EFFECT OF TALBA YOUTH REHABILITATION AND REORIENTATION PROGRAMME ON KALARE THUGGERY IN GOMBE STATE

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Abstract
Youth restiveness, especially political thuggery over the years has been used to create and foster a climate of intimidation, uprising and violence in Nigeria especially in the Northern parts of the country, where selfish politicians are in the habit of recruiting and manipulating unemployed youths, most of whom come from less privileged families, to serve as their fighting political dogs, used against opponents or anybody perceived as obstacle to realising their selfish interests. Gombe State is one of the states in the North most affected by political thuggery. The bedeviling security challenges faced by the state were largely attributed to the activities of political thugs known as ‘Kalare’. Kalare thugs wreaked serious havoc on many innocent citizens, leaving some with permanent injuries and quite a number of others lost their lives. This study examined the phenomenon of Kalare thuggery and the effect of the Talba youth rehabilitation and reorientation programme, as a deliberate government strategy, introduced to rehabilitate the ex-Kalare members who abandoned violence and keyed-in into the programme. The incremental theory was employed as a theoretical guide; the study used content analysis where the documentary record of Kalare violence was sourced and complemented with interviews and focused group discussions (FGD). The findings revealed that the introduction of Talba Youth Rehabilitation and Reorientation Programme has not effectively stemmed the menace of Kalare thuggery in the state, the study also discovered that the beneficiaries of the programme are being rehabilitated and empowered, but they constitute only a fraction of the Kalare youth in Gombe state. The study recommends the need for Stiffer sanctions against youths who engaged in Kalare related violence and their sponsors, to serve as a deterrent to others who may be contemplating joining the group and more youths should be engaged in the programme especially those identified to have joined Kalare thuggery.

Keywords: Youth, Thuggery, Violence, Restiveness, Empowerment

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Introduction
Youths are generally believed to be the most valuable asset for engendering any societal development. They are the critical component of every human society, they can constitute a reservoir of energy and dynamism for any national struggle or campaign if they are correctly guided, mobilised, and fully integrated into the social fabrics of a nation. Valuable as the youths may be to any nation, however, they could also constitute a threat to national survival and stability if allowed to be adrift, unemployed, undisciplined, morally bankrupt and engaged in restive activities (Ifenkwe, 2012).

In order to tackle the menace of political thuggery which is attributable to the activities of the Kalare thugs in Gombe state, the governor of the state prescribed the group’s activities and granted its members amnesty during his first inauguration as the executive governor of Gombe State on the 29th of May, 2011. He later followed the action by constituting eleven sector-based committees that came up with reports and recommendations. Part of the recommendations was the enactment of a law by the State House of Assembly for the establishment of the Gombe State Agency for Social Service (GSASS), a body mandated to coordinate and manage the youths for the provision of social services in the state. This is thus stipulated in Section 3 of the Act, “There is hereby established for the state a body to be known as the Gombe State Agency for Social Services (in this law referred to as ‘the agency’) which shall consist of such number of uniformed members as may be determined from time to time by the agency with the approval of the governor” (Section 3, Gombe State Agency for Social Services Act, 2012).

One of the first acts of the GSASS was to initiate the Talba Youths Reorientation and Rehabilitation Programme, designed for Kalare members and other restive youths who had abandoned violence. The programme was specifically aimed at reorienting and rehabilitating such youths. And after undergoing a mandatory training period and medical examination, they were engaged as road traffic agents, environmental marshals or community ward agents respectively.

Objectives of the Study
The general objective of the study is to examine the trend of Kalare thuggery within the period 2011-2015. While the specific objective is to assess whether the introduction of the Talba youth rehabilitation and reorientation programme has helped to reduce the preponderance of Kalare thuggery in Gombe state

Conceptual Issues
Youth
Youth as a concept has remained a subject of interpretations by scholars of social science and policy makers alike. For instance, Suleiman (2012)
observed that ‘youth’ lacks clear definition. He noted that in some situations its definition may be based on one’s social circumstances rather than chronological age or cultural position. However, the National Youth Policy (2001) defines youth as all young persons of ages 18 to 35 years. It is important to note that this category of people constitutes about 40 percent of more than 140 million people in Nigeria. Thus; the definition of National Youth Policy was adopted as the working definition for the study.

**Kalare**

‘Yan is a Hausa prefix that literally means ‘sons of’ and Kalare is a name of a retired hunter and a drummer who uses charms to entertain his spectators. ‘Kalare’ as used throughout this study refers to a group of youth notoriously refers to as ‘Yan-kalare’ in Gombe State who have constituted themselves into political thugs and who have made themselves available largely to the political class to be used to scare political opponents or perceived political opponents before, during or after elections, and aimed at achieving an undue political result or advantage.

**Scope of the Study**

This study is confined to the assessment of the effect of Talba Youth Rehabilitation and Reorientation Programme on Kalare thuggery in Gombe State in the period 2011 to 2015. The choice of this time frame was based on the fact that 2011 was the year when the programme was introduced. Secondly, it will enable the study to cover the first four-year tenure of the administration of Alhaji Ibrahim Hassan Dankwambo, the Executive Governor of Gombe state, who initiated the programme.

**Methodology**

The study used both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data was generated through interviews, focus group discussion and personal observation by the researcher. The interviewed respondents included the community leaders, traditional rulers, politicians, government officials, law enforcement agents and the victims of Kalare thuggery in Gombe state. Similarly, two Focused Group Discussions were carried out, one in Gombe metropolis and one in Kumo town, with unemployed Youths who have remained in the business of Kalare activities. Furthermore, the secondary data include the use of documented records of Kalare related violence by the Gombe state Bureau of Statistics (GBS), other relevant government publications, existing literature derived from relevant materials like theses written on the subject matter, textbooks, journal articles, newspapers, magazines, Internet materials related to the subject of study as well as other unpublished materials.
Literature review

Youth Restiveness

The phenomenon of youth restiveness all over the world, especially in Africa and Nigeria has become a pattern of behaviour increasingly prevalent among youths and has correspondingly attracted the attention of scholars and policymakers who investigate the causes and attempt to devise a means through which the menace will be tackled. Happiness and Innocent (2009) assert that youth restiveness is a manifestation of man’s negative side of social development. It is disturbing to both individuals and the society because it has become one of the many security challenges facing the man in the contemporary society leading to loss of lives and properties worth millions of naira vandalized by restless youths.

Youth restiveness, as a global phenomenon has created problems in both developed and developing countries. For instance, Bell (2010) in his study, Criminal Responsibility and Young People in France and the United Kingdom argues that young people are increasingly perceived as being a threat to society due to their anti-social behaviours such as gangsterism, rape cases, petty crimes, hooliganism, among other anti-social behaviours. This led to the labeling of restless youths in the United Kingdom as ‘thugs’ and ‘yobs’ because of the preponderance of anti-social behaviours which is prevalent among youths. In the same vein, Umar (2014) provides instances from the research conducted by Harrof-Tavel in 2010 where youths were involved in violent activities. Umar pointed out few cases of such violent behaviour which started from the 2005 experience of the wave of violent disturbances that plagued Paris and its environs and spread to over 200 cities in France, to the 2008 experience of armed violence involving different gangs in Cape Town, South Africa, and also the Rio de Janeiro conflict in 2010 in Brazil where drug peddling gangs engaged the police in a violent manner leading to loss of lives and valuable properties. Similarly, in Nigeria, the activities of restless youths have constantly posed a serious challenge to the socio-economic and political wellbeing of the country.

Political Thuggery

Political thuggery as a form of youth restiveness has remained an endemic feature of most political systems in the world, especially in developing countries Sunday (2011). Haruna and Hamman (2013) cite the example of thugs to include a former secret organisation of robbers in India, who are worshippers of the goddess Kali who strangle their victims. Similarly, the thugs in Nigeria go by different appellations. For instance, in Kano they are called ‘Yan daba’, ‘Sara-suka’ in Bauchi, ‘ECOMOG’ in Borno and Kalare in Gombe State. They move in groups and are always seen during elections attacking the perceived opponents of their paymasters and most often even
when elections are over; they usually commit crimes such as stealing, raping and assault on innocent people.

These gangs, comprised primarily of unemployed young men mobilized to attack their sponsors’ rivals, intimidate members of the public, rig elections and protect their patrons from similar attacks (Human Rights Watch 2007). Mbaya (2013) observes that there is a correlation between thuggery and political violence. The end product of thuggery is violence, which is a means through which thugs realize their aims. This phenomenon has remained largely unchecked and has affected negatively the delivering of democratic dividends, the exercise of citizenship right of voting and public accountability.

**Kalare Thuggery in Gombe State**

The term Kalare has become a household name in Gombe State, and for those living outside Gombe state, Kalare is always synonymous with Gombe State. Although there are many folklore explanations on the emergence of Kalare groups in Gombe state, Kalare was originally the name of a hunter from Guddiri in Azare, Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi state. He was said to have retired and become a musician singing for hunters during naming ceremonies, Sallah celebrations or celebrations of hunting victories over rival groups. Hunters came upstage one-by-one chanting and showering on themselves slogans of bravery while Kalare played his music. He also captivated the hunters with magical and daring performances that included the use of charms to play with knives, broken bottles, fire, swords and razor blades. These groups of hunters were then named after the musician, ‘Yan-Kalare’. They are not biological sons of Kalare, in the real sense, but they share a common antecedent (Lamido 2008).

Subsequently, groups of hunters that comprised both indigenous hunters and hunters from neighbouring states formed the habit of coming to Gombe for hunting purposes even before the creation of Gombe State. With the creation of Gombe State in 1996, however, their profession became a victim of rapid urbanisation, deforestation and extinction of wild animals from the nearby bushes, leaving behind, within the cities, remnants of jobless, locally charmed ex-hunters. These ex-hunters engaged in nothing but petty stealing, street fighting, drug abuse and other forms of youth restiveness.

Lamido (2008) and Mahmoud (2011) observe that several youths who were formerly hunters and who were impressed by Kalare began to emulate his daring exploits. They usually organised themselves into groups mostly based on their neighbourhoods and streets and went round the town thrilling people who often offered them money and other materials as a gift. The term ‘Yan Kalare’ therefore denotes those groups of youth who were in the practice of emulating Kalare, by using local charms to play with fire, knives and other
dangerous weapons. As time went on, the rivalry among various Kalare groups began to turn violent and fighting among various factions of ‘Yan Kalare often occurred on daily basis. It is worthy of mention here that Kalare is not only made up of the ex-hunters who lost their jobs, but also other categories of young people such as irate youths (who have fallen out with families), school drop-outs and those who have never attended school. It also includes those who are from less privileged families and have become victims of poverty, therefore becoming vulnerable to join the Kalare membership.

With the creation of Gombe State in 1996 and with the return to democracy in 1999, these youths whose profession became a victim of rapid urbanisation, deforestation and extinction of wild animals from the nearby bushes became lucrative raw materials available to ill-willed politicians for utilisation in perpetuating nihilistic supremacy (Baba 2008 and Umar 2014). Consequently, the numbers of Kalare youths who were initiated kept increasing at every election season i.e. 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015 respectively. Although there were cases of Kalare thuggery in the 2015 general elections, the incidences of violence perpetrated by the Kalare thugs were said to be higher in the previous elections especially the 2003 and 2007 general elections. In fact, it was the 2003 gubernatorial election that ushered in a new chapter of Kalare related violence into the electoral campaign process in the state (Lamido 2008), (Baba 2008) (Mahmoud 2011) and (Umar 2014).

In its 2014 report, the International Human Rights Commission published a petition on the extra-judicial killings in Gombe state between 2003 and 2009. The report revealed the uncovering of over 70 cases of politically inspired extra-judicial murders, mostly of perceived opponents of the former administration in the state. The report further stated that Yan Kalare thugs harassed, intimidated, assaulted, tortured and brutally murdered many innocent citizens of the state. The report also cited some of the victims of murder to include renowned politician and businessman, Hon. Isah Magaji Bangus a former Special Assistant to Governor Danjuma Goje who later decamp from PDP to an opposition party ACN in the state and one Nasiru Keke.

Studies such as Lamido (2008), Baba (2008), Mahmoud (2011) and Umar (2014) all revealed that the spate of Kalare related violence has drastically reduced in the subsequent elections, going by the records of Kalare related violence in the state. However, the events that preceded the 2015 general election in Gombe state suggests that Kalare thugs still have not reneged in the business of wreaking havoc and distorting social relations in the state. For example, Adamu (2014) published a report titled Deadly Return of Political Thugs where it was observed that as the 2015 general elections drew nearer, the Kalare appeared to have resurrected with more fierceness. Adamu
observed that Kalare thugs moved freely with all sorts of weapons, ready to descend on targets. Others alleged that they sometimes indulged in other crimes, like burglary, assault and even murder. It is also revealed that the Chief of Staff of the Gombe State government, Alh. Ahmed Yayari decried the violent activities of the group. He was quoted to have said, ‘’three days ago, behind the Emir’s palace close to one Ali Jijji’s house along Bello Sabon Kudi Road, two people were killed by the members of Kalare group’’. Similarly, in January 2014, one Adamu Yusuf, nicknamed ‘Cooler’, a political youth leader and a close associate of the governor and one Umar Makama were reportedly killed by suspected Yan Kalare at Chechnya Quarters in Gombe Metropolis (Adamu 2014).

In the same vein, Abdullahi (2014) reported that the threat by the dreaded Kalare group, an outlawed association which undermined the peace of Gombe State in the past has raised fresh concern in the state. He further explained that the Administration of Governor Dankwambo on assumption of office in 2011, decimated the Kalare group, but the turn of events lately has shown that cells of this group have not died completely. Except they are revisited, the lifeline of the group allegedly linked to the former administration will threaten heavy showdown in the countdown to the 2015 general election.

Consequently, during the 2015 elections, and even after the elections, there were cases of Kalare related violence. For instance, Kalare gangs murdered one Mohammed Bunu a photographer living at Idi Quarters in Gombe Metropolis in cold blood. Although the Gombe state Police Command has paraded nine suspects in connection with the killing, Kalare thuggery has continued to create problems in Gombe state especially within the Gombe Metropolis. Similarly, Ojo (2015) reported that the police in Gombe arrested 67 political thugs.

According to the report, the police said it has arrested 67 suspects in connection with political thuggery in the just concluded general elections in the state. The newspaper further explains that the Police Public Relations Officer stated that the police have arrested the suspects on charges of political criminal offenses. According to him, the police have recovered dangerous weapons from the suspects including cutlasses, knives, long sticks and charms. He said over 20 cases were recorded in connection with election violence in the state, and that investigation on the matter was currently ongoing after which the suspects would be charged to court to face the full wrath of the law. This shows that even as the state government is not relenting in its quest to tame the menace of political thuggery, there are still cases of Kalare related violence in Gombe state.
Youths Empowerment

Youth empowerment means involving young people in decision-making processes on issues that affect them, as well as entrusting them with the knowledge and skills necessary for them to effectively and meaningfully participate in decision making especially as its affects their lives (Reiss, 1988). This implied that youth empowerment is a wide-range of activities and has become an imperative not only for national development but also because the transitional period from childhood to adulthood is unquestionably a challenge for many youths.

Rappaport (1987:121) expatiates further that it conveys both a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power and legal rights. His conception did not also look at empowerment holistically as his definition focuses on psychological control and political influence. Tope (2011) in his study The Challenges Facing the Implementation of Youth Empowerment Programmes/Economic and Development Strategy (NEEDS) in Northern Nigeria maintains that youth empowerment does the following for African youths; it gives them the ability to make decisions about personal/collective circumstances; the ability to access information and resources for decision making; ability to consider a range of options from which to choose; ability to exercise assertiveness in collective decision making; having positive-thinking about the ability to make change; ability to learn and access skills for improving personal collective circumstance; ability to inform other’s perceptions through exchange, education and engagement; involvement in the growth process and changes that is never ending and self-initiated; increasing one's positive self-image and overcoming stigma; and increasing one's ability in discreet thinking to sort out right and wrong (Tope 2011). This suggests that youth empowerment has to do with creating enabling an environment for the youths within the age bracket of 18 to 35 years to take full charge of their life situation while at the same time achieving a psychological sense of personal control or influence.

In recent years, the governments of most countries have sought new approaches to harness the potential of young people and address the problems facing them. The concept of youth empowerment has gained increasing attention. For example, the 2012 report of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) observed that Africa has a youthful population made up of enthusiastic and energetic young people which, if sufficient supportive policies and programmes are put in place, could drive the social and economic prosperity of the continent. It also suggests that there must be sustained, determined, and concerted action by a wide range of actors. This implies that all stakeholders in youth empowerment and development, including governments, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), religious organisations, parents, guardians, and elders have the responsibility to
empower youths around them in order to jointly realise the national objective of socio-economic transformation of communities (Yemisi 2010).

**Talba Youth Rehabilitation and Reorientation Programme**
The Gombe State Ministry of Youth Empowerment and Poverty Alleviation in its status report (2013) indicated that out of the two million three hundred and sixty-six thousand and four (2,366,04) population of Gombe state based on 2006 census, 53 percent are males and 47 percent are females. Youths aged 15-35 years constitute 65 percent of the total population of the state. The report showed that 53 percent did not attend any school, while only 7 percent attended or are attending tertiary institutions; it also showed that 17 percent of the population attended school in the past. Consequently, the report confirmed that Gombe state has a large reservoir of the uneducated and unskilled workforce which means that there is a tendency of high dependency ratio, increased social vices and political thuggery among other forms of youth restiveness because of increasing poverty rate to about 70 percent in the state (Labaran, 2014).

Talba Youth Rehabilitation and Reorientation Programme was initiated as a deliberate effort by the state government to tackle the menace of Kalare thuggery and at the same time empower the youths who were hitherto engaged in Kalare and other forms of youth restiveness. Kera (2014) argues that the initiation of the programme was borne out of the need to take youths off the streets, engage their minds positively and then broaden and brighten their horizon, stimulate the maximisation of their potential, polish or reshape their philosophy and psyche while reducing their tendency to become hooligans.

In his inaugural speech on 29th May 2011, the executive governor of Gombe state declared that Youths are the most sensitive and mobile part of the society, and, depending on how they are handled, they could either be an advantage or a disaster. He went further to explain that the problem of Kalare thuggery can only be solved through non-violent and persuasive discussions; objective engagement and sustainable diplomacy (Labaran, 2014).

Consequently, the state introduced a programme where youths are trained under the Gombe State Agency for Social Services. The agency has about three thousand five hundred and sixty-four (3,564) youths who were trained in two batches. The first batch of the youths who were trained under the public works scheme in 2012 was about one thousand five hundred and thirty (1,530). These youths were divided into two categories: the first categories were the gang leaders who were leaders in their various groups and they were about 330 and the second category were other members of the Kalare groups drawn from different communities, but mostly from within Gombe metropolis having been the place mostly hit by the Kalare activities, they were about two
thousand and thirty-four (2,034). The second batch of the youths was enrolled into the programme in 2013 and they were about one thousand, five hundred and fifty-four (1,554).

The first category of the youths who were three hundred and thirty (330) in number was trained at the Citizenship and Leadership Training Centre, Shere hills in Jos, Plateau State and they are trained as supervisors whose duties were to supervise a certain number of the youths who would be assigned to them. The second categories of the youths were trained at the Gombe state NYSC orientation camp in Malam-sidi, the headquarters of Kwami Local Government for three weeks. A coordinated series of activities were organised for them in the camp, they were given paramilitary training, citizenship education, emergency response, and enlightenment on the dangers of drugs and substance abuse before they were deployed as environmental, traffic and ward agents.

There are three major objectives which the programme was designed to achieve. These include to tackle the trend of Kalare menace in Gombe State; reduced youth’s unemployment by providing them with the opportunity to participate in the development of the state; and enhance peace and political stability through persuasive engagement of Kalare youths in the state.

Table 1.1: Budgetary Allocation for the Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Recurrent</th>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Recurrent</th>
<th>and Capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>22,000,000</td>
<td>300,000,000</td>
<td>322,000,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>45,000,000</td>
<td>45,000,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>40,000,000</td>
<td>494,000,000</td>
<td>534,000,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>12,700,000</td>
<td>400,000,000</td>
<td>412,700,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>119,700,000</td>
<td>1,194,000,000</td>
<td>1,313,700,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gombe State Ministry of Finance, 2016

As indicated in Table 1.1 above, in 2012, Twenty-two million naira (22,000,000) was spent on recurrent expenditure while Three hundred million nairas (300,000,000) was spent on capital expenditure. Similarly, in 2013, Forty-five million naira (45,000,000) was spent on recurrent expenditure with no allocation for capital expenditure in 2013. In 2014, Forty million naira (40,000,000) was spent on recurrent while Four hundred and ninety-four million naira (494,000,000) was budgeted for capital expenditure. Similarly, in 2015, Twelve million seven hundred thousand nairas (12,700,000) was
spent on recurrent and four hundred million nairas (400,000,000) was spent on capital expenditure.

The agents (or Marshals as they are popularly known in Gombe State) were initially given a stipend of ten thousand Naira (10,000) fifteen thousand five hundred Naira (15,000,500), twenty thousand Naira (20,000) and thirty thousand Naira (30,000) per month respectively as their allowances, but the state governor in April 2015 converted their appointment from temporary to permanent and pensionable appointment.

The environmental agents were deployed to streets, markets places, motor parks, and other public places to help in enforcing environmental laws and ensure environmental sanitation especially within Gombe metropolis while the road traffic agents were deployed to control traffic and enforce traffic laws across the state and ensure the free flow of traffic especially in Gombe metropolis. On their part, the ward and community agents were deployed to monitor Youths behaviour; report any action that is capable of disrupting peace and security of the community; ensure peaceful and cordial community relations; provide security for Ministries, Departments and Agencies; guard and protect government buildings in order to prevent vandalisation of government properties.

The Talba Youth Rehabilitation and Reorientation Programme is being implemented by the Gombe State Agency for Social service, established by the Gombe state government with the mandate to coordinate and manage youths for the provision of social services in the state. It is backed by law, and this is stipulated in Part one (1) sec (3) of the act thus;

There is hereby established for the State a body to be known as the Gombe State Agency for Social Services (in this law referred to as “the Agency) which shall consist of such number of uniform members as may be determined from time to time by the Agency with the approval of the Governor (GSASS Act 2012).

The agency is headed by a General Manager as a chief executive with a governing Board as stated in the Act. Similarly, the structure of the Agency includes the Staff officer of the Agency, Commandant General, Civil defense attaché, NDLEA attaché, Provosts for Environmental, Traffic and Ward community Agents, as well as Commandants for various awards under the agency.

**Theoretical framework**
Incremental theory or science of muddling through was propounded by Charles E. Lindblom in 1959; other proponents of the theory include Martin
Landau (1962) Robert Dahl (1967) and David Braybrook (1968). Lindblom (1959) wanted to provide an alternative to the scientific school, the rational-comprehensive theory which is rooted in scientific thinking, thoroughness, rationality or power of proper reasoning, objectivity and empirical claim of proof of claims in dealing with societal problems.

Incremental theory is one of the empirically based theories of decision making and started from a recognition that human problems are extraordinarily complex, while our analytic capacities and resources are quite limited among other obstacles we lack sufficient knowledge of cause-and-action effect to understand complex social problems, and there is not enough time and recourses even to conduct most of the partial studies that are feasible (Lindblom, 1959).

Braybrook and Lindblom (1963) claimed that people do not know all their goals or the tradeoffs they are willing to make among them. They further argued that humans disagree about almost everything, and have no satisfactory analytic method for resolving disparate perceptions and priorities into collective choices. Due to the constraints of time needed for a rational decision, Lindblom proposes what he calls “disjointed incrementalism” or “the science of muddling through”. In line with this philosophy Lindblom proposes five distinct characteristics of policy decision making, which the analyst has to recognise (Dlakwa, 2008:141).

Stillman (1980) further explained that it is incremental in the sense that only small steps are taken at a time in order to achieve objectives and not broad ‘‘leaps and bound’’. Second, it is non-comprehensive because of the limitation imposed on policy makers by the lack of resources to go into sufficient details of problems before taking remedial measures. Third, policy decision involves “successive comparison because the policy is never made once and for all but made and remade endlessly by small chains of comparison between narrow choices.” Fourth, in practice decision making ‘‘suffices rather than maximises from among the available options.’’ The fifth characteristic of the incremental theory is plurality in choice. This is based on the fact that government decision making rest on a ‘pluralist’ conception of the public sector in which many contending interest groups compete for influence over policy issues, continually forcing the administrator, as a person in the middle, to secure agreement from among the competing parties” (Stillman,1980:201, cited in Dlakwa 2008). Based on the outlined characteristics of the incremental theory, the following assumptions are discernible.

i. that Public policy is a continuation of previous policy with minimum changes

ii. that existing programmes, policies expenditures are considered as a base, and
iii. That Policymaker accepts the legitimacy of previous policies because of uncertainty about the consequences of new policies.

Since policy is a purposive course of action based on currently acceptable societal values followed in dealing with a problem or matter of concern, predicting the state of affairs which would prevail when that purpose has been achieved. The introduction of the Talba Youth Rehabilitation and Reorientation as a policy made to address a societal problem of Kalare thuggery on incremental basis inheres in it the basic characteristics of the incremental theory. Incremental theory suggests that Public policy is a continuation of previous policy with minimum changes and the initiation of the Talba Youth Rehabilitation and Reorientation Programme was an increment on the successive government strategies such as the Anti-Kalare squad and Gombe State Environmental Protection Agency as a deliberate strategy to effectively stem the menace of Kalare thuggery in Gombe state.

Kalare Violence and Talba Youth Rehabilitation and Reorientation Programme
Despite the introduction of the youth rehabilitation and reorientation programme in Gombe state, cases of Kalare related violence are still being recorded on daily basis. The persistence of the menace is supported by the record of Kalare related violence in Gombe State from 2003-2015 compiled by the Gombe State Bureau of Statistics, presented below:

Table 1.2: Recorded Victims of Kalare Violence 2003-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Death</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Injured</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.5</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.9</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 1.2 above shows the rise and fall in the recorded cases of Kalare related violence in Gombe state in from 2003 to 2015. In 2003, the numbers of
recorded deaths were 17 which represent 19.3% of the recorded death cases. Although the record has shown that there were no cases of injuries, the period between 2003 and 2007 was characterised by intense political rivalry and violence. In 2004 about 5 deaths and 2 cases of injury were recorded representing 5.7% and 0.9% respectively. In 2005, 14 deaths and 13 injury cases were recorded representing 15.9% and 5.5% respectively, 2006 had 4 deaths and 4 injury cases representing 4.5% and 1.7% respectively while 2007 recorded 16 deaths and 14 injury cases which represent 18.2% and 5.9% respectively. These periods recorded the highest number of casualty involving the Kalare rival groups and innocent citizens due to the fact that the 2003 and 2007 were elections years. Also, the two elections were keenly contested by the political parties and politicians in a heated contest for political power. Jobless youth were engaged to ensure the victory of their candidates at the polls. This indicates that there is a strong relationship between Kalare activities and intense partisan political activities.

Similarly, there were cases of Kalare violence within the period, 2008 and 2010, as shown in Table 1.2. Although there is no record for 2010, 2008 recorded 8 deaths and 5 injury cases representing 6.9% and 2.1% respectively while 2009 recorded 7 deaths and 5 injury cases which represent 7.9% and 2.1% respectively. The slight drop of Kalare related violence within that period may not be unconnected with the introduction of a carrot and stick approach by the state government in its exertion to stem the menace of Kalare thuggery.

It was within the period that government introduced the Anti-Kalare Squad, a special squad comprising the military and the police with special training and equipment to checkmate the growing trend of Kalare thuggery in the state. The Gombe State Environmental Protection Agency (GOSEPA) was deliberately introduced to employ some of the Kalare youths as cleaners, but soon after its introduction, the thugs abandoned their jobs of cleaning the streets and went back to their Kalare activities. All these have not completely ended the Kalare thuggery in the state but it has helped to reduce the spate of Kalare violence for sometimes. Initially, Anti-Kalare squad recorded tremendous success, but it was accused of eventually derailing from its noble objectives by aligning with the loyalists of the ruling party to provide cover for thugs loyal to them and harassed only those from the opposition parties.

Furthermore, the period between 2011 and 2015 as shown in Table 1.2, witnessed yet another phase of Kalare related violence because, within that period, the recorded cases of Kalare related violence reached an unprecedented high despite the introduction of the Talba Youth Rehabilitation and Reorientation Programme. Although the numbers of death cases were reduced, the record shows that within that period, the injured victims
surpassed the ones recorded between 2003 and 2010. In 2011 there were 5 deaths and 25 injury cases representing 5.7% and 10.7% respectively. As an election year, there were no high records of Kalare violence in 2011. The reason for this is that the 2011 governorship election was not keenly contested because there was no challenge to the then ruling party, the PDP and a former governor was accused of deliberately emasculating the opposition by infiltrating its ranks and making his personal friend the candidate of Congress for Progressives Change (CPC) the then opposition party. This he did in his desire to pave way for his candidate.

In 2012, there were one death and 23 injury cases representing 1.2% and 9.8% respectively. The year 2013 did not record any death, but it recorded the highest number of injured victims. This is not unconnected to the fact that there was local government election in Gombe state in 2013 and there were allegations of the use of marshals to suppress the opposition, scare away prospective voters especially in the opposition stronghold, snatch ballot box to make sure opposition parties were not allowed to win even a councillorship. In 2013 alone, 53 cases of injured victims representing 22.6% were recorded, while 2014 recorded 4 deaths and 51 cases injured victims who represent 4.5% and 21.7% respectively, and in 2015 the number of death cases was 5 and 40 cases injury representing 10.2% and 17.0% respectively. However, the reason for the increase in the number of injured victims especially in the period 2011 to 2015 is probably because the Kalare youths have evolved a new concept call flashing which in their local parlance means to injure and not to kill. One of the interview respondents who is with the Nigerian Police Force revealed that most of the Kalare suspects arrested and interrogated will tell you that they only ‘flashed’ and not killed … “We arrest detain and interrogate the Kalare youths, but they will tell you they just flash and did not kill anybody” (Interview, 2015)

Similarly, Daily Trust newspaper quoted the incumbent governor lamenting the persistence of Kalare in these words: “Kalare members who are mostly between the ages of 16 and 20 have recently resurfaced in Gombe terrorising, killing, snatching people’s bags and breaking houses both in the day time and at night” (Daily Trust 2nd July, 2015 p 29).

Conclusion
It has become apparent that the introduction of the Talba Youth Rehabilitation and Reorientation Programme has not completely succeeded. This is against the backdrop that, Kalare thuggery has remained a threat to social stability and a source of immense concern in Gombe State. Though the government has tried to absorb some of the Kalare youths in its determination to get rid of the scourge, the menace of Kalare violence appears to have defied its efforts and
persisted against the background of continuous loss of lives and valuable properties as revealed by this study.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are presented:

**Recommendations**

i. Stiffer sanctions should be meted out against youths engaged in Kalare related violence and their sponsors, to serve as a deterrent to others who may be contemplating to join the group. Similarly, the capacity of security agencies, the Police, Civil Defence, and including the Marshals need to be enhanced by providing them with necessary equipment and support to effectively carry out their duty of ensuring the security of lives and properties throughout the state.

ii. More youths should be engaged in the programme especially those identified to have joined Kalare thuggery. Besides, apart from Talba Youth Rehabilitation and Reorientation Programme, other skill acquisition programmes which will make them productive to themselves, their community and society, in general, can be organised. This becomes necessary in view of the alarming trends of Kalare related violence especially within the period investigated.

iii. The government should pay more attention to the overall human development that can reduce poverty and hunger, especially among the youths to break the recruitment chain of Kalare in Gombe State. In addition to this, the government should also come up with a sound education policy that will ensure that all school-age children regardless of their background attend school and have the opportunity to be educated.

iv. Communities need to be encouraged to be vigilant and, guard their neighbourhood. Parents and religious leaders should get involved in that enlightenment and sensitisation of youths on the dangers of indulging in restive activities.

v. Finally, there is a need for partnership between Government and Non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations, families, traditional and religious leaders towards enlightenment and reorientation of the youths to shun manipulation by selfish politicians.
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