the Sara Suka interviewed (Informers A, B, C, D, E & F), confessed that, they join the group because they want to earn a living, since they have no jobs or skills to earn money. Informer 4 confirmed that:

“What we need to understand here, is the implications of unemployed youth in the society. The implication of these unemployed youth as I understand is that these youth can be ready to hire themselves out for cheap to any sort of job, and can be ready to do all sorts of social vices. This can increase their participation in social vices. As these youths are unemployed and they can no longer secure a good job, they become hopeless and reckless in the society, as they can’t even afford to buy even a piece of cigarette” (Informant 4).

Informer 1, also asserted that unemployment is another problem to youth involvement in Sara Suka and not only with their involvement but to all societal problems,

“I can’t imagine a society where by its youth who occupied 2/3 of the population cannot secure a job. If youth cannot find themselves in the work force that can keep them busy for about ten-twelve hours, then they will be ready to do anything to earn a living. And this is a very serious problem”. (Informant 1)

Meanwhile, informer 2, opined that youth unemployment always provides the chances for the most politician to recruit such unemployed youth as a shortcut to employment in an attainment to their political and economic interest in the society

“I can swear to Allah, that youth unemployment gave the opportunity to the politicians or any political elites to recruit such unemployed youth as they refer it as {shortcut to employment}. And mark you, the politicians denied or refuse to give youth employment because they have a plan for youth in the future, especially within the period of campaign and election by recruiting the youth and make them to serve as thugs. Therefore, lack or inadequate policies on job creation by the government significantly damaged and increased the rate of youth involvement in Sara Suka” (Informant 2).

Informer 3, concluded that the fact is this youth engaged in Sara Suka because they don’t have any valuable job in their own hand. He further blames the government for their incapable of designing policies that can at least provide a job for 2000 youth every year.

It is important to stress that all the Sara Suka members contacted in this study were jobless. Thus, the concept of unemployment becomes challenging among youth, the state government and the federal government. It is said, now in the country people bought job for themselves, meaning one has to spend thousands of Naira (Nigerian currency) before he/she can secure a job. This is a serious challenging to the state and the country as a whole. Therefore, unemployment plays a vital role in youth involvement in Sara Suka in the state. It is important to note that, unemployment normally paved way to high abject of poverty in society, and every human want to earn a good living.

Poverty

This is another concept which most of the developing countries are familiar with. It is a concept that has to do with low income of persons, in relation to their inability to satisfy their needs and necessity, coming from the angle of wants. Nigeria is a country that produces two million barrels of oil a day, and has the seventh largest oil reserved in the world. And yet poverty remains one of the striking forces of Nigerian social problems. In respect to Bauchi, youths participate in Sara Suka because of the situation they found themselves, i.e. they have been marginalized and dominated by the elites. Six (6) respondents out of six of the Sara Suka members stated that, they participate fully in Sara Suka because they come from poor backgrounds and they are in a hard situation at home, their parent cannot even feed them, talk less of other things (Informants ABCDE&F). Informer 2, on the other hand agreed that poverty contributed immensely to youth participation in Sara Suka.

“Well! The present situation people are in now in the state, to me, I can say the majority live under poverty. Not to talk of the Sara Suka, but in general, these situations led to hardship and the great challenges of earning a living. Personally, this can contribute to their participation in Sara Suka” (Informant 2).

In addition to above, Informer 4 stress that most of the youth who happen to found themselves in such act of social vices are people from poor background of the society

“Yes. We cannot hide the fact that 99.9% if not 100% of those boys; (you know what I mean by those boys right), they are if not all from a poor background and hardship. Their parents are poor” (Informant 4).

Informer 3 also believed that the nature of the Nigerian environment demonstrated highly that most of the people are in poverty and hardship, which resulted in frustration and high level of security challenges in the state and the country as a whole (Informant 3).

Therefore, it is clearly understood that most of these Sara Suka members are from poor background. The reality is that they are poor and always look for a way to earn a living like other people in the society. Hence, there is a little blame on the part of their parents, for allowing their abject of poverty to destroyed the future of their own children.

Parents' Roles

In relation to feeding, all the respondents concurred on the parent's role in youth involvements in Sara Suka. For example, Informer 2 outlined that:

“Parents are to be blamed for their act of negligence on their children as they don't know their child's way about and the group they associate themselves with at a given time” (Informant 2).

Informer 3 also added that parent contribute immensely towards youth involvements in thuggery (Sara Suka).

“Definitely, parent most be blamed, as they don’t pay so much attention to their children. Sometimes they don’t even feed or sponsored their children to school, though with the current situation of {ba kudi} no money they can at least send them to free Arabic school which would shape their thinking and have good orientation” (Informant 3).

Four (4) out of the six (6) members of Sara Suka validates this view, where they stated that they had not seen their parent for the past 2-4 years, one of them mentioned that his parent chase him out of the house (Informant F) and the other one posited that he doesn’t want to stay with his parent as the parent, don’t even care about him and are too harsh on him (Informant C). The other two complain that their parents always ask them to bring something to them, they don’t care about what they are doing but always pressurized them to bring something to them. (Informant B&D) while the last two, feels staying independent to themselves (Informant A&E).

Informer 4 added that child responsibility lies in the hand of parents especially the attitude of upbringing, parent cannot denied that responsibility to their child

“Absolutely! To some extent blame can be impose to most of the parents. You know these days’ parents are too weak in controlling their children. The worst case scenario is that some parents are even afraid of their children. Whatever the child says is final. And this is not good to the environment. It is not the children to be blamed fully; the parent should also be blame (Informant 4).

It is against this background, Informer 1, concluded that the fundamental’s causes to youth dis-attitudinal or involvements in any social menace depend on the parent i.e. the parents are the ones to train, educate and teach their children towards realizing their dreams and good attitudes, “Charity begins at home”. Based on these, parents can be hold responsible in some extent to youth involvement in social menace, for not caring and carter for their basic and fundamental needs in the initial stage.

Financial Attractiveness

This could be simply be defined as the desire to earn money from all sorts of ways with such recognition and fame to the possible achievement some choice needs and wants. Human beings are born with passion, desire and wish, and all this is achieved through financial capabilities. These Sara Suka members are also humans like any other person. They always wish and want to have something that is of passion. Therefore, financial attractiveness is a major factor towards youth involvement in Sara Suka, since these youths are poor and frustrated. Informer 2 stated that

“Let me clarify this to you, do you know the situation of youths now a day, especially in this state. Oh no. Money! Money!!! It became their life and without it they cannot live. Because they are in a rush to have fancy things, resulted to willingness and desire to marry beautiful wives, own a good car, good mansion to live in and also desire to travel abroad. All of these are the reasons why they hired themselves out to the politicians, cultist, rituals and many other evil principle in the society, with the expectation of getting something tangible from their masters” (Informant 2).

Informer 3 added that right from the beginning the youth go into agreement with politicians that if the politicians win the election they will compensated them with something tangible

“Yes, rights from the beginning, is a win-win agreement, once the Politician’s declared winner they normally compensate them with some amount of money or even place them on monthly salary for some period. Meanwhile, in a situation whereby the politicians refuse to offer anything to them, the Sara Suka members do turn against their principal” (Informant 3).

Informer 4 concluded that the current situation youth are in anything finance can attracts them to do everything since they are desperate enough to own something in their life.

“As mentioned earlier about the current situation of the Nigeria, I must say that youths are desperate to own money in the bank, so that at any time it can be used for their needs, though some of them are helping their parent in one way or the other with the little income from the said activities, while others lavished up the little they have in wrong ways such as chasing women and taken to drugs etc.” (Informant 4).

Therefore, since these youths are poor the politicians used their means and other sorts of wealth to attract the attention of these youth, in order to use them for political gains. Since youth have no any way or chance of having such economical means, they surrender themselves to these weak politicians cheaply. So, financial attractiveness contributed also to the increase rate of youth involvement in Sara Suka activities in the state.

Passion and Drugs

In recent times, drugs addiction has started becoming one of the social problem of most youth in the world, as most of them sees it as passion in their life. Viewing Bauchi and her environs in this direction, youths are found by taking excessive and hard drugs for several reasons which are dumbfounded. In lieu of this, Informer 2 lamented that in real sense drugs has become a passion among youth in the state, to some extent that for a youth to get recognized among his fellow colleagues he has to be drug addicts

“In reality, drugs and passion is now the order of the day within the youth. Meaning, you cannot be respected or recognized by the fellow youth who are taking drugs unless you are part and parcel of them. So, to be one of the toughest boys, you have to be addicted to drugs. And this has become a passion for the youth in recent times” (Informant 2).

Most of the Sara Suka interviewed are on drugs. They lamented that “drugs give us the zeal, power and authority above any other person or persons”. They see everybody as animals that they can crush at any given time they so desire. Similarly, they added that if not because of the drugs they would not have achieved or do anything (Informant A, B, C&D).

To further, Informer 3 added that the availability of excessive drugs has a high implication to the youth and the Society in general

“Umm! The increase and availability of excessive, illicit drugs in the state and the country as a whole, also contributed to youth negative attitude. Although the responsible agencies are doing their duty to reduce the number of importations of this intoxicated drugs, but still youth knows their way on how to get those drugs. Sometimes, is there masters (politicians) who provided such drugs to them, so that they can work without any fear in them” (Informant 3).

Informer 1 believe that:

“It’s not just the passion that make them what they are today, rather the drugs, because they’re insane, they can wear any sort of cloth. Look at the kind of dress and attitude which they consider as passion, do you realize it is totally different from our traditional and religion way, to me this is totally nonsense” (Informant 1).

To buttress further, between January-June 2014, the national drugs law enforcement agency (NDLEA) has seized about 346.5kgs illicit drugs in the state. And 117 suspects all youth were arrested while 73 convictions were recorded within the period, and most of those arrested are youth (City voiced, 2014). This has clearly indicated that youth have access to illicit drugs and they can take it for their personal motive at any time. To this point drugs can said to be another form or reason for youth involvement in Sara Suka menace.

From the foregoing discussion, therefore, it is understood that youth participation in Sara Suka act is due to so many reasons. Their activities include; killing, assassination, intimidation, threat, rape of women and destruction of property and all of these, has a direct or indirect consequences to human endeavor and to the society in general. Hence, some of their activities occurred, especially when the groups were dumped by their sponsored, which lead them to turn against the other innocent inhabitants. As such, fundamental to this problem is not just the Sara Suka members rather the politicians who recruit them during campaign and sponsored their activities at election time.

More so, the informant’s view (findings) on why youth participate in Sara Suka were clearly identified and proven by both the elite theory and the sociological theory assumptions. This is because, the finding shows that the Sara Suka boys are illiterate, poor, and unemployed, this assertion was affirmed by the sociological point of view that when youth lack social factors (employment, literacy) then there is every possibility for them to take part in social disorder like thuggery. Pareto added that other groups apart from the minority elite are incompetent, lack abilities to govern and they are economically down (poor), this testifies why the Sara Suka members are illiterates, and poor. On the other hand, the study, understand that the Sara Suka groups are highly connected and fully sponsored by the elite (politicians), which was testify also by the elite theory, that the elite do not only control the activities of other groups, but also have the power and will to influence others to do things the way they desire, that will protect their interest. So, since the Sara Suka groups are poor, they normally hire themselves to the politicians who are more resourceful in the society.

Recommendations and Future Work

As the problem of Sara Suka becomes a threat to the government and governed, intellectuals begin to debate in finding a possible solution to the problem, which would help in combating and alleviating the Sara Suka activities, to the policy makers in the decision making process. Based on this the study recommended the following ways in solving youth involvement in Sara Suka; the government should pass a law that will sanction any politicians who found using youth as thugs and undertakings must be sign before for campaign and election, if any found should be punished by terminating him or her from contesting. The government should provide policies that would eradicate poverty by establishing employment to the youth or through any means of skills. For example, the government should establish skills acquisition centers where the youth can acquire entrepreneur skills. And during the graduation the government should support this youth by providing them with equipment and machines for free or at subsidized rates, so that they can depend on their own. It is believed that job creation is one of the major cures in combating youth's involvement in any social vices. As for future research, further research is required of the role of government towards combating or solving the Sara Suka and any other sort of criminal acts in the state. More investigation on the implication of Sara Suka menace to the society is also needed.

Conclusion

With regards to the above point of view, it is clearly stated that youth involvement in Sara Suka depends on certain reason, but the real cause is the politicians (elite) who uses their economic and political power to recruit unemployed youth for their political gains. It is crucial to understand that these youths become reluctant not that they want to, rather the current situation they found themselves in the Nigeria political system.

The insecurity of Sara Suka in the state is the result of several factors, including a general deficit of government and governance, political violence and within crisis that is generally instigated by the elites in striving to have control of the state power. In order to combat the worsening situation of Sara Suka and to improve security, both the state and federal government should encourage and defend the ethics of democracy at the same time fortify public and community institutions that are necessary for human life.

Subsequently, the safety of the individuals and the security of the state cannot be achieved or guaranteed if the people continue to deny their maximum support to the security forces and the elites continue in one way or the order undermine democracy and good governance in the state. It is, therefore, mandatory to both elite and the citizens to join hands in the struggle for peace and reassurance of good governance in the state.

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Appendix

The background of the informants

Table 1: The Sara Suka members

Informants	Background
Informer A	
Informer B	
Informer C	
Informer D	Youth, active leaders of Sara Suka group in the study area
Informer E	
Informer F	

Table 2: Other respondents

Informants	Background
Informer 1	An elderly statesman and district head of the study area (traditional ruler)
Informer 2	Msc holder and chairman for non-governmental organization.
Informer 3	Phd holder of political science with specialization in peace studies.
Informer 4	Founding and active member of vigilantes group in the study area.