

**ARMS GLAMORIZATION: THE BANE OF VIOLENCE AND POVERTY IN NIGERIA,  
2009 – 2021**

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**Abstract**

*This study interrogates the connection between small arms glamorization, violence and deepening poverty in Nigeria. Security appears to have become a tall dream in Nigeria as the glamorization of arms with its destructive consequences has negatively affected innocent and hapless citizens of the country. The availability of arms has encouraged conflict, wars, weapon trading and has out-rightly entrenched the culture of militarism and wealth-making through arms abuse. Arms glamorization is the means of making arms attractive through government inactions in checkmating the proliferation and abuse of small arms and light weapons. This, not only make small arms attractive but communicated wrong values and encouraged the promotion of guns as a tool for acquiring wealth and power in the society. Works on arms proliferation have become prevalent but none exist on arms glamorization, a gap this study intends to fill. Primary and secondary sources such as interviews, ad-hoc observations and accounts, journals, newspaper reports and text books were analyzed qualitatively using self-report technique, anomie theory and security dilemma approach. The study submits that arms glamorization and its social dynamics fuel conflict and poverty because non-possession of arms is synonymous with weak-willed and vulnerable to human rights violations and death while possessors of arms become valours and confer respect, prestige and power.*

**Keywords: Small arms, glamorization, poverty, violence, Nigeria.**

### **Introduction**

Arms glamorization appears to have become a continental problem and Nigeria is considered to be the hardest hit in Africa (AWEPA, 2006:1). The continent has limited firms for small arms production yet awash with it (Grip, 2017:1). Out of the 875million small arms in circulation worldwide with many of them illegally in the hands of non-state actors and civilians (Stohl and Hogendoorn, 2010:1), more than 100million are in circulation in Africa causing huge problems for the continent and its people (Ngboawaji, 2011:1). And Nigeria is believed to have at least one-three million illicit small arms (Stohl, 2004; Moses and Ngomba,2017:1641).

The propensity of arms and its glamorization, instead of achieving sustainable security and development, have ignited a disturbing rate of ethno-religious crisis, civil wars, communal conflicts, Fulani herdsmen activities, terrorism, ethnic agitation and economic deprivation. Rising cases of intimidation, harassment, kidnapping occasioned by armed groups and non-state actors have not only stimulated arms glamorization and violence but has adversely affected the security architecture of the state (Ndanawa, E., Hove, M., Ghuliku, S.D., 2018:49-50). Arms glamorization has also weakened the ability and capacity of the state by nurturing a culture of impunity and criminality as easy access to weapons makes difficult federal government efforts to establish and maintain public order, rule of law, and pursue development goals (Patrick, 2006).

Traditionally, small arms, irrespective of their practical utility either positively or negatively, are valued as a symbol of resistance, defense, self-sufficiency, and also a transition from boyhood to manhood (Small Arms Survey,2006:302). It offers an individual a role, social status, and potential access to wealth and a share in what may be a grandiose but noble social design (Arena and Arrigo, 2006:23-24; Agbiboa, 2015:12).But because of the deepening level of poverty, inequality, and instability, people probably against their wish have been pushed into a resilient strategy where arms glamorization and application become a norm even in the full glare of the law enforcement agencies. (Okoro, 2007)

The demise of the Cold War in 1989 should have been an opportunity to usher in a spate of renewed global relations and inter-dependence that would have spurred the world into an era of unprecedented economic growth and prosperity but the reverse was the case in Africa especially Nigeria. It rather unleashed an outbreak of violent conflicts resulting in an untold magnitude of human tragedy. The adoption of the UN Programme of Action to silence Small Arms and Light Weapons appears to have been, not only mired in controversy but evoked a paradox because the government tends to operate or respond to the needs of their ruled by acting outside the bounds of morality (White, 2014:17). Most leaders oftentimes, attend the conference with trump up reports of all-is-well approach, hiding the true fact of these issues. Government failure to clampdown on the perpetrators rather than silencing the gun-approach brings to zero-level of insecurity since arms cannot function by themselves but part of a conflict equation (Ero and Muvumba,2004:224).

Although arms proliferation has elicited numerous publications such as Small Arms Survey, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2010, 2013, 2015, 2017; Ibeanu, 2005; Obasi, 2002;Ayassi and Sall, 2005; glamorization of arms has not received deserved academic discourse. The return to

civilian rule in 1999 is significant because it has opened up the space for interrogating political and social phenomenon in Nigeria. The perceived imbalances and unanswered questions with the Nigeria political system contributed fundamentally to the atmosphere of hostility, instability, conflict and poverty supported by the availability of arms. The political elites mobilized and secretly armed the unemployed and disenchanting youths to cause mayhem against their perceived enemies or the ruled (Aniekwe and Agbiboa, 2014:10).

However, in the absence of a systematic attempt to resolve most of the fundamental problems facing the country's political structure, the enlarged space is filled with ethnic militias, arms race and primordial identities. While arms and armed groups were being glamorized, politicized, and overlooked by subsequent administrations in Nigeria probably as colleagues in the dispensation of injustice, many Nigerians were secretly decimated, communities destroyed, farmland abandoned daily, and poverty took over the land (Eke, 2017:30). Therefore, the study brings into awareness that silencing the gun urged by African leaders and members of the WASSANER group is more of ruse than silencing the perpetrators since the gun is a part of conflict equation and cannot function by itself. The study shows that government's lack of policy implementation has encouraged arms glamorization, militarism, ethnic violence and poverty.

**Methodology:** Conducting research on arms glamorization and its consequences is a difficult engagement because of the precarious nature of insecurity in Nigeria. Besides, there is the problem of getting informants to give useful information relating to arms glamorization and militarism as issues of security is discussed in hush tone/voices due largely to shadow operations of the perpetrators. Informants were very careful to whom they speak to in realization of the dire consequences of being punished for doing so. This is one of the fundamental challenges facing this type of research in the course of data collection. In view of these obvious constraints, primary data for this research were obtained through oral interviews with retired and serving security officials, scholars, politicians, resource-haves and the resource have-nots in Enugu and Port-Harcourt in October 2019. Interviews were also conducted among Fulani residents in Nimbo (Enugu), Ubakala (Abia), Agatu (Benue), Idah (Kogi), Issele (Delta) between December 2018 –May, 2019. Some of the responses were transcribed from local dialect especially Igbo, Hausa to English, with the help of people versed in the languages. Consent was obtained from all participants and all have been anonymized by using pseudonyms. This was complemented by documented materials or secondary sources which were, however, subjected to re-interpretation.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Arms glamorization is not a new phenomenon but its rising profile and government's inability to caution, arrest and prosecute the illegal armed users has provided the fulcrum for the perpetrators' impunity of public display of arms even in the full glee of the country's security agencies. In a clear violation of national and international laws, glamorization of arms is not seen as arms transfer, but its propensity and uncontrolled abuse on any slightest provocation. Glamorization, according to Webster Dictionary, means 'attractive, glorify, glamorous, romanticize' something. It may also be referred to as 'gun-show-loopholes' in a society where non-state actors might swap or barter arms and its accessories often beyond any government's regulative oversight (UNODC, 2019).

Glamorization of arms, in recent time, appears to have become prevalent in most African societies especially with conflict mentality, patriotism, and gun culture. In a civilized society with patriotic zeal, glamorization refers to a system of values in which love for, or devotion to one's country and civic virtue glorifies arms with passion without application, knowing fully its strength. But in a crisis-ridden society, conflict mentality is expressed through the feeling of fear, insecurity, distrust, human carnage, violence, poverty, and anomie that people gained in the aftermath of official and unofficial show of military prowess and abuse. Gun culture illustrates passionate pride about possession and use of arms. Africa and Nigeria in particular, there are victims of conflict mentality who have tended to glamorize arms, and other anomalies in firearms use caused by social marginalization, exclusion and humiliation. The abuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW) has not only become the syndrome of existence but also accelerated their demand and increased display without official challenge from the constituted authority.

This study adopts the Emile Durkheim's theory of anomie which was refined by Merton in 1938. The theory demonstrates the missing-link between the social rules and some aspects of value-medium discrepancy introduced by the military that leads to anomie. Anomic conditions are no longer seen in the gap between needs and satisfactions but between means and goals. The discrepancy between means and goals varies from one ethnic, class, or sectarian group to another. The theory posits that:

*Most people strive to achieve recognized socio-cultural and economic goals. A state of anomie develops when access to these goals is blocked to the entire group of people or individuals. The result is a deviant behaviour characterized by rebellion, retreat, ritualism, innovation and conformity (Merton, 1938:676).*

The theory presents a glaring paradigm of existing situation in Nigeria as it reflects the government's inability to protect its citizens and their property; a development that results in security dilemma complex. There is no denying the fact that SALW having remained the main instruments of death and destruction, it also noteworthy that bad leadership has provided the fault-line from which arms were romanticized and abused. Lack of meaningful career path means that there is nothing holding a person back, psychologically, from joining the armed groups since they recruit larger-than-thou heart; and arms are already available to transform the recipients to what they want to be (Agbibo, 2015:21). The rapid increase in the numerical strength of armed groups not only encouraged the propensity of arms abuse but also stimulated its glamorization.

Security dilemma complex is a process in which a concern of one's security prompts an overall waning in the security of others. The need to be ready for the worst-case scenario originated from the 'un-resolvable uncertainty' which shows a sense of uncertainty on the part of other actors about present and future intentions of who might harm them, including both friends and enemies (Booth and Wheeler, 2013:138). In other words, the threat posed by one's security leads others to increase their security (Ndawana, *et al*, 2018:53). The need to keep same level of security empowers one to keep pace with the rivals by increasing the arms as deterrent to the level of the rivals (Roe, 1999:186). Leaders of most communities in various ethnic nationalities seem to have fortified and remained not only armed but custodian of their

amours in defense of their areas of jurisdiction while fear for another vestige of tension led some civilians to keep their weapons.

Therefore, various administrations in Nigeria since 1999 appeared guilty of the inadequacies especially the Goodluck and Buhari administrations resulting in instability, violence, and poverty as their silence and body language seem to have become the pivot for arms glamorization. The emerging anarchy arising from the activities of Boko Haram, Fulani herdsmen, unknown gunmen, bandits, kidnappers and other separatist groups coupled with the siege mentality of the Nigerian coercive agencies were all not proofs of arms glamorization in Nigeria. This has called to question the legitimacy of the constituted authorities since their orders were neither obeyed nor respected by their various ethnic nationalities including the members of the state actors.

### **Dialogue of Death: From Proliferation to Glamorization of Arms**

Since the mid-1980s, Nigeria has been under the grip of liberal economic policy hovering essentially around the conditions of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) as marketed and enforced by World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). The neo-liberal economic policies that alienated the ruled and commercialized the Nigerian economy for the benefit of the transnational corporations not only produced among others poverty and unemployment but forced Nigerians to tilt to crime as resilient strategies. In trying to stabilize the economy as canvassed by Washington Collective, the state also rolled itself away from the provision of the most basic needs of its functions especially provision of security. Failure of the state and its agencies to guarantee security has transformed security from being public good by the government to a private service which individuals and groups have to provide physical security through arms acquisition. Therefore, small arms acquisition became a means of livelihood for some individuals as a potential reprieve from the desperation of poverty.

The increased incidence of armed conflicts and abuses from the mangrove to the desert in Nigeria fueled the proliferation of arms. The economic hardship that emanated from poor implementation of Economic Recovery Programme (SAP) aggravated not only poverty but increased youth restiveness, facilitated ethno-communal conflicts, terrorism, insurgency, and undoubtedly stimulated small arms acquisition and misuse. This general state of affairs in Nigeria has played a significant role in the rise of desperate armed groups and increased demand for the supply of small arms throughout the country. Conflicts over resource-control, land grab, communal boundaries, demand for theocratic state and self-determination have involved different non-state actors. Furthermore, the policy of globalization also heightened the operational effectiveness of armed users and even undermined both the state capacity and legitimacy to curb their excesses thus giving arms proliferation and glamorization a free rein. Government sometimes appears to have secretly established marriage of convenience with armed users as they are colleagues in the dispensation of their dastardly political goals (Hanlon,2009:129).

Even the extensive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme established by Economic Community of West African States, African Union, United Nations, and other regional agencies of which Nigeria is a signatory to the agreement seems deceitful. This is on the account of the fact that the authorities of various countries only pay lip service without demonstrations of action for implementation, and sometimes make use of the non-state actors

as spoilers in the game to perpetuate themselves in power. In a clear manifest of deceit, the destruction of 6,000 weapons at the Nigeria's Flame of Peace was symbolically designed to mark the end of unrest and reintegration of armed militants into the society during the Goodluck administration. But the Peace Process was but a mere trash as the arms burnt were not only a fraction but old and hardly useable weapons. Secondly, many weapons did not find their way to the flame of peace and some ended up in the conflict zones because of continued insecurity and distrust (Florquin, 2005:59). Therefore, the submission did not remove insecurity; rather arms were still on ground and have been in use by the armed groups as the need arose. Most of the recalcitrant criminals never gave up their arms, and gun-for-cash programme emboldened bandits with more money to purchase more arms and motivation to raid villages and farmland with impunity (Ejiofo,2022:10).

The ECOWAS Protocol of free movement of persons, goods, and services has created a space that criminals cash in on to facilitate cross-border crime and trafficking. In Nigeria, the porous nature of her borders according to Abba Moro, former Minister of Internal Affairs, shows that there are over 1,499(irregular) illegal and 84(regular) legal officially identified entry routes into Nigeria and those illegal routes encouraged illicit transnational trafficking (Onuoha, 2013:4). This implies that most weapons in Nigeria both legal and illicit not only originated from outside but have unrestricted access into the country. Even some countries that export arms to Nigeria which included China, USA, Israel, Russia, Turkey, Switzerland, France, Britain and others are either yet to ratify or accede to the treaty (Adeniyi, 2017:50). Then, it remains contentious whether the political will to enforce the treaty's provisions only exist at the leadership and institutional levels of the United Nations Security Council or are they playing legal chicanery and subterfuge to Africa because of the revenue that accrue from arms sale?

Unfortunately, institutions in Nigeria are seemingly uninterested in taking stock of these facts and effect the required safety measures *ab initio*. The Nigerian coercive agencies usually tend to wait and respond after the act as opposed to preventive or preemptive measures before the act. Government's inability to stop the influx and proliferation of small arms has resulted in an unfortunate situation where several non-state actors now contest their claim of sovereignty. Not only that the Nigerian government no longer have monopoly of coercive forces in the society. So, Boko Haram, Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP), armed bandits, terrorist, Fulani herdsmen, Niger Delta militants, secessionist, anarchist, are all intent on dismembering the country into enclaves, fiefdoms and caliphates.

### **Highlights of Arms Glamorization and Violence in Nigeria since 2009**

The mad orgy of non-state actors has cut across all facets of the Nigerian society. Their activities, in most cases, were more of criminal purposes since they engaged in armed robbery, murder, looting, kidnapping, raping, arson, terrorism and destruction of communities and churches (Eke, 2017:33). These heinous crimes committed by non-state actors not only remained unchallenged with arms glamorized and impunity unabated but no Nigerian coercive agency has taken punitive actions aimed at apprehending, investigating, and prosecution of these criminals. Therefore, the centrality of violence coupled with government's incapacitation to curb the excesses generated the perfect scenario for the creation of an enabling environment for emergence and sustenance of organized violent groups (Ebimbore,2017:105).

Evidence abounds of such criminal impunity without government action and no regret from the political elite. Between November 2008 and 2009, Rumuekpe was torn apart by crisis allegedly engineered by Shell Petroleum Development Company over oil glut that affected their farmland and the lives lost were 60 people including women and children. Despite the number of people wasted and the property destroyed in the crisis, Shell with no remorse still continued its routine activities in area (Chigbo, 2011:15). The drive to keep oil revenues flowing and always in dire need to work in close relationship with Multinational Corporations (MNC) has made the federal government to ignore the crisis between the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) and state security forces in 2010. This crisis not only led to the death of 20 people and many others injured but also heavily militarized the Niger Delta region. Shell Petroleum Development Company hired more than 1,300 government forces as armed guards with a view to cowing the communities into submission of access to their God-given natural rights (Chigbo, 2011:9).

Since 2012, Boko Haram have recruited children and used them as combatants and non-combatants in the Northeast part of Nigeria. More than 3,500 children of the age of 13 years were recruited by Boko Haram for the on-going armed conflicts in the Northeast, Nigeria (Otokpa, 2019:10). This group of boys known as 'Kalare,' especially, in Gombe State have become proven prey for politicians who offered them small amount of money, drugs, alcohol and weapons in exchange for engaging in acts of intimidation and assault to their perceived enemies (Aniekwe and Agbiboa, 2014:10). The first major attack from the bandits occurred on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2014 in Yar Galadima, a village in Maru LGA of Zamfara State where over 200 people were decimated as criminals carted away monies and several valuable resources (Omonobi and Maradun, 2014:85). On 15<sup>th</sup> April 2014, Fulani herdsmen attacked Nwuko, Wukari LGA, Taraba State and killed 10 people while 18 were injured.

The situation even became worse when security officers trained with the tax-payers' money have now turned to be killers of those whom they swore an oath to protect. On 15 and 16 April, 2013 unknown number of civilian in Borno State were either executed, shot while running away from the scene of action or burnt to death when rampaging soldiers set fire to their houses (Adamo, 2020:12). Not only that, those civilians caught up in an indiscriminate security force sweeps were incarcerated, tortured, murdered, or starved to death at Giwa Barrack. The report of Dionne Searcey (2017) exposed the dastardly behaviour of Nigerian soldiers over the decimation of civilians in many communities in Eastern Borno, in public arena for no just cause other than their refusal to identify those who were sympathizers of Boko Haram (Adamo, 2020:11). Therefore, one can aptly put it that 2014 appears to be the bloodiest and most violent year of insurrection in Goodluck Jonathan's administration as Boko Haram, Fulani Herdsmen, bandits and gunmen began to occupy blocs of territories and communities both in the Northeast, Northwest, North Central, Southeast and South-South zones. The inability of Goodluck Jonathan's administration to checkmate those lapses not only dehydrated the resources but also eroded his popularity. Many states come under the siege of bandits, kidnappers, herdsmen-killers, and insurgents creating a staggering number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) and refugees in Nigeria (Eze *et al*, 2020:122).

Arms glamorization and poverty gained higher momentum with the inception of Buhari regime. There has been an escalation of violence since 2015 as the government in power has not paid considerable attention to the provision of security for the citizens. The high degree

of insecurity appears to erode people's confidence in the ability of the government to protect them, maintain peace, law and order and thereby create uncondusive environment for foreign investments. The politics played out by this regime with regard to various acts of arms abuse such as criminal damage, murder, rape, abduction, armed robbery, and kidnapping for ransom across the country have remained unchecked and always on the upsurge as Fulani herdsmen have become emboldened with their access to Ak-47 rifles. Between June 2015 and May 2016, about 525 persons were murdered by Fulani herdsmen across the country (Adeoye and Alagbe,2016). More so, 808 persons were also decimated while 1,422 houses were destroyed in Southern Kaduna (Adegun, 2016).

Nigeria has witnessed increased attacks by unknown gunmen, bandits or terrorists and Fulani herdsmen that sometimes denied people in the locale access to their farmlands. On September 21, 2015, Fulani herdsmen attacked and kidnapped the former Minister of Finance and Secretary to the Federal Government, Chief Olu Falae in his farm in Ondo State and demanded N5million ransom which was paid before his release (Premier Times, 2015). On 25 December, 2015, Kwata community in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State was attacked by Fulani herdsmen and 22 persons were killed (Abimboye, 2016). Also about 5 communities in the Lagelu Local Government Area of Oyo State were attacked on 20 April, 2016 killing unspecified number of people (Eke, 2017). In a similar vein, the Nimbo Community in Uzo-Uwani L.G.A. was attacked by Fulani herdsmen on April 25, 2016 and 52 persons were killed. The police and other security agencies did not take a proactive step to defend the Community after being informed in advance by the State Governor, Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of the planned violent attack (Bolashodun, 2016:5). On August 25, 2016, Fulani herdsmen attacked Ndiagu Attakwu Akegbe Ugwu Community in Nkanu West L. G. A. of Enugu State, killed a seminarian of the Catholic Church and seriously injured others (Nathaniel, 2016:1).

Furthermore, about 300 people were killed in Agatu village in Benue State by herdsmen in February 2016 (Eke, 2017). On 5 March 2016, 500 people were wasted in a simultaneous attacks carried out by Fulani herdsmen in 9 communities including Agila, Akwu, Adagbo, Ugboju, Odugbehu, Ogbalulu, Egba, Obagaji in Agatu LGA. Again, 15 people were killed in 2 communities in Gashaka L. G. A. of Taraba State on 12 April, 2016. On June 20, 2016, 59 persons were killed in Ugongo and Gabo Nenzev community in Logo LGA by herdsmen. On August 21, 2016, some Fulani herdsmen attacked Unguwan Ango Community near Godogodo in Jemata'a

LGA of Kaduna State and killed 3 persons including Pastor Luka Ubangari of Redeemed Christian Church of God, Unguwan Ango (Eke, 2017:35). On 23 August, 2016, Ningon Village of Sanga LGA of Kaduna State was attacked by Fulani herdsmen and 2 persons were killed (Isenyo, 2016). On 24 and 26 September 2016, Fulani herdsmen attacked the Godogodo village in Southern Kaduna and killed 8Christians while others were injured. The same village, (Godogodo) was attacked on 15 October 2016, killing 40 people while many churches were burnt down (Morning Star News, 2016). The three villages in Kuje Area Council of FCT, Abuja were also attacked by herdsmen in November, 2016 and three persons were killed while 10 persons were abducted (Akinrujomi and Abimboye, 2016).

Again, on 25 December 2016, herdsmen attacked Goska village of Kaninkon chiefdom in Jema'a LGA of Kaduna State and killed10 persons and injured several persons despite the 24



hours curfew imposed on South Kaduna communities. The economic activities of the entire LGA of Delta State were brought to a halt while protesting against the killing of 23 persons in the State by herdsmen on 19 April, 2019. Furthermore, the Obeagu Community of Nkalagu in Ishielu L.G.A. of Ebonyi State was also attacked in September 2021 by Fulani herdsmen killing 35 people (Nnaji, 2022: Oral). Within the same period, kidnapping for ransom has become every occurrence. It remains to be pointed out that most of their victims were the poor masses just as a number of them were found in IDP camps living a beggarly life. The political elite moving in convoys were always shielded from the ugly experiences.

Despite the ugly trends of man's inhumanity dotted across the Nigeria's political landscape, government appears mute and wrings its hand, incapacitated in the arrest, investigation and prosecution of culprits. What a paradox of political jinx calculated at encouraging and promoting not only ethnic violence but arms glamorization. The body language of Buhari administration seems to be complicit as official concrete statement was not heard from the government nor were genuine efforts made to bring these dastardly acts to a richly deserved end. Even the law of criminal trespass has been thrown to the wind with a view to providing an enabling environment for land grab through the force of arms. What happened at Attakwu, Akagbe Ugwu in Enugu South, and Nimbo in Uzo-Uwani LGAs are shining examples of government's incapacity and helplessness in the face of unbridled attacks on its citizens. The response against the activities of non-state actors in Nigeria has been that of subterfuge, chicanery, and rigmarole. That notwithstanding, the president appeared to be more interested in defending and protecting cows cum propagating the ideals of Fulani hegemony than protecting the lives of Nigerians whom as against the constitutional oath sworn to by him to protect all citizens of the country irrespective of religion, culture, language, and ethnicity.

It is only in the history of Nigeria that police officers will see criminals committing crime in their presence but turned their faces away from the scene only to appear to arrest the victims afterwards. This was demonstrated in March 2016, when 76 people from Ugwuneshi Autonomous Community in Awgu LGA of Enugu State were arrested by police while trying to protect and rescue their wives from criminal violence and arms abuse. Similarly, the attack of Nimbo village in Uzo-Uwani LGA of Enugu State was a clear evidence where the government coercive agencies refused to defend the community after having been duly informed in advance of the proposed violent attack by the Governor of Enugu State. The inability of the coercive agency to arrest and prosecute not only emboldened the superiority of the non-state actors and romance of arms but also deepened poverty among the citizenry in a democratic dispensation.

The criminal activities of these non-state actors appear to enjoy robust support of high profile public office holders like Bala Mohammed, the Governor of Bauchi State. He justified Fulani herdsmen carrying arms on the failure of government to protect both the herdsmen and their cattle from rustlers (Mohammed, 2021, Eze, *et al*, 2020). Even the Governor of Kaduna State was bold to announce the payment of N940 million to Fulani herdsmen with a view to stopping them from further killing of farmers in Southern Kaduna. What a strange statement that the victims of herdsmen attacks were not taken care of while culprits were paid by Governor Nasir El-Rufai for killing innocent citizens. Nigeria portrays a country of cynicism where Fulani herdsmen, terrorists, murderers, armed robbers, kidnappers, rapists, and other

violent criminals are paid for executing their assignments (or causing violence) instead of being punished for their crimes.

The lackadaisical attitude and inactions of the government created veritable environment required to enthrone and sustain arms glamorization. The body language of the government provides the live lines for arms glorification since none of the perpetrators who denied farmers access to their farmland, were arrested and prosecuted or punished appropriately. The situation became worse as the non-state actors glamorously scorned the laws prohibiting the possession of dangerous arms and the conveyance of the weapons without hitch to various destinations. Against this backdrop of government's ineptitude in Nigeria, there emerged militias and irredentist groups such as the Hisba, Kalare, Egbesu Boys, Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People, Niger Delta Avengers, the Oodua People's Congress, the Indigenous People of Biafra that have not only become violent in their demonstration of dissatisfaction with the political class but romanticized arms against the ill-treatment. Members of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria have been traversing the length and breadth of Nigeria wielding Ak-47 assault rifles without any interference from security agents.

Government's orchestrated policy of political exclusion, incapacitation to checkmate insecurity and violence has increased the margin of poverty, unemployment and impoverishment. Many zones in Nigeria especially Middle Belt, Southeast, Southwest were turned into gulags of misery, pains, fear, perfidy, violence and death through the reckless staccato of small arms exercised by non-state actors. These violent activities have evoked a feeling of frustration among the populace prompting the aggressive use of arms and light weapons to compel accountability and responsiveness (Eze *et al*, 2020:117). The activities of non-state actors and government's weak stand to curb their excesses have increased food insecurity, poverty, hardship, starvation and underdevelopment resulting in massive dislocation of people from their farms and homes. Some communities in many ungoverned areas in Nigeria have been sent out of their homes for IDP Camps while others were decimated by insurgent groups, kidnappers and herdsmen.

Farmers are also prevented from returning to their farms on the grounds that they might come into encounter with the enemies since crops were not planted and none to be harvested (Adams, 2020:15). Even the Joint Task Force of the federal government both in the Northeast and North Central have engaged themselves in action that can be described as terrorist since they razed down the entire village and killed hundreds of people with reason that the victims were suspected of giving aid and cover to the insurgents (Hansen, 2019:12). A fishing village on the shore of Lake Chad, Baga and the yam-producing towns in Agatu LGA in North Central Zone are certainly no stranger to these massacres. Therefore, farmlands and other resource-filled areas in Nigeria have remained fearful and killing enclaves for herdsmen and Boko Haram terrorist with government doing nothing (Offor, 2020).

## **Conclusion**

The study strove to explain that arms glamorization and violence are synonymous with poverty. The seeming failure of the State to perform its responsibility and statutory obligations to address the real grievances of the citizens against the government has made the citizens to resort to various forms of strategies including the use of arms, kidnapping and

terrorism to attract the needed sympathy, responsibility and accountability from government (Eze *et al*, 2020:117). Extreme poverty and deprivation that writ large in Nigeria are telling factors in the generation of an army of youths ready to kill and be killed. In this kind of situation where there is shrinking social resources, excruciating economic crises, a retreat of state welfare, and its consequences on contracting social services, and a market ideology to fend for self, grandiose arms glamorization becomes inevitable for self-definition and determination. Therefore, providing mainstream paths for young people within the society can help to alleviate the anger, frustration and hopelessness.

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