COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE OF BOKO HARAM REPENTANT TERRORIST IN MAIDUGURI METROPOLITANS COUNCIL BORNO, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed people's willingness to accept repentant Boko Haram and the role of Government and Non-Governmental organizations toward public risk-free coexistence campaigns. Primary and secondary roots of data were used for this study. First, a structured questionnaire was used to source data from 382 sampled respondents. The results revealed that most respondents were affected by Boko haram, 74%, while 26% were not. Furthermore, the study also showed that most respondents are not ready to accept Boko Haram Repentance, with 79% because they killed their relatives, burned their social environments, caused hardship, and migrated. Also, they fear that when the Government fails to fulfil their promise, they can rejoin the group because they are not to be trusted. At the same time, with few people, 21% are ready to accept the Boko Haram repentance because they believe peace will be restored. Some of the reasons are some were forced to join the group, some were their relatives, and lastly, some were brainwashed. Finally, the following recommendations were proffered. Firstly Government and NGOs should increase their efforts to enlighten the people to accept Boko Haram because, based on the findings, enlightenment camping is not enough. Secondly, the Government should ensure they fulfilled their promise to Boko Haram repentance after they were integrated because if they fail, they can rejoin the group again.

Keywords: Insurgency, Boko Haram, Repentant, Terrorist

INTRODUCTION

Security concerns have become one of the problematic issues in the world (UNISDR, 2015), as people have become exposed to violence and other forms of instability (Bloom and Cadarette, 2019). Thus, food insecurity, a rise of corruption; civil strife; kidnapping, among others, have stripped the world of peaceful coexistence, overstretching public subsistence thresholds (Abdulrashid, Saifullahi and Amir, 2018). Terrorism, arguably, is the main threat to global peace and stability in the contemporary world. Since the dawn of the 21st century, the incidence of terrorism has been on a steady rise worldwide. The trend was more or less a national or regional affair and seemed to be constrained to a few isolated places, such as Northern Ireland, the Basque Country in Northern Spain, and some areas of the Middle East. However, since September 11, 2001, the Twin Towers' destruction in New York has manifested into a worldwide phenomenon (June, 2006:4; Bloom and Cadarette, 2019).In contemporary social discourse, terrorism has been used to denote forms of unconventional, illegitimate violence targeted by a group at the state, society, or any section of the population (Adibe, 2020). In this direction, Yusof (2012) observes that terrorism is the aggression unjustly carried out by individuals, groups or states against human beings. It includes forms of unjustly terrifying, harming, threatening, and killing of people and banditry. It also consists of any violent act or threat as part of the individual or collective criminal plan aimed at terrifying or harming people or endangering their lives. Lack of resilience, poor emotional stability and intolerance constitute the principal causes of most conflicts In Nigeria, characterized by fighting, violence, destructions, shootings and killings aimed at displacing, subduing or eliminating others to have access to unreserved powers, positions, possession and control of scarce resources leading to disruption of social security and consequently destructions and displacement of lives and properties which usually culminates in various internalize feelings, physical and emotional injuries in addition to some psychosocial effects (Tor-Anyiin, 2016).

Nigeria is full of many forms of terrorism, including religious crises, inter and intra-ethnic crises, communal crises, kidnapping, Boko Haram insurgency to socio-political conflicts (Tor-Anyiin 2016). Terrorism has become a topic of discussion nowadays, especially in the Northwest and Northeastern parts of the country, where terrorism such as armed banditry, cattle rustling, kidnapping and Boko-haram are the central discussion (Hamidu and Gamabri, 2020). Boko-haram is ranked the fourth deadliest terrorist group in the world (Global Terrorism Index report, 2019). Borno State has remained the instigator and the epicentre of the terrorism, where communities have witnessed the rapid killing, Bomb lasting and burning of properties by Boko Haram terrorists during its intense period (2009 to 2019). As a result, over 2,000,000 innocent people have lost their lives, and about 2,114,000 persons have been displaced. Apart from a trillion of naira hauled, dozens of citizens were abducted and killed. The incidences have resulted in rural-urban migration, thus forcing many to flee their ancestral homes in multitudes unprepared and took refuge in the neighbouring States and Countries like Niger, Chad and Cameroon as Internal Displaced People (IDPs), where victims' properties worth trillions of naira were destroyed (Ngohi, 2016; Ngohi, 2019; Hamidu and Gamabri, 2020).Boko-haram has carried out countless attacks and continued to do so sporadically. However, the year 2019 witnessed a decline in the activity, especially with the death of many terrorists, including their leader 'Shekau' (Ngohi, 2019). In addition, the members of Boko Haram started laying down their arms and surrendering to the military in their numbers following the Federal Government's reiteration in 2018 of her unconditional amnesty, education, rehabilitation, de-radicalization, skills acquisition, training and subsequent reintegration of the dependents with their community and immediate family (Ngohi, 2019). In 2020, an estimated 1,400 repentant Boko-

haram insurgents were released and resettled back into the community (Adibe, 2020). While these are laudable, it raises several concerns about the transparency of the selection process used for those being released and the capability of the Nigerian reintegration programs such as "Operation Safe Corridor" to effectively screen the combatants to ensure they pose minimal or no threat to the host communities.

Studies talk about Boko-haram violence. Examples include Okoli *et al.* (2014), who looked into terrorism and humanitarian crisis in Nigeria: insights from Boko-haram insurgency. The study of Vanda (2018) also attempted to assess amnesty, defectors' programs, leniency measures, informal reconciliation, and punitive responses to Boko Haram. In addition, Anthony (2019) evaluated the implications of Boko Haram insurgency on integration: pieces of evidence from Northern Nigeria. Other perception studies include Umar (2020), which assessed community perception of the role of the civilian joint task force (CJTF) in resisting the Boko Haram culture of violence in Borno State, Nigeria. Finally, Tarela et al. (2020) studied community perspectives of former terrorist combatants, militants and reintegration programs in Nigeria.Furthermore, Saheed (2022) wrote on community receptivity to restoring Operation Safe Corridor's deracialized Ex-Boko Haram members in Northeastern Nigeria. In addition, Ngohi et al. (2022) assessed guilt feelings among Boko Haram repentant and perceived entrepreneurs to be engaged in Self-reliance: counselling interventions. However, these studies have not looked into the community perspective of Boko Haram repentant, especially concerning living conditions. Therefore, this study aims to explore such views from the people of Bulabulin, Grange III and Shehuri South as well as the role of Governmental and Non-Governmental organizations in ensuring peaceful coexistence within the host communities. Apart from being among the most highly populated areas within the Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, the three wards in question are mostly affected by Boko-haram insurgency and seem to be the most desirable regions for the resettlement of ex-terrorists. Therefore, beg the attention of this study.

MATERIALS AND METHOD
Study Area
Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC), a major city in the Northeastern corner of Nigerian, is located between latitudes 11˚04'N and 11˚44'N; and between longitudes 13˚04'E and 13˚44'E. It covers a total land area of 543 km2, making it the largest city in the Northeastern region of Nigeria (Daura, 2002). MMC shares the border with three local government areas (LGAs): Jere, Konduga and, to a minor extent, part of Mafa. The area is within the vast open unfussy, flat or gently undulating, developed on young sedimentary rocks of the Chad Formation. This relatively flat terrain slopes toward Lake Chad and has an average relief of 300 m and 600 m above sea level (Daura *et al.,* 2001). Maiduguri lies on and at the bottom of the Bama Ridge, which runs in a Northwest/Southeast direction from the Nigeria-Niger boundary to the Cameroun Mountains in the Southeast. The topographic landscape to its Northeast and Southwest is virtually undifferentiated and flat. The area is drained by River Ngadda and its tributary (Mala, 2007). The study area is characterized by low annual precipitation (650 mm), high evaporation and perennial water shortage (Daura, 2001). The highest rainfall is received in August. The mean monthly temperature is consistently above 20˚C. Still, the daily extremes vary in a wide range reaching up to 47˚C in April The soil of Maiduguri and its environs may be classified into sands of Aeolian origin and the beach ridge sediment, vertisol

or lagoonal clay and fluvisol and clay soil of alluvial deposit. There are also brown and reddish-brown, regosols, hydromorphic and alluvial soils which are favourable for agricultural activities of many types. It had a population of 635,000 in 2006 (NPC, 2009).

Data type and variables
This study utilizes primary sources of data. The primary source involved a field survey through a structured questionnaire designed for the residents of the study area to solicit data relevant to the study's objectives. The information collected included socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, duration of their stay in the area; how the Boko-haram insurgency has affected them; willingness to accept the ex-Boko-haram repentant. The interview guide is also used to solicit information from disaster management actors from both State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) Borno office (Government) and non-governmental (Search for Common Ground) organizations. In addition, related books and newsletters, including published and unpublished articles obtained, are used to serve as additional information for the study.

Sampling technique
The residents of Bulabulin, Gwange III and Shehuri South within the age of puberty, who are victims of Boko-haram terrorism and did not take part in the act, constitute the population of the study from which the sample size should have been drawn. Since there is no available documented figure of the targeted population, also the entire 1991 population figure of Borno State (which recorded data at the community level) Even though much effort was made through the National Population Commission (NPC) could not be obtained. The 2006 census figure of MMC as a local government (635,000) is adopted and projected (at a 3% national growth rate) to the year 2022 (equation 1); this puts it at 822,000. Krejcie and Morgans (1970) provide a "sampling size selection table". The study used a 95% confidence and a 5% margin of error to select 382 samples. In addition, being inseparable in terms of proximity and urbanization and having similar city structures and socio-economic patterns, the three communities, were assigned an equal number of questionnaires.

$$Po = P1 (1+r) n$$

Technique of data collection and analysis
Three *'Bulamas'* (district heads) from Bulabulin, Grange III and Shehuri South were traced and visited, who guided the research team throughout the field survey due to the Boko-haram sensitivity. In addition, six community representatives (two from each community) were assigned by the *'Bulamas'* who assisted the team in mobilizing a few respondents from respective wards. However, the study employed a snowball sampling technique to access more respondents. The choice of this sampling technique was based on the fact that the data required is much better and more efficient if provided by the Boko-haram victims who have been permanent residents of the study area. This necessitates the conscious identification of individual(s) who the research assistants know with such unique characteristics. More people are then identified through them and those to others until the required samples have concurred. The questionnaire is self-administered, and where those who do not understand English, the research team interpreted via common native languages of MMC (Hausa and Kanuri). The data received were analyzed using a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS), and the results obtained were subjected to simple

descriptive statistics in the form of a percentage. Reins (5) rank Likert scale was used to summarize the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

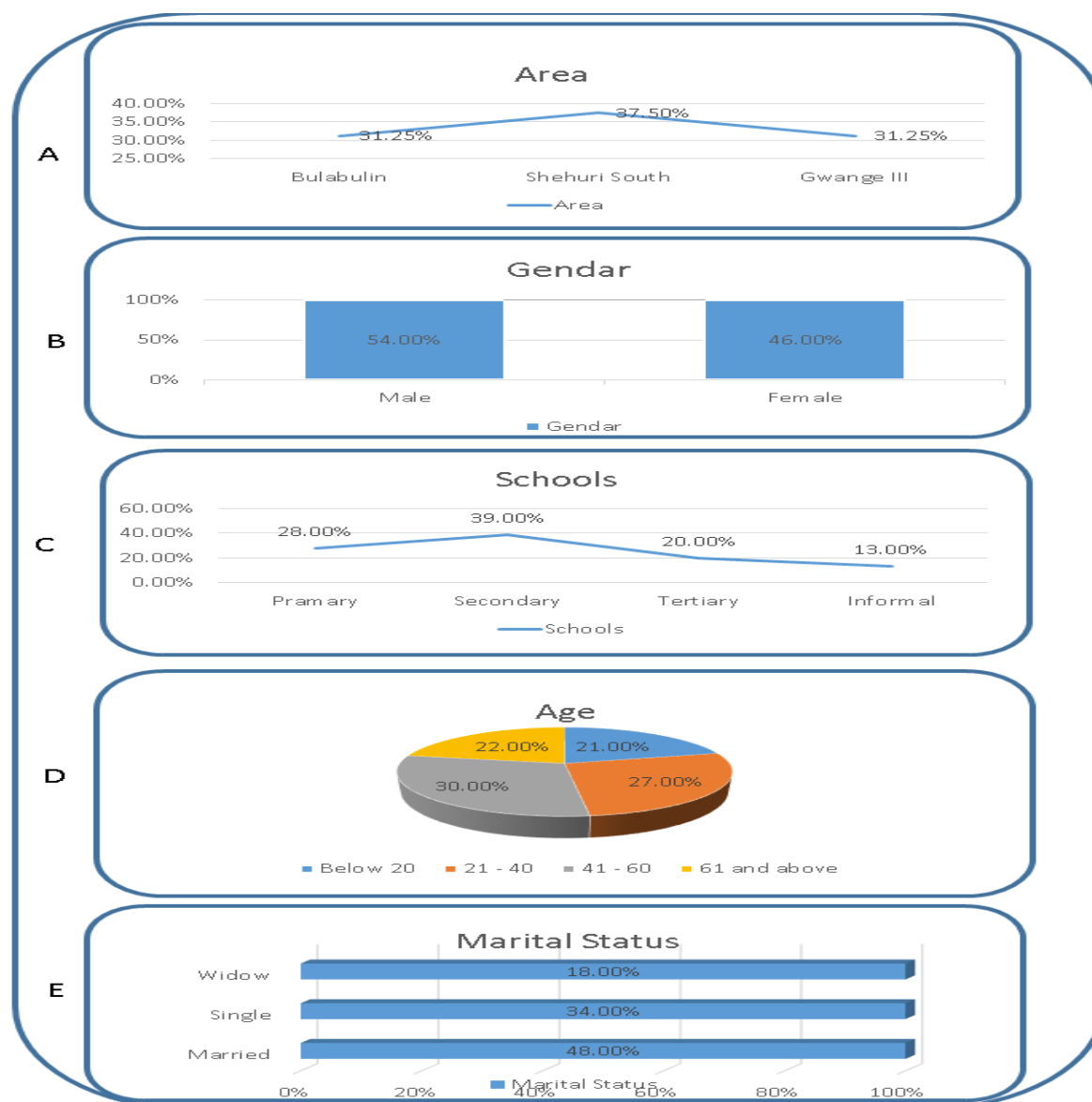**Socio-demographic characteristics of the Respondents**

FIGURE 1 SHOWS:- DEMORGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

(A) Figure one shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents, and the questionnaire was distributed to three areas, namely Bulabulin, Shehuri South and Grange III. An equal number of the questionnaire was distributed to Grange III and Bulabulin because they have almost the same population (31.2%). In comparison, Shehuri South with (37.6%) because it has more population than the two Areas. In addition, **(B)** in figure one displayed the gender of the respondents (54.0%) male and (46.0%) female, the reason why the number of female respondents is not equal to the number of the male because in Northern Nigeria majority of females a shy to come out and engaged themselves in such kind of research and also the nature of the culture in the Area contributes to their limited numbers. However, **(C)** in figure one shows the literacy level of the respondents with (28.0%) that attended Primary School, (39.0%) Secondary, (20.0%) Tertiary institution and (13%) attending informal education. In addition, **(D)** in figure one shows the Age of the respondent

with (21%) below 20 years, (27%) from 21 to 40 years, (30%) 41 to 60, and 61 to above is (22%). Furthermore, **(E)** in figure one shows the marital status of the respondents with (18.0%) widow, (34%) single and (48%) married people. **(F)** In figure two shows the awareness level of the respondents on Boko Haram Repentance, with (74%) Saying yes that their aware about the repentance and (26%) saying No, they are not aware. Furthermore, **(G)** Showing the effects of Boko Haram on them (79%) of the respondent notified them that they were affected, while (21%) notified them that they were not affected. In addition.

Awareness level and reasons for accepting and Rejecting Boko Haram Repentance

(H) displayed the opinion of the respondent on whether they are going to accept Boko Haram Repentance to their community or not, with (72%) saying they are not going to accept them while (28%) saying they will accept them back

to the community and leave together like before. So this goes in line with work of Ngohi *et al*. (2022) that shows majority of community are rejecting chance of accepting the Boko Haram repentance However, **(I)** in figure two shows why 28% of respondents will accept repentance. One of the .

opinions by the respondents is to have peace with (47.0%) strongly agree with that statement, then (45.0%) Agree, with (3.0%) dis agree and strongly dis agree each and lastly (2.0%) remain neutral without showing their support or not on the statement.
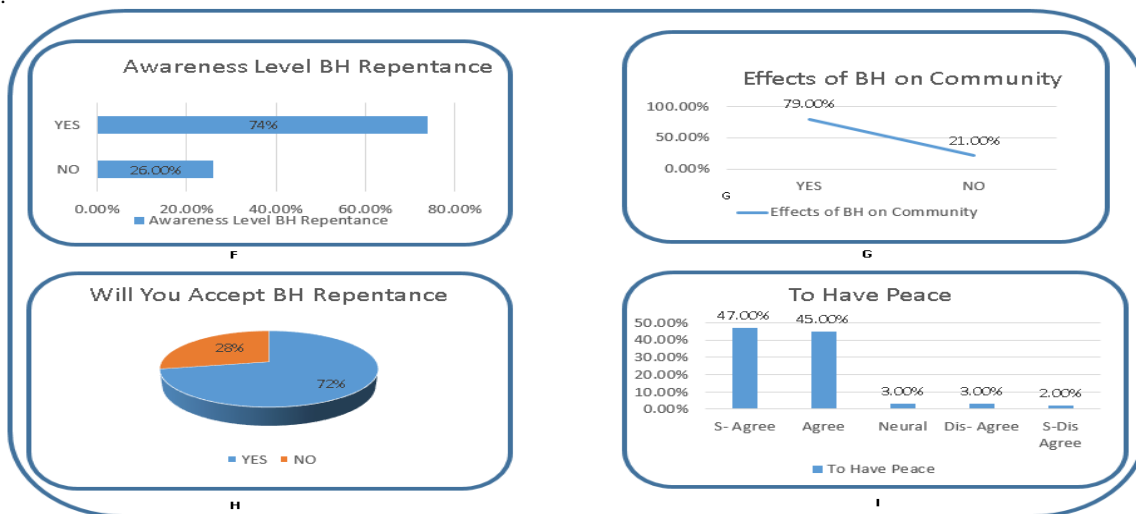

FIGURE 2:-SHOWS RESPONDENTS EFFECTS ON BOKO HARAM, AWARENESS LEVEL ON REPENTANCE AND THEIR SAY ON WEATHER TO ACCEPT THE BOKO HARAM REPENTANCE OR NOT.
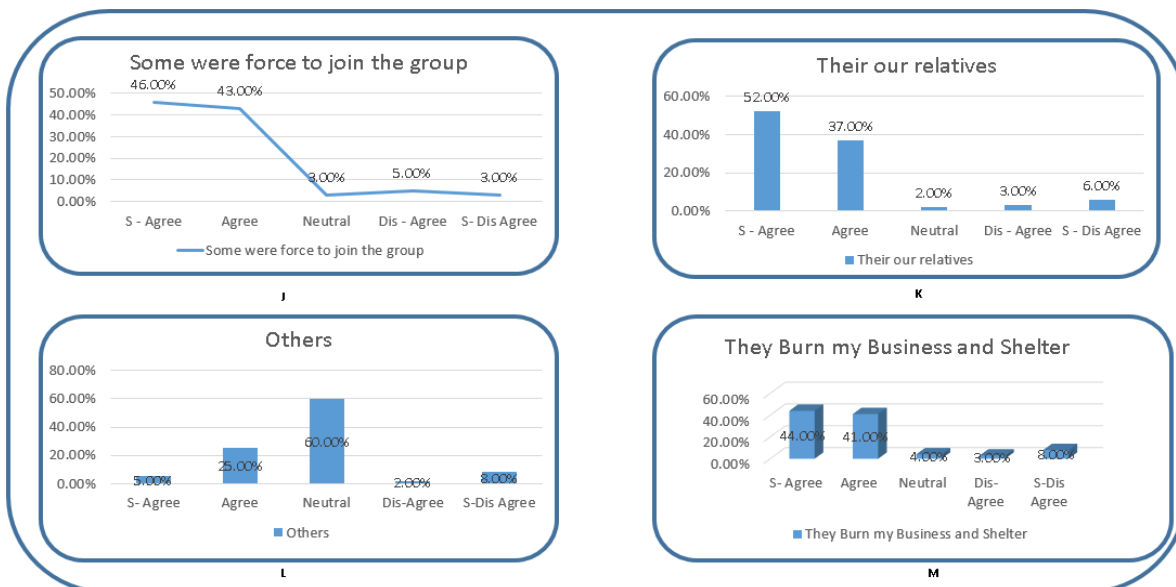

FIGURE 3:- SHOWS RESPONDENTS SAY ON WEATHER TO ACCEPT THE BOKO HARAM REPENTANCE OR NOT.

(J) Figure three shows the opinion of the respondents that thinks they will accept them because some of the Boko Haram members were forced to join the group, with (46%) Strongly Agree, (43%) Agree, (5%) Disagree, (3%) Strongly Disagree and (3%) Neutral. In addition, **(K)** shows another respondent's opinion on why they will accept Boko Haram's repentance to their community. The opinion is because they think it is their relatives with (52%) Strongly Agree, (37%) Agree, (3%) Dis Agree, (6%) Strongly Dis Agree and (2%) Neutral on the opinion. Moreover **(L)** about (5%) of respondents strongly agree that there is another reason why they will accept Boko Haram Repentance. In comparison, (25%) Agree, (2%) Disagree, (8%) Strongly disagree that there are no other reasons beyond the mention above that will

make them accept Boko Haram's repentance, and lastly, (60%) remain neutral on the opinion. However, **(M)** in figure three shows why people will not accept Boko Haram's repentance to the community. About (44%) of respondents strongly agree that Boko Haram have burned their Business places and shelter that is why they will not accept them, with (41%) Agree on this statement, (3%) Disagree, (8%) Strongly Disagree and (2%) remain neutral on this statement. Furthermore, **(N)** displayed the opinion of the respondent that they do not want to accept Boko Haram repentance because they killed their relatives, with about (40%) strongly agreeing with this statement, (35%) Agree, (11%) Dis Agree, (6%) Strongly disagree with the statement and (8%) remain neutral. In addition, **(O)** in figure four notify the reasons why some

respondents do not want to accept Boko Haram Repentance, because they cause Hardship to the community with (34%) Strongly Agree, Agree (42%), Disagree (11%), with (6%) strongly Disagree with the statement and lastly (7%) are

neutral. This outcomes agrees with what Tor-Anyiin 2016 assert that Boko Haram members has killed so many people in the study area and also burned many people in social environment.
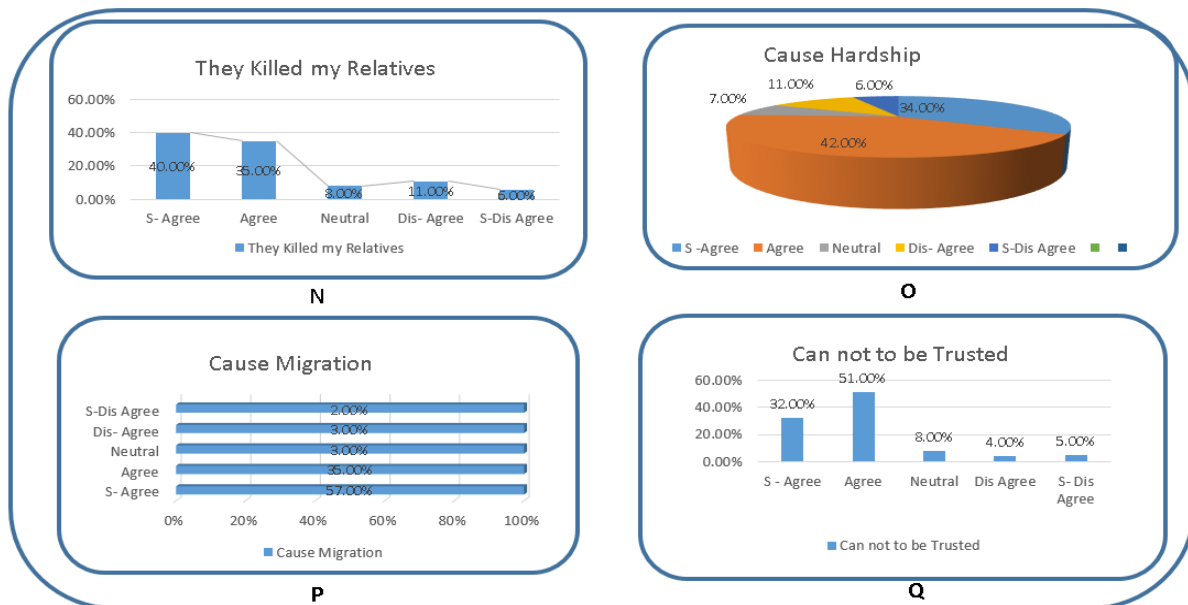
FIGURE 4:- SHOWS RESPONDENTS SAY ON WEATHER TO ACCEPT THE BOKO HARAM REPENTANCE OR NOT.

(P) Figure four displayed the opinion of the respondent that says Boko Haram has caused Migration to the society that is why they will not accept them with (57%) Strongly Agree, (35%) agree, (3%) disagree, (2%) strongly disagree with the statement and lastly (3%) remain neutral. Moreover, **(Q)** in figure four shows why some of the community members are not ready to accept Boko Haram repentance because they

cannot be trusted with (32%) strongly agree,(51%) agree,(4%) Disagree with (6%) strongly disagree and (8%) remain neutral. This outcome agrees with work of Chilwa et al., (2003) and Okoli et al. (2014) which assert that Boko Haram insurgency has cause Migration of people from affected areas by insurgency to the safer area.
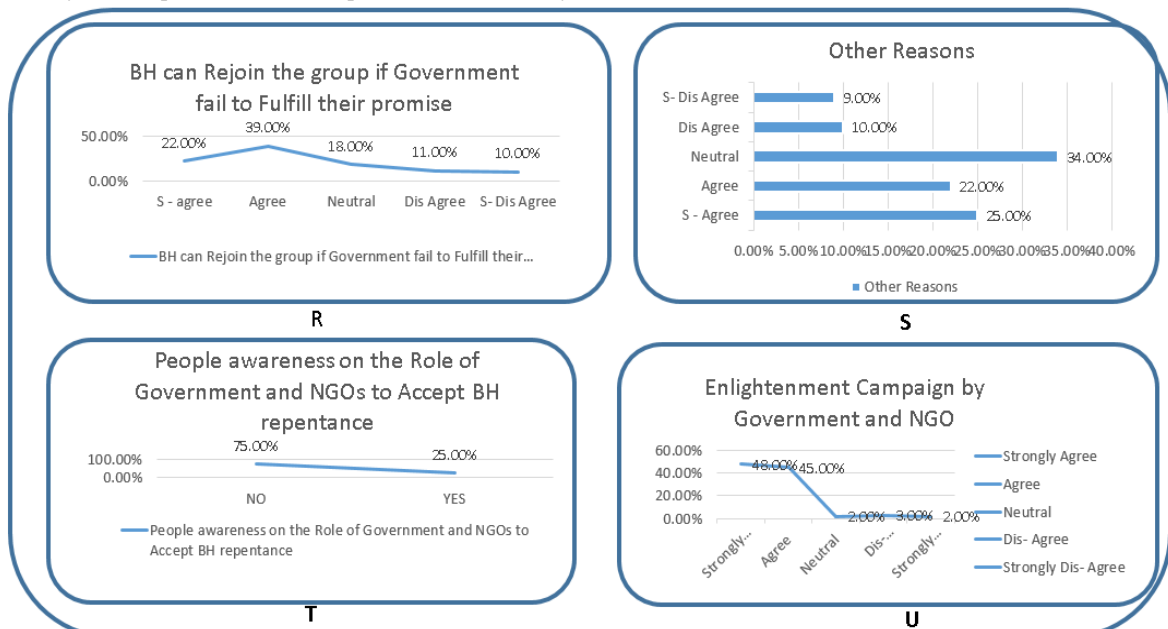
FIG 5:- SHOWS RESPONSE OF PEOPLE ON WEATHER TO ACCEPT THE BH REPENTANCE OR NOT AND THEIR AWARENESS LEVEL ON THE ROLE OF GOV & NGOS IN MAKING COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO ACCEPT BH

(R) in figure five shows another respondents opinion on why they are not ready to accept Boko Haram members back to community, they believed Boko Haram can rejoin the group if Government failed to fulfill their promised to them with

(22%) Strongly agree, (39%) agree, (11%) dis agree while (10%) Strongly dis agree and finally (18%) remains neutral to this opinion. Moreover **(S)** in figure five shows some percentages of respondents that believed that there's another

reason after the ones mentioned that makes them not to accept the Boko Haram repentance with (25%) strongly agree, agree (22%), Dis agree(10%), while (9%) strongly Dis agree and finally (34%) are neutral.

People awareness on the role of Government and NGOs in convincing people to accept Boko Haram Repentance

However (**T**) in figure five shows people awareness on the role of Government and NGOs to accept Boko Haram repentance, with (75%) saying No are not aware and (25%) saying Yes their aware. Furthermore(**U**) in figure five shows the opinion of the (25%) that agreed Government and NGOs are playing better role in convincing people to accept Boko Haram Repentance. About (48%) of the respondents strongly agreed that NGOs and Government are doing enlightment campaign, (45%) Agree on the statement, (3%) dis agree, with (2%) strongly dis agree and finally (2%) remain neutral.
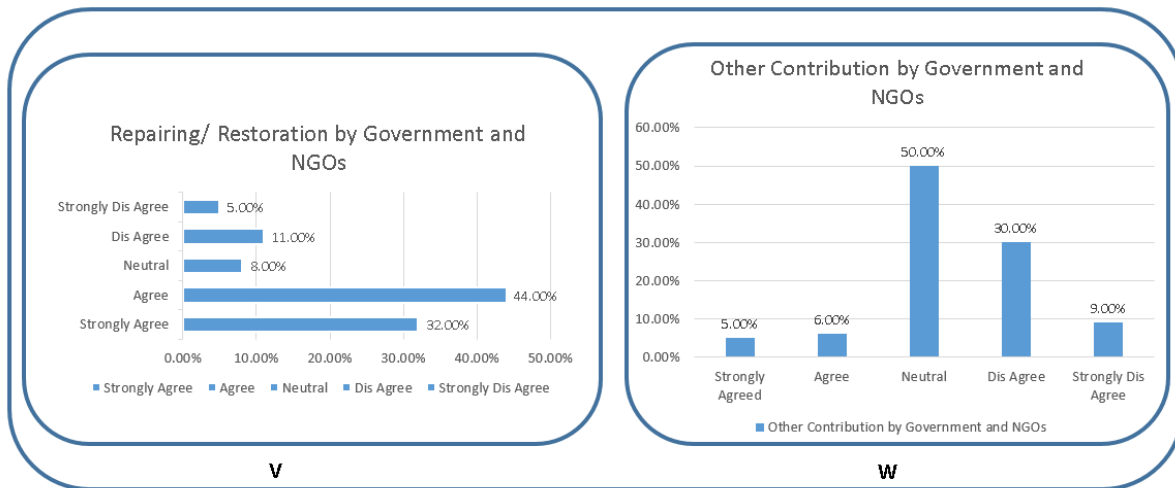

FIGURE 6:- SHOWS ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND NGOS ON PEOPLE TO ACCEPT BOKO HARAM REPENTANCE .

(**V**) Figure six shows the government's role in convincing people to accept Boko Haram's repentance back to the community. (32%) Of the respondents who strongly agreed that Government and NGOs are repairing /restoring damaged places and houses by Boko Haram, (44%) Agreed, (11%) disagreed, (5%) strongly disagreed and finally (8%) were neutral. Moreover, (**W**) in figure six shows the opinion of the respondent that believe that the Government and NGOs are doing other things apart from mentioned earlier to convince community members to accept Boko Haram repentance, with (5%) strongly agreeing,(6%) Agree, (30%) disagree, with (9%) strongly disagree and finally (50%) Neutral.

Furthermore, an NGO staff in (Search for common Ground) organiasation was also interviewed to assess their role in convincing People to accept Boko Haram's repentance. The staff noted that their Organization, together with collaboration with the (SEMA) Governmental organiasation, are making all their effort to see they convinced people to accept Boko Haram's repentance. He explained that they were doing an enlightenment campaign by telling people that some of the Boko Haram members were innocent; some were forced to join the group while some were brainwashed while some join the group because of poverty, so when they have something doing, they would not be tempted to join the group again. In addition, he added that Government and NGOs are reconstructing the market places, shelters and other social environments that the Boko Haram vandalized and giving Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) foot stuff and giving monthly salaries to convince them to accept the Boko Haram Repentance. However, the officer also explained that Boko Haram are of two types which include the Combatant and Supportive; the combatant are the ones that are used to carrying weapons and are also responsible for killing innocent people, while the supportive are the ones that only provide information, food stuff and other necessary and helpful support to the combatants. Moreover, the combatant is tough to handle. So what they usually do is manage them by taking them to the hospital to see if they are mentally stable. After spending time in the hospital, they take them to a rehabilitation center to make sure they forget about their previous act. In addition Government and their Organization, give them the scholarship to go and acquire skills. After that, they gave them funds and sewing machines to be used to earn their living. Moreover, for the combatant, he noted they are doing integration techniques in associating them with the community example, people in Maiduguri will be transferred to Bauchi, and some from Bauchi will be brought back to Maiduguri so that there will be no hard feeling between the community members and the Boko Haram repentance. The importance of applying this strategy because the community members does not know the repentance because they are not their origin after all.

CONCLUSION

This study found some significant conclusions based on the findings. Firstly, this study revealed that most of the people in the study area are aware of the Boko Haram repentance and are mostly affected by them. Secondly, the study also revealed that most people are not ready to accept Boko Haram's repentance to live together. Finally, based on people's responses, it shows that Government and NGOs are doing little to convince people to accept Boko Haram back into the community even though, based on the interview by the NGOs officer, its shows that both Government and NGOs are doing their best both it makes little impact. Moreover, the Government should also involve religious leaders in convincing people to accept Boko Haram to repentance because their religious leaders can easily convince them. Thus, based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations: Firstly, Government and NGOs should increase their efforts to enlighten the people to accept Boko Haram because, based on the findings, enlightenment camping is not enough. Secondly, the Government should ensure they fulfilled their promise to Boko Haram repentance after they were integrated because if they fail, they can rejoin the group again.

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