

## Impact of Urban Urchins on the Nigerian Democratic Governance: A Study of *Yan-Shara* in Kaduna Metropolis 2015-2021

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### Abstract

**T**huggery has become a fractious phenomenon affecting individuals and democratic briskness in Kaduna State. The Yan Shara thugs move mostly in groups victimizing, terrorizing, intimidating, and injuring not only politicians but also innocent individuals at their homes, shops and on the streets which resulted in loss of lives and valuable properties in the State. It is against this background; therefore, this article attempts to examine **the impact of** Yan Shara thugs on democratic **governance** in spite of the measures adopted by governments to overcome the phenomenon in the state from 2015 to 2021. The objective of this article is to find out the factors responsible for the recurrence of Yan Shara thuggery on democratic **governance** and to assess the effectiveness of government policies and programmes designed to overcome the menace. Data was obtained through secondary sources. The study considered this assumption that, Yan Shara thuggery recurs frequently in Kaduna State because it is sponsored by the elites. Elite theory was adopted to serve as a theoretical base for this article. The findings of the study depicts that thuggery in the State is as a result of political manipulation, unemployment, illiteracy, poor governance, group sentiment, poverty, injustice and **weak** security agencies to mention but a few. Therefore, the study recommends among others that government should initiate programmes including awareness campaigns that will transform and dissuade the Yan Shara and intended thugs psychologically from involving into such violent behaviours within the State.

**Keywords:** Democracy, violence, Yan Shara, thuggery.

### Introduction

Urban youth gangs have been in existence in Nigerian cities for a long time. In the immediate post-civil war period, i.e. from early 1970s, there was a noticeable increase in the incidence of violent crimes and in the heinous nature of these crimes particularly in the use of dangerous weapons and killings. The national awareness and emergence of thuggery and increased violence can be traced back to the aftermath of the Nigerian civil war that lasted from 1967 to 1970. The roots of urban violence have been attributed to the loss of traditional structures that kept people together (Aderinto, 1994).

The use of political thugs (*Yan shara*) and its attendant consequence in Kaduna State has been a source of worry in recent years. Though, thuggery is not peculiar to the State alone but also Nigeria as a whole. The activities of militia gangs in other parts of the country such as the '*Bakasi Boys*' in Eastern Nigeria, the '*Niger-Delta Defense Force*' in the Niger-Delta region, the *Yan Daba* in Kano, among others have

cumulatively impacted negatively on credible electoral process and development of the country. However, despite assurances from the Nigerian Police Force on security, opposition candidates are harassed or arrested; voters were turned away from polling stations by gang of young thugs (Bratton, 2008). It is commonly reported that long military rule in Nigeria is responsible for high level of political violence orchestrated by political thugs in the form of election rigging, falsification of electoral register, assassination of political rivals among other things. The inability of the government to conduct free and fair election has continued to undermine smooth transition and good governance, and in the words of Omotosho, (2008) '... has made the country the butt of bad jokes in the international community'.

More recently, Kaduna State, being the focus of this paper, has experienced this trend of violence, partly due to its strategic location in the North-West sub-region. Whatever happens to the neighbouring states, tend to affect

**Kaduna State.** Thus, since the creation of the State in 1967, the State has experienced several cases of violence. These include ethno-religious conflicts, land disputes, pastoralists-farmers conflicts, violent actions of thugs called *Yan shara* and election related violence, armed robbery, kidnapping and other related social vices. Of all these forms of violence, however, the most devastating one that keeps recurring in the State is thuggery by Yan shara. The use of political thugs, Yan Shara and its attendant consequences in the State has been a source of worry in recent years.

### **Statement of Research Problem**

In spite of the different measures adopted by different governments through policies and programmes to curb the menace, thuggery by **Yan Shara** has remained pervasive in Kaduna State. Since the resurgence of multi-party democracy in 1999, the menace of thuggery has become a pervasive phenomenon in Kaduna State and Nigeria in general affecting innocent citizens and democratic activities in Kaduna State. The problem is affecting democratic activities during campaign, rallies and casting of votes which invariably caused loss of lives and valuable properties. Thuggery also perpetually affects innocent individuals on daily basis in their homes, shops and on the streets. Thus, the activities of thugs called *Yan Shara* in Kaduna State have widely affected the relative peace enjoyed by the people. These gangsters move mostly in groups victimizing, terrorizing, intimidating, and injuring not only politicians but also innocent individuals in the state. The menace results to death or poses deadly threats by deterring individuals from actively partaking in the political, economic and cultural activities in their environments.

### **Review of Related Literature**

This paper utilizes thematic **style** of literature review whereby the author place the items base on the themes they occupied in the paper to enable the work provides adequate knowledge on the research topic.

### **The Trend of Nigeria's Democracy**

The concept of democracy has been defined differently by different scholars depending on the circumstance and interest of their research.

Accordingly, democracy here emphasizes political freedoms and procedures, including “government by the people”, political rights and elections or civil liberties. It entails “civilian politics” that provide substantive values such as peace, social and economic development, or equality and justice in every political community even within the scope of this research (Lukman, 2010).

The meaning and nature of democracy is subjected to its application in different environments. In discussing the nature of Nigerian democracy, Jega (2007:15) observes that “the dominant model, historically and contemporarily, in terms of the number of the countries who have used or are using it, is liberal democracy. It is predicated on the following principles: individual freedom; equality before the law; universal suffrage (voting rights); election and representation”. Additional features include popular sovereignty; popular representation; majority government; guarantee of freedom (basic); consensus and accommodation; peaceful resolution of disputes; free market and enterprise. Liberal democracy is also variously referred to as bourgeois democracy and elite democracy.

A democratic system is said to “enable citizens to control public policy pertaining to the holding of elections under certain forms, to the central, national decision making organs and to the maintenance of certain fundamental political liberties” (Hadenius, 1992:36 in Umar, 2007:3). However, this definition limits the scope of democratic experience to the central level of governance by excluding other important levels of analysis such as the state and local governments that played an important role in a federal system of government like Nigeria. Thus, any definition of democracy should not only consider the system that observes election to control public policy decisions alone but also recognizes other fundamental issues that have to do with social justice, economic development, political rights, harmony and social security.

Furthermore, Umar (2007) argues that the imperative for states to uphold democratic values and institutions is premeditated upon the entrenchment of the ideals of democracy which, unlike other **systems** provide the citizens with the wherewithal to actively participate, directly

or indirectly in the political system through the mechanisms of transparency, rule of law, civil rights and fundamental freedoms, and as a way of overcoming the shortcomings of the other systems. Democracy allows the citizens to know the processes of decision making with regard to the issues affecting their societies. Transparency, accountability and justice are the pivotal principles that accompany the human coexistence in democratic system without infringing their Fundamental Human Rights.

### **Violence and Conflicts in Nigeria's Democracy**

Violence has attracted different definitions in a number of contexts and dimensions. According to Osaghae (1994:3), "Violence is any act that involves a threat to, or destruction of, lives and or property". This definition is significant because it brought two issues: threat and destructions, but violence on a wider outlook cannot be limited to only act of threat and destructions. Gurr (1970) and Hibbs (1973) have defined violence based on political grounds as the use of force, that is, the intentional use of force by an individual or society on the opponent(s) in order to injure, kill or destroy lives and property. Though, the above definition expanded the dimension of violence to a political angle but that alone cannot fully explain violence as it excludes other important aspects in human society.

It is necessary to explain the concept of violence from different aspects such as socio-cultural violence, economic violence, and ethno-religious violence. According to the 2011 report by the Thinking Security for Africa, there are five forms of violence in Nigeria. These include **violence caused by** political differences; religious extremism; communal differences; the economic struggle and crime. Each of these overlaps with one another, in many important ways. This identification of the forms of violence helped us to understand the dimensions of violence in Nigeria and Kaduna state in particular. Consequent to any form that the violence may assume is the nature and disposition of the actors involved and whether the violence is incidental, ancillary or endemic. Therefore, violence, regardless of its form, is surrounded by the four compartmental circles: the organizers, the victims, the beneficiaries and

above all, the environment.

Thuggery has become a matter of national insecurity, especially during campaigns and elections. Security is thus elemental in governance as it is the protection of the lives, rights, dignity and property of the citizens and the resources, territory, sovereignty and lawful institution of the country. It is also when these institutions utilize the resources of the nation for the provision of secure, just and equitable living conditions for the citizens of the country that they own their legitimacy (Usman, 1986:173). However, in most African states, including Nigeria, the rulers of the states constitute the major threat to the security of the lives and property of their own citizens. Meanwhile, the security agencies that exist to checkmate the excesses of such leaders become the propagators of disunity because of their political ambitions.

Ethno-religious violence also formed an integral part of violence. Albert (1994) considers a few cases of violence in Kano. He argues that ethnicity, religion, and culture are the foundation of violence in Kano state. He further explains that the first major religious violence in Kano took place between December 18 and 29, 1980, and was triggered by the Maitatsine sect under Muhammad Marwa. The riot expanded to other places in Northern Nigeria such as Jimeta in 1984, Gombe in 1985 and Funtua in 1987. Between May 28 and June 5, 1985 over 61 people were killed and over 101 injured in some areas of the then Bauchi State, specifically Gombe, Azare, Kaltungo and Alkali.

Furthermore, religious violence also affects "unity in diversity" in the contemporary democratic process of Nigeria. A study of violence suggests that conflicts between Nigerian Christians and Muslims manifests in deadly inter-religious conflicts. On February, 2000, Kaduna state experienced religious violence within the metropolis. The crisis erupted as a result of the apprehension arising from the agitation for the implementation of Sharia in the State. Also, on March, 2002, another religious tension occurred in Kaduna State, owing to a revolting act against the holy prophet in a publication by Thisday Newspaper, it took the intervention of the security agents to forestall reprisals (Sampson, 2012).

Similarly, other major cases of violent ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria include the Zangon-Kataf riots of 1992. Between May 28 and June 5, 1985 over 61 people were killed and over 101 injured in some areas of the then Bauchi State, specifically Gombe, Azare, Kaltungo and Alkaleri. Tafawa Balewa clashes in 1991, 1995 and the Jos ethno-religious riots of 2001. Although no exact figures of casualties are available, the Jos riots of 2001 have claimed several hundreds of lives and generated violent ripple effects beyond Jos (Osaghae, 2005).

### **Political Thuggery in Nigeria**

As a political concept, thuggery has been defined differently by different scholars depending on their own perspective of the term. As observed by Howell (2004) and Asiegbu (2011), thuggery refers to the activities of thugs connected with stealing, killing, kidnapping, rudeness, victimization, intimidation and harassment. This manner affects peace, harmony and mutual co-existence among groups in their respective communities. If politics is criminalized through thuggery, right people who are the observers of good values tend to be scared and keep away from political processes. This suggests that thuggery is a violent behaviour affecting political processes in the Nigerian politics. Banwo (2003) maintains that the processes of the use of extra-judicial means in the course of the contest for or in exercising political power including intimidation, harassment, assassination, blackmail, and arson; physical and psychological attacks could not help to ensure sustainable peace and security within any democratic system like Nigeria. Hence, scholars believe that the attributes of sponsoring thugs is due to the fact that Nigerian politics is characterized by rigging, violence and ropes under the manipulation of the few elites.

Furthermore, in discussing the causes of thuggery in Kaduna State, Mbaya (2013) argues that the majorities of youths in Kaduna State are jobless, illiterates, with no means of livelihood, and are being paid to manipulate election results. The political elite capitalize on this weakness and recruit the youths. Secondly, politics for personal gain – this has become a common feature in Nigerian politics. This is a

situation in which an individual tries to hold on to power for personal gains. In an attempt to hang on to power, leaders often create a regime of violence, repression and bloodshed. They organize political thugs, hooligans and scavengers to sing their praises, intimidate opponents and kill them if they become intransigent. The unnecessary and uncoordinated urge to control, dominate and amass wealth for their family and friends informs the emergence of political thugs to be used to win election by all means. Thirdly, The politicians, having invested huge amount of money on campaigns and other political activities, coupled with the existing system of winner takes all, would want to win at all cost. In view of the above, the need to employ the use of thugs and touts to manipulate and rig elections becomes necessary, especially when such politicians are not popular candidates.

### **Nexus between Political Thuggery and Electoral Process**

The word thug refers to a person inclined or hired to treat another person roughly, brutally or murderously (beaten or robbed) (The Merriam Webster Thesaurus 1995). In this sense a thug is a person or group of persons employed to perpetrate violence on another person or group of persons. Example of thug in this respect is the *Yan Shara* thugs in Kaduna State who strangle their victims. Howell, (2004) on the other hand observed that political thug can be seen as the tireless repetition of misleading 'facts' designed to depict an opponent as personally despicable and with regard to governance and it is dangerous to the physical and political life of the nation.

Political violence on the other hand refers to act of the processes of execution of the activities of political thugs enticed by politicians. In other word Banwo (2003:100) posits that:

It is the processes of the use of extra-judicial means in the course of the contest for or in exercising political power. These include intimidation, harassment, assassination, blackmail, arson, looting, physical and psychological attack..... among others.

To Mehler, (2007:209) political violence has

become a prominent part of the culture of Africa. Indeed he emphasized that governance and violence have become common mode of political competition in African societies more than consensus or co-operation. Political violence is usually part of the machinery employed by the political class in most underdeveloped economies to attain and sustain power or protest its deprivation. Reno, (2002) made a remark in his analysis of politics in failed states he cited Bazenguissa-Ganga, (1999) who observed that, '... faction leaders in collapsed or collapsing states are often politicians or officers who jockeyed for position in an elite hierarchy and benefited from 'official' political violence, the goals of violence turn toward battling local rivals and appropriating as much of the wealth of this political network for themselves' Therefore political thuggery and political violence are intertwined. This had in many ways truncated political process in Nigeria.

Electoral process consist of more than methods of counting votes cast by the voters but embraces within all institutional procedures, arrangement and actions involved in elections. It include the suffrage, the registration of voters, delimitation of constituencies, the right to contest election, electoral competition between rival parties, body charged with the conduct and supervision of election, the method of selection of candidates, method of voting, conduct of election, determination of results, election disputes, electoral malpractice, (Jega, and Ibeanu, 2007; Ball, 1979:92; Harris,1982:157; Appadorai, 1978:523) Electoral malpractice and violence have been burning issues in both the developed and developing societies; it involves riots, thuggery, looting, kidnapping, arson and political association. These occur before, during and after election with the view of altering, influencing or changing by force the voting pattern or manipulating the electoral decision in favour of a particular individual or political party,(Ejitiwu, 1997:38; Ugoh, 2004:164; Dinneya, 2007:59) Election rigging is the worst form of electoral fraud since it leads directly to the falsification of the will of the people and empowerment of the wrong leaders. Election rigging through the activities of thugs or otherwise is a function of some weaknesses in the electoral system as well as its successful

exploitation of such by leaders/politicians; hence the mutual relation between thuggery and electoral processes.

### **The Menace of Political Thuggery (Yan Shara) on Electoral Processes in Kaduna State**

The popularity of political thugs in Kaduna State could be traced to the politics of 1999 when youth were mobilized to refute the claims of the leading party PDP by ANPP as it were in Kano and other neighboring States. *Yan Shara*, or tout; resurfaced in the Politics of 2007, 2011 but became eminent and unhealthy for democratic process in the Politics of 2015 and 2019. There activities commences from the early stage of politicking and becomes intense at election periods. Most of these groups of unemployed youths are sponsored by desperate politicians who lure them with extravagant promises of employment and other government patronage. Since 1999 to date, some of these youthful thugs have been sponsored by desperate politicians to protect their political interest.

After elections, these boys trained to maim and kill political opponents are left helpless without any tangible means of sustenance (WeeklyTrust, 2018). Dashee, (2019) asserts that in other instances, even their sponsors are not spared from their acts of violence as they equally attack them in public functions like wedding, political rallies and so on, when they fail to meet their expectations or demand. Two major reasons why politicians employ violence could be attributed to their quest for power and drive toward primitive accumulation of wealth and competitive authoritarian nature of the Nigerian state. This gave rise to the high level and sophistication of political thuggery in Kaduna State.

For instance, Weekly Trust reported worrisome atrocities of *Yan Shara* titled "*How Yan Shara held Kaduna State hostage*" revealed that hooligans tagged *Yan Shara* from both opposing parties APC and PDP and others fought, left some dead and many casualties with injuries. Similar incidents abound in Borno state when Ali Modu Sheriff won the 2003 election. Many youths across Borno state found it enterprising to engage in political thuggery. As a result other groups emerged with seeming

divisions amongst them and persistent clashes between the different camps mostly associated with sharing of largesse. On 12th June 2016, there were intra group clashes between political thugs loyal to the ruling APC and inter group with PDP an opposition party. These activities however do not occur without the input of the two players the politicians and the youths (thugs) themselves and the youths depend on the politicians to perpetrate their nefarious activities without impunity.

### **Factors Responsible for the Incessant Yan Shara Activities in Kaduna State**

Governance is the way rules, norms and actions are structured, sustained, regulated and held accountable. Democratic governance involves promoting the sustainability of democracy which includes an enduring capacity for the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms; and the transparency and accountability of a responsible civil service, functioning at both the national and local levels. Democratic governance is a machinery of government that allows the voice of the minority to be heard while majority have their way in deciding and addressing various issues that confront them as a people or an entity for the good and fairness of all. Elections provide a theatre of power politics amongst elites in Nigeria. Such moments lay bare elites' desperation to hang on to power for incumbents, or achieve power for marginal elites. For incumbents, state resources and other privileges associated with State power are invested in retaining power. And for those wanting to gain power, personal wealth and those of "power brokers" are patronized to fight their way into power (Tar & Shettima, 2010).

Several factors abound to explain the cause of political thugs as well as political violence. Prominent amongst these are two principal factors these are - competitive authoritarian nature of the Nigerian state and economic factor. The rest can be tied to either two of the above. These include illiteracy and poverty, weaknesses in the institutions, checks and balance. *Nature of Nigerian state:-* The competitive authoritarian nature of the Nigerian state after long punctuations of military regimes accepted civilian government in 1999 that permits democratic competition but bedeviled

by fraud and abuse of state apparatus which enables those with machinery of the state to suppress opposition group or party. This groupings result more often than not into clashes of interest between different groups which end up in violence or skirmishes.

*Illiteracy:* - This is another cause of political violence. Some studies revealed that most of those that engage or used by politicians in their shoddy deal are either illiterate or received low level of education as such they become prey to overzealous politicians as they are vulnerable to resort to violence.

*Poverty:-* High level of unemployment have accounted for high level of poverty in the State. As most of youths come from humble families which cannot fulfill their obligation. It goes with the common saying "a hungry man is an angry man" hence need little effort to join any group of militia/thugs.

*Weaknesses in the political system:* - There are prevalent weaknesses in the institutions responsible for carrying out electoral processes in Nigeria. The inability of institutions of government such as Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the police, judiciary and the executive resulting from abuse of office and fraud often emasculate electoral process. This includes undue favor to some group or individuals and power of incumbency.

*Checks and balances:* - Lack of checks and balances on part of the three arms of government to ensure smooth electoral process often leads to fraudulent acts and behaviors, rigging, cheating among others.

### **Theoretical framework**

Elite theory was adopted in this study. Elite theory is a political tool advanced to explain political realities within a political system. The theory was developed from the popular writings of Robert Michels (1876-1936), Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941), Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923), and Ortega Gasset. The theory come forth from political sociology to explain the social and political relationships among individuals and groups in their respective societies with regards to power relations, decision making and

resources; the theory is a complement to Conflict and Pluralism theories.

Practically, Mosca stressed the ways in which very small minorities 'out-organize and outwit' large majorities, the political classes. Mosca's term for political elites, usually have a certain intellectual, material, or even moral superiority over those they govern. Pareto affirmed that in a society with truly free social mobility, elites would consist of the most deserving and talented individuals; but in actual societies, elites are those most adept at using the two modes of political rule, persuasion and force, and who usually enjoy important advantages such as family connections and inherited wealth. Pareto outlined alternating types of governing elites, which he likened, following Machiavelli, to foxes and lions. Michel rooted elites 'oligarchies' in the need of large organizations for experts and leaders in order to operate effectively and efficiently; as these individuals gain control of information flows, funds, promotions, and other aspects of organizational functioning, power becomes concentrated in their hands. Emphasizing the inescapability and also the relative autonomy of elites, all three men characterized aspirations to fully egalitarian and democratic societies as futile (Higley, 2005).

Kayode (2008) **succinctly**, summarizes the meaning and nature of elites in Nigerian politics as "those citizens who have either a vocational or an occupational interest in issues of governance". He went further to state that elites naturally include those inside and outside the apparatus of government, Non-governmental organizations, those in media houses, educational institutions and the likes, their attitude towards democratic rule has not been uniform. Therefore, elite can be defined as persons or individuals who, by advantage of their defined positions in many respects of arrangements and crucial establishments are able to determine political consequences considerably and frequently. Therefore, elites are individuals with the systematized aptitude to make factual political actions without being immediately punished by authorities concern. These individuals consist of high-status and reputable leaders, significant businessmen, classical politicians, high-ranking military officers, top civil servants, and other well

respected individuals in the society.

Based on the postulations of the elite theory, the research summarizes the basic assumptions of the theory as:

The elite theory assumes that any political community is divided into two. The **first are the few** who are self-protective, cohesive, and well-organized, and above all have the power to allocate values for the communities, and the majority who are confused and uncoordinated without any political power to make policy. It is also assumed that the elites are obtained truly from the higher socio-economic status who possess certain attributes and qualities of superiority over the masses; also, the elites are essentially cohesive constantly defending the status quo. The channel of sustenance include but not limited to coercion by security agencies, manipulation of the media, schools, militancy, indoctrination of masses with deceitful ideologies and stereotype; and finally, to ensure system maintenance of their interest. Elite avoids any sort of revolt or rebellion against their interest by creating institutional framework which permits gradual process to recruit and absorb tiny few individuals whom will also protect the general interest of elite.

Therefore, Elite theory enables us to analyze the way in which the ruling elites manipulate the Yan sharathugs to serve their interest in order to maintain and control political power. The elites use every means and tendencies at their disposal by ensuring that they remain in power. Therefore, as argued by Jega (2007), it is significant to maintain that the political elites in Nigeria's democracy are the cogs in the wheel of democratic progress, the dictum of do-or-die affair in politics is a salient credo of an unwritten ideological structure in their manifesto. They sponsor all sorts of violence for upkeep of their political advancement and personal gain. It is for these reasons that they adore the ideals of democracy in as much as it creates and facilitates opportunities for blunder and plunder of public treasury and the people at their mercy. Democracy to these groups is only a defensible and a desirable venture if it is a means not an end; a means to power at the detriment of common good of the majority of the population whereas the end being the lofty ideals of personal liberty and good governance.

## Discussion

Gleaning from Dashee (2018), that selfish interest, unemployment, illiteracy, poor governance, group sentiment, political manipulation, poverty, injustice and inactive security agencies are the major factors contributed to *Yan Shara* thuggery in Kaduna State. All these contributes perpetually to the endless thuggery, as a socio-political phenomenon, affecting the people and democratic process negatively in Kaduna State in spite the policies and programmes initiated by the government to tackle the menace.

The ruling elites' fault is attributed to the lack of employment, ineffective policies on education to booster literacy level, poor governance, manipulation in political processes, injustice and inactive security agencies. Government of Kaduna State has been accused in many respect related to the above atrocity which felt reluctant to overcome the aforementioned issues that invariably influenced thugs to emulate violent behaviour leading to thuggery and more often than not resulted to social violence. The government is being biased to its different decisions on tackling the menace of thuggery in the state.

On several occasions, public commentators and political analysts blamed political elites on supporting *Yan Shara* thuggery for their selfish gain, in the State. Just as Human Right Watch was being secretly informed by a Police that politics is making their life very difficult; PDP supporters were not arrested, and or if they were arrested, Police Officials, handed them over to the governor, and in turn released. Similarly, in some occasions, police officers posit that thugs had been detained on purely political ground as a result, they should be released, that they are human beings and they have human rights like any other human being.

Finally, It can be deduced that the reasons for thuggery is as a result of youth are joblessness, they are impoverished, and being paid easily to manipulate election results. Politics for personal gain, being a situation in elites organize thugs, hooligans and scavengers to sing their praises, intimidate opponents and kill them; and prebendal politics, as an investment by hungry politicians also created chances on which politicians have invested huge amount of money and resources on campaigns and other

political activities.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the effects of the perpetual *Yan Shara* thuggery in Kaduna State are basically included creating fear amongst candidates, hindering electorates, killing innocent people, violating human rights, destruction of valuable properties, insecurity during and after elections and intimidating people. The paper observed that these effects have been politically and socially motivated which affected different people in different places in Kaduna State. As a result, both government and private properties including vehicles and offices were burnt, offices and valuable properties of different political parties were destroyed and burnt, innocent individuals lost their valuable properties on the streets, in their shops and at homes. Besides, elites and innocent individuals of various positions in both public and private establishments have been affected by the *Yan Shara* thuggery with different degrees of injuries ranging from wounds to loss of lives within the state.

Finally, the paper also observed that the activities of thugs called *Yan Shara* have fuelled insecurity in the state which is characterized by killing, kidnapping, street attacks, house break-ins, shoplifting, frightening and threatening innocent individuals losing their lives and valuable properties that invariably exacerbated social violence affecting democratic and social activities especially during campaigns, rallies and election related activities for which electorates and candidates of different party affiliations are scared and frightened of in Kaduna State.

## Recommendations

The study recommends the following:

- i) The government should ensure that it prosecute and punish *Yan Shara* thugs who were found wanting regardless of their political parties' affiliations. This will deter them from involving into thuggery within the state.
- ii) The government should embark on effective rehabilitation of *Yan Shara* thugs at their places; those who fail to appear at their stations should be punished while those that are punctual should be rewarded.



iii) Finally, the government should initiate other programmes including awareness campaigns that will transform and dissuade the *Yan Shara* and intended thugs psychologically from involving into such violent behaviours within the State.

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