Research Article

Revitalising Indigenous Knowledge to Address Area Boys' Violent Activities in Sokoto: Hausa and Fulani Values of Morality, Peace and Tolerance

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Abstract

The rise of armed groups and youth violence in Africa, particularly in North-western Nigeria, is partly attributable to cultural disruptions caused by external influences, including colonialism, globalisation, and modern communication. In Sokoto State, this issue is manifested in the alarming proliferation of Area Boys gangs. These gangs engage in activities such as vandalism, organised fights, and violent protests, contributing to a broader security crisis with potential links to banditry and kidnapping. Historically, the Hausa and Fulani communities of Sokoto State embraced a culture of morality, peace, tolerance, and Islamic universalism rooted in indigenous traditions. However, the disruption of cultural transmission, compounded by the political exploitation of armed groups, has normalised youth violence. This article explores Hausa and Fulani indigenous knowledge systems, emphasizing values of morality, peace, and tolerance as a framework for addressing the challenges posed by Area Boys gangs and restoring societal harmony in Sokoto State.

Keywords: *Area Boys, Indigenous Knowledge, Morality, Peace, Tolerance and Sokoto State.*

Introduction

The proliferation of armed groups and youth violence in Africa can largely be attributed to cultural disruptions caused by external influences. According to Falola (1998), violence and extremism have long captured scholarly attention, with various disciplines and theoretical frameworks proposing solutions. In Northern Nigeria, particularly in the North-western states, external forces such as European and U.S. imperialism, post-colonial modernity, globalisation, political pluralism, divergent religious interpretations, and modern communication channels have introduced significant cultural shifts (Dicko et al., 2018). Combined with socio-economic crises and rapid population growth, these phenomena have contributed to the emergence and re-emergence of armed groups, particularly the Area Boys gangs, and their violent activities in the region.

In Sokoto State, the violent activities of Area Boys have reached an alarming and threatening scale, taking on forms such as vandalism, destruction of public and private facilities, organised fights, and mass protests. These activities not only pose immediate threats but may also facilitate recruitment into more notorious groups of cattle rustlers, bandits, and kidnappers. While the Sokoto State government focuses its attention on the frequency of banditry and kidnappings which cause significant damage to property and human lives, there is relatively little focus on the rising number and violent activities of Area Boys gangs.

Historically, the people of Hausaland enjoyed a rich culture that blended Islamic universalism with traditional values, fostering tolerance and peace with minimal internal conflicts (Kyari, 2017). Despite the predominantly Hausa and Fulani Muslim population, the Sokoto Caliphate, established in the 19th century, was characterised by ethnic diversity and an emphasis on Islamic universalism over ethnic particularism. Kingdoms such as Zamfara, Gobir, and Kebbi became part of this polity, their cultures deeply rooted in Hausa and Fulani traditions as well as Islamic teachings that promoted humility, peace, tolerance, and accommodation.

The disruption of the transmission of Hausa and Fulani indigenous knowledge by external influences introduced immorality, intolerance, and violence, transforming what was once a peaceful society. This shift was exacerbated by the unhealthy political landscape, where political elites sponsored armed groups for thuggery and intimidation during elections. As a result, contemporary youth violence, characterised by the activities of Area Boys, has no historical or cultural basis in Hausa and Fulani traditions. In this context, it becomes imperative to retrieve and present indigenous knowledge systems to address the security challenges posed by Area Boys gangs. This article aims to explore the Hausa and Fulani values of morality, peace, and tolerance as solutions to this phenomenon and as a pathway to restoring societal harmony in Sokoto State.

Aim

This article aims to explore the Hausa and Fulani values of morality, peace, and tolerance, making them available for revival, refinement, and application to address the phenomenon of Area Boys' violent activities in Sokoto State.

Methodology and Study Area

This study adopts a qualitative approach, combining both primary and secondary data collection methods. Primary data were generated through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted with selected respondents across two local government areas (LGAs) in each of Sokoto State's three senatorial zones: Sokoto Central Zone (Sokoto South and Wamakko LGAs), Sokoto East Zone (Gwadabawa and Wurno LGAs), and Sokoto South Zone (Yabo and Tureta LGAs).

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and FGDs provided relevant data on respondents' perceptions and awareness of the increasing number of Area Boys gangs, their violent activities, and the Hausa and Fulani indigenous knowledge systems, particularly the norms and values advocating morality, peace, and tolerance. In total, 60 KIIs (10 per selected LGA) and 12 FGDs (two per selected LGA) were conducted. Each FGD included 10 respondents (5 men and 5 women). Similarly, both male and female respondents participated in the KIIs.

Secondary data were obtained through intensive desk reviews, relying on documented evidence relevant to the study's objectives.

Literature Review

Several scholarly works examine armed groups and their violent activities in Nigeria, particularly in the North-west and Sokoto State. Existing studies have also explored the phenomenon of Area Boys in urban contexts like Lagos and highlighted the lessons that can be drawn from pre-colonial Hausa society, especially during the Sokoto Caliphate era to address contemporary security challenges. However, no existing studies explicitly focus on the Area Boys phenomenon in Sokoto State or provide a framework based on Hausa and Fulani norms and values for addressing this challenge.

Two notable texts on the Area Boys phenomenon are The Emergence of the 'Area Boys' Phenomenon in Lagos, Nigeria (Emordi, 2005) and The Challenge of Area Boys' Menace in Lagos Metropolis: The Role of the State (Eshiet, 2020). Both studies highlight the increasing prevalence of the issue in Lagos and evaluate measures adopted by various administrations. They conclude that the measures have been inadequate and stress the need for a drastic transformation of the Nigerian state to address the problem effectively.

On Hausa values of morality, peace, and tolerance, key works include Maitafsir and Birnin Tudu (1999); Paden (2005); Musa (2014); Maishanu (2014); Bunza (2016); and Usman (1983). These studies describe the Hausa people's traditional and Islamic cultures, which emphasise tolerance and peaceful co-existence. For example, Paden (2005) explores the links between Hausaland and the Islamic cultural heritage of North Africa, which fostered a sophisticated and all-encompassing Islamic culture. Falola and Heaton (2008) highlight the Hausa culture of tolerance and cooperation, noting that pre-jihad inter-state wars were rare and that Hausa states often united to repel external aggressors, as evidenced by Kano and Katsina's alliance against Kororofa in the 17th century (Hunwick, 1972).

During the Sokoto Caliphate, the region's blended Hausa-Islamic culture was further refined and institutionalised, fostering tolerance, peaceful co-existence, and effective conflict resolution methods. These values were transmitted through family structures, religious education, and public settings, emphasising humility, patience, and accommodation. Although the relationship between the Hausa states and their neighbours, such as Kanem-Borno, has sometimes been depicted as contentious, Usman (1983) argues that peaceful interactions, including trade and cultural exchanges, were more prevalent than conflict. This historical narrative underscores the potential of Hausa and Fulani traditions to inform contemporary strategies for fostering societal harmony.

Findings and Discussions

1. Understanding the Phenomenon of Area Boys and Their Impact

To Sokoto people, 'Area Boys' is a term commonly used to refer to informal groups of young men, often unemployed or underemployed, who congregate in specific urban areas of especially Sokoto North and South Local Government Areas and other local governments' headquarters in the State. These groups are often associated with street-level activities, including: street hustling in which they might engage in activities such as directing traffic, helping drivers find parking spots, or selling goods on the streets. In some rare cases, Area Boys beg money from people passing through their areas of operation. Also, the findings revealed that some members of Area Boys are involved in theft, pickpocketing, snatching of cell phones and other valuable items as well engaging in many other criminal activities, especially during periods of unrest.

With regards to the emergence and re-emergence of Area Boys, the study has shown that the phenomenon is linked to poverty, and lack of formal opportunities for young people. Thus, the respondents accounted for several socio-economic, political and cultural factors for the rise of Area Boys to include illiteracy, and cultural shifts. Specifically, the findings revealed that the emergence of Area Boys in Sokoto is deeply rooted in a combination of the following causes:

i) Unemployment and Poverty, this includes the lack of formal employment opportunities forces many young people to turn to informal or illicit means to survive. Also, there has been the issue of rural-urban migration in which many individuals migrate to Sokoto from various rural areas of the State in search of better opportunities but end up jobless or underemployed due to the saturated labour market.

ii) Breakdown of Social Structures, this is equally one of the leading causes of Sokoto youths' participation in Area Boys' activities. The findings revealed that broken homes, absentee parents, and lack of parental guidance often leave young men without adequate support and supervision or proper upbringing in line with Hausa culture. Also, in this regard, there is the issue of decline in community bonds. On this, respondents accounted that urbanization weakens traditional support systems, leading to an increase in street culture.

iii) Inadequate Education, according to the findings of the study, illiteracy and the rising number of school dropout contribute significantly to the rising number of Area Boys in the Sokoto State. In this regard, poor access to quality education or early school dropout limits opportunities for young people, leaving them vulnerable to street life.

iv) Governance and Corruption, findings revealed that in Sokoto State, inadequate policies addressing youth development and welfare contribute to their marginalisation. Also, mismanagement of public funds and resources at both State and Local Government levels that could have been used for employment or youth programmes exacerbates the problem.

v) Peer Influence and Street Culture, according to the respondents, this is one of the major factors causing the rising activities of Area Boys in Sokoto. Many youths join Area Boys due to peer influence or the allure of quick money, street power, or protection. Also, for some, becoming an Area Boy is a way to gain recognition, security, or a sense of belonging in a harsh environment.

vi) Political Exploitation and Manipulation, political gladiators often recruit Area Boys as enforcers during electioneering campaigns and elections, providing them with financial incentives, drugs, light arms and promising them protection, which legitimises their activities. In most cases, after elections, many of the engaged Area Boys are often abandoned, leaving them to fend for themselves through street activities.

vii) Drug Abuse, substance abuse, including drugs and alcohol, is both a cause and a consequence of street life, contributing to the entrenchment of Area Boy culture in Sokoto State.

On the issue of consequences of the Area Boys' activities, the study reveals that the activities have significant impact on societal stability and development in Sokoto State. These consequences are generally negative, affecting social harmony, economic growth, and governance. For instance, in the area of social instability, the activities of Area Boys, such as theft, extortion, and vandalism, contribute to insecurity and make urban spaces unsafe. Also, there has been erosion of community trust resulting from the activities of Area Boys in Sokoto. Fear of harassment or such violence as snatch of cell phones erodes trust within the community, weakening social cohesion. There is youth vulnerability issue in which the influence of Area Boys can lure other youths into delinquency, perpetuating cycles of criminal behaviour.

Moreover, the findings revealed some economic consequences of Area Boys' activities in Sokoto to include disruption of business activities, loss of revenue and discoursing tourism because of perceptions of insecurity in the State. The respondents accounted that there are also, governance challenges. These include undermining rule of law. For instance, the inability to curb the activities of Area Boys in the State exposes weaknesses in law enforcement and governance. Others include political exploitation in which the way politicians use Area Boys for thuggery or election violence, further undermine democratic processes. There is pressure on public resources where addressing the consequences of Area Boys' activities such as crime, drug abuse, or incarceration drains public resources.

Other consequences as revealed by the findings of this study are normalisation of street culture in which the Area Boys' activities can normalise a culture of violence, drug abuse, and lawlessness among vulnerable youth. They also include lack of skills and productivity whereby young people engaged in such activities are often deprived of opportunities to develop useful skills, reducing their long-term contribution to society. There is the issue of public safety concerns. Areas where Area Boys operate in the Sokoto State especially, in some parts of Sokoto North and South Local Government Areas are sometimes no-go zones, reducing accessibility and the overall quality of life.

Moreover, public health is equally affected. The findings have shown that because of the Area Boys' operation in the State, there has been an increased prevalence of drug abuse leads to health problems and higher healthcare costs for the state. Similarly, unsanitary conditions in places they frequent contribute to public health risks. Also, their presence around healthcare facilities and educational institutions can discourage attendance or lead to harassment of patients and students.

2. Indigenous Knowledge Systems: An Overview

According to the findings of the study, to Sokoto people, as in the case of other Nigeria cultural groups, Indigenous Knowledge Systems refer to the accumulated knowledge, skills, practices, and beliefs that are developed by indigenous or local communities over generations through interaction with their environment. This knowledge is often transmitted orally and is deeply rooted in cultural traditions, spiritual values, and social norms. It encompasses various domains, such as agriculture, medicine, environmental management, governance, and arts. The knowledge has been important in environmental sustainability, cultural heritage preservation, health and medicine, education and innovation, disaster risk reduction, community resilience, as well as ethics.

In every society, indigenous knowledge is transmitted for its role in societal development and in fostering peace, both by addressing root causes of conflict and providing traditional mechanisms for resolution. According to the respondents, in every Nigerian society, indigenous knowledge promotes social cohesion. Shared indigenous values, norms, and customs create strong social bonds, minimizing tensions and promoting a collective identity that discourages conflict. The knowledge also transmits conflict avoidance mechanisms, in which it often emphasises respect, harmony with nature, and peaceful coexistence. Indigenous knowledge includes environmental indicators and spiritual insights that can forewarn resource scarcity or natural disasters, preventing related conflicts. In the area of conflict resolution, indigenous is said to be the customary mediation systems. The findings revealed that, traditional and community leaders, such as chiefs and elders, use negotiation and mediation to resolve disputes. This process often involves dialogue, consensus-building, and restorative justice rather than punitive measures. It also provides frameworks for equitable resource distribution, preventing or resolving conflicts over land, water, and other resources. The knowledge entails consensus decision-making whereby conflict resolution focuses on collective agreement, ensuring that all parties feel heard and included in the resolution process. In this process, the knowledge often emphasises restorative justice models in which repairing harm and restoring relationships rather than punishment, ensuring long-term peace.

According to the findings of this study, the Hausa and Fulani people of Sokoto State possess a rich repository of indigenous knowledge systems and values that have historically played a critical role in fostering community harmony. These systems are deeply rooted in their culture, traditions, and Islamic influences, and in the past, they had contributed significantly to social stability, cohesion, and development. For instance, in traditional governance and leadership, it provided governance structure, led by Sarki and later emirs and chiefs, employed indigenous systems of administration that emphasised justice, consultation (*shawara*), and accountability. This governance model ensured societal order and resolved disputes fairly, fostering trust and harmony in the area of what is today Sokoto State. In ensuring peace through conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms, also, there were mediators and arbitrators. They included community elders and leaders who used wisdom and cultural knowledge to resolve disputes and prevent escalation.

Moreover, Hausa and customary laws, influenced by Islamic principles, upheld values such as fairness (adalci), truthfulness (gaskiya), and respect for others. These norms guided behaviour and maintained social order, preventing conflicts and promoting unity. Again, the issue of communal responsibility is fully entrenched in Hausa and Fulani indigenous knowledge systems. The concept of *zumunta* (kinship and solidarity) emphasised collective welfare and mutual support, reducing inequality and fostering community ties.

Regarding conflict resolution mechanisms, the Hausa and Fulani of Sokoto traditionally resolved conflicts through dialogue (*tattaunawa*) and consensus-building, often mediated by elders, traditional rulers and religious leaders. These methods were inclusive, culturally relevant, and aimed at reconciliation rather than punishment. Also, traditional feasts such as marriages and naming ceremonies helped mend broken relationships and restore harmony after conflicts. This signified that ceremonial gatherings were community-centred, reinforcing bonds and a shared sense of identity. In Sokoto mediation processes in the past, there were religious and ethical values. Islam, which is deeply integrated into Hausa culture, reinforces indigenous values like peace (*salama*), forgiveness (*afuwa*), and patience (*hakuri*). These values

encouraged individuals to prioritise community well-being over personal grievances. Islamic scholars (*malamai*) often acted as moral and spiritual guides, promoting peaceful coexistence and resolving disputes through teachings of justice and compassion. In addition, there was Hausa and Fulani tradition of *hadin kai* (cooperation) that encouraged collective farming, trade, and mutual aid. These practices reduced competition and tension over resources, fostering economic interdependence and social harmony. Markets served not just as economic hubs but also as spaces for social interaction and conflict resolution.

Therefore, it became clear from the findings of the study that Hausa and Fulani indigenous knowledge systems had in past, the following impact on community harmony, cohesion and peaceful co-existence in the vast area of what is today Sokoto State. Such impacts include:

i) Social Stability: The emphasis on justice, fairness, and reconciliation reduced grievances and ensured long-term stability.

ii) Inclusion and Equity: Indigenous systems fostered a sense of belonging and mutual respect, regardless of status or background.

iii) Conflict Prevention: Proactive engagement through customary laws and norms prevented the escalation of disputes.

iv) Cultural Continuity: The preservation of Hausa traditions and values strengthened community identity and cohesion.

3. Hausa and Fulani Values of Morality, Peace, and Tolerance:
Mechanisms of Transmission

As hinted earlier in the background, the Hausa and Fulani people of Sokoto State had had in the past, Islamic culture of humbleness, self-peace, respect for parents and accommodation. The culture was blended with the already existing Hausa tradition that cherished tolerance and respect for elders among youths as well as conflict resolution and general community peace. The question is, how was the culture (indigenous knowledge) transmitted from one generation to another before the interruption of the alien culture of immorality and intolerance? Thus, this study reveals that the culture was transmitted and sustained through oral traditions and proverbs. Hausa proverb(s) (*karin magana* or *karin maganganu*), folktale(s) *(tatsuniya* or *tatsuniyoyi*), and songs containing moral lessons and emphasising the importance of unity, respect, and peaceful coexistence were the conveyors of the knowledge from one generation to another. It was transmitted at family level and public places where norms and values were given to children and youths. At schools, mosques and other public places, parents and elders regarded themselves as extremely respectful, polite, moral, tolerant, humble and peace so as to lead by example. At family level, the knowledge was transmitted by the parents and senior siblings and piblings whose humbleness, sense of respect for elders, tolerance and accommodation were displayed to guide children by examples. Most specifically, at both the levels of family and public places, children and youths were taught physically, the Hausa and Fulani tradition that advocated tolerance, self-peace and respect for parents and elders through proverb (*Karin Magana*) and folktale (*Tatsuniyya*).

Findings of this study revealed that Hausa and Fulani heritage has several proverbs and folktales on tolerance, respect for parents and elders as well as mutual understanding and respect among all members of Sokoto community. Also, there are proverbs and folktales on hospitality, truth and sincerity, role of women to ensure mutual respect among spouses for prevention of matrimonial fictions or domestic violence, control of social problems, the importance of education, conflict resolution, and finally, sustainable peace-building. It was through transmission of such proverbs and folktales at the levels of family and public places that Sokoto people were able to sustain their morality and peaceful co-existence until now that the immorality, intolerance and violent activities of youths (Area Boys) are contesting the peace of the Sokoto State. Given that, the related proverbs and folktales cannot be contained within the scope of this article, the following are some Hausa and Fulani proverbs and folktales that transmits values for morality, peace, tolerance among others:

Hausa Provers on Peace

i) *Zaman lafiya yafi zama ɗan sarki* (to be in peace is better than to be a prince or even the king (literal translation) and or peace is priceless (equivalent translation). This proverb expresses the value and importance of peace.

ii) *Maso faɗa wawa ne* (a quarrel loving person is described as a fool). This proverb was commonly said among the Hausa people of Sokoto to discourage troublemaking and violent attitudes.

iii) *Tashin hankali yana kawo tsiya* (conflict brings poverty). For Sokoto people, conflicts caused evils and regression. They believed that where there was conflict, there would be no development. To them, peace was directly related to economic prosperity. Only with a peaceful atmosphere, Hausa and Fulani people of Sokoto could prosper and their economic growth was dependent on their peace.

Hausa Proverbs on Conflict Resolution (*Sulhu*) and Peacebuilding

i) *Akan saba ko tsakanin harshe da hakora* (friction does happen even between the tongue and the teeth). This proverb draws the attention of the friends, relations and neighbours that friction happens among even friends and relations. What is not normal is to allow the friction to escalate into a major conflict.

ii) *Hakuri maganin zaman duniya* (patience is a universal remedy). This was a proverb transmitted among the Sokoto people for the preservation of peace and sustainable peacebuilding.

iii) *Ba a rama gayya da fushi* (do not avenge a malicious conduct when angry). This is another Hausa proverb that advocates conflict resolution. It was widely communicated among Sokoto people in the past. The proverb connotes that angry reaction causes contrition and remorseful action. Unclever people act hastily and therefore add insult to an existing injury. At extended family level, the proverb was extensively used to nip in the bud disputes that were likely escalate because of awkward action by one of the parties in the dispute.

Proverbs on Hospitality

i) *Shimfidar fuska tafi ta tabarma* (a smiling face is a better welcome than the offer of a mat). This proverb was widely and maximally communicated among Sokoto people to boost for, and understanding among all. The proverb connotes that a welcoming face is better than the entire offer that will be given. While the proverb is part of the Hausa traditions, its essence is deeply rooted in Islamic religion. Another related proverb is:

ii) *Ba bakonka ruwa ka sha labara* (give a stranger water and he will tell you the news). The proverb was commonly communicated among the people of Sokoto in the past and it advocated that guests and visitors should be prioritised. It connotes that if a guest or visitor is welcomed, he will narrate all the needed information to his host.

iii) *Bako rahama ne* (a guest is a blessing). This proverb was similarly transmitted among Hausa and Fulani people of Sokoto and it was linked to the provision of Islamic religion that prescribes how quests and visitors should be treated.

Proverbs on Truth and Sincerity

i) *Gaskiya dokin karfe, makaryaci ba zai hau ba* (truth is an iron horse, a liar will not climb). This proverb presents an insight into the importance and power of being truthful and was fully communicated among the Hausa and Fulani people of Sokoto.

ii) *Tsare gaskiya ko da wuta aka saka ka* (keep to the truth even if they put you in the fire). This is another proverb widely said among Sokoto people of the past and it connotes insistence, consistence and persistence on telling the truth without minding the consequences.

iii) *Gaskiya daci gareta* (the truth is always bitter). This proverb was equally communicated among Sokoto people to show the importance of telling the truth no matter the situation.

Probers on Women

In Hausaland and Sokoto in particular, it was recognised that women had vital roles to play to prevent family frictions and domestic violence. Thus, there were many Hausa proverbs that discussed the role of women especially married ones Sokoto and how they were perceived by the society and their husbands in particular; as well as how they (the women) perceived the men of Sokoto, especially their husbands. Such proverbs include:

i) *Matar na tuba bata rasa mijin aure* (a woman who says I am sorry would always have a husband to marry). This proverb was widely said in Sokoto and it was in relation to the fact that some women were strong headed while many others were not. The proverb revealed that women, especially wives who used to ask for forgiveness from their husbands when they make any mistake would not get separated or lack husbands.

ii) *Zaman ka kai kadai yafi zama da muguwar mace.* (living on your own is better than living with a wicked woman). This proverb was widely communicated to discourage Sokoto people from getting married to troublesome women.

Proverbs on Control of Social Problems

i) *Duk abinda mutum ya shuka shi zai girba* (what one sow it is what he will reap). This proverb was transmitted among Sokoto youths to counsel some of them that were behaving contrary to the expectation of Sokoto society.

ii) *In za ka gina ramin mugunta gina shi gajere* (If you are going to dig a hole of wickedness, dig a shallow one). This was another proverb widely communicated against wickedness among Sokoto people. According to the proverb, if a person was to lay a trap for others, he was advised not to overdo it because he might be the one to fall into the trap.

iii) *Komai yayi farko zai yi karshe* (everything that has a beginning has an end). This proverb was equally transmitted among the Hausa and Fulani people and it is self-explanatory. The proverb signifies that whatever the situation might be one will not dwell forever. It definitely has an end.

Proverbs on Knowledge Seeking
i)   *Iya ruwa, fidda kai* (the knowledge or ability to swim is preservation of life). The proverb connotes that the greater our knowledge, the greater our chances to succeed in what we want to achieved).
ii) *Ko ba'a gwaada ba, gatari ya san dutse* (without a trial a hoe knows a stone). This proverb is saying that an educated person can recognize certain things by merely seeing those things.

Proverbs on Patience
i)   *Hakuri maganin zaman duniya* (Patience is a universal remedy). This proverb is saying that we must be patience and not despair. This proverb was used by the people of Sokoto to silence a person who is complaining about the harsh condition of life.
ii) *Kowa yayi hakuri zai samu riba* (anyone who is patient will profit or patience is profitable). The proverb was used to show that patience is the key to success in life. If a person is patient enough, he will succeed.

Proverbs on Importance of Solidarity and Cooperation
i)   *Hannu daya baya daukan jinka* (one hand cannot lift a hut). This proverb is used to show the importance of team work because no man is an island. You need someone to assist you in decision making or other activities of your life. You need someone to assist you one way or the other.
ii) *Kaso danuwanka kamar kanka* (love your neighbour like yourself). The proverb was used by the Sokoto people to signify that it is without doubt that for you to do justice and to live in peace with your neighbours you must think of them the way you think of yourself.

Hausa Folklores on Morality, Peace and Tolerance
The findings revealed that similar to proverbs, Hausa folklore, like much of African oral tradition, served as a vehicle for teaching societal values, promoting good character, and fostering harmony among individuals. Through the folktales, the Hausa people of Sokoto preserved and transmitted values essential for societal harmony, making folklore a vital tool for moral education over the past years. The following elements in Hausa folklore advocate morality, peace, and tolerance:
i)   'Tales of Honesty and Integrity', Hausa folklore frequently highlights the virtue of honesty. For example, in the story of *Tafarkin Nagari* (The Path of Righteousness), characters who practice honesty and fairness are rewarded, while those who deceive or exploit others face consequences.
ii) 'Conflict Resolution in Stories', many Hausa folktales involve disputes that are resolved through dialogue, wisdom, and understanding. For instance, in stories featuring the character 'Ibro', misunderstandings often arise, but peace is achieved through compromise and the intervention of wise elders.
iii) 'Lessons on Harmony', stories like that of *Dodo da Kyakkyawa* (The Monster and the Beautiful Maiden) demonstrate how individuals or communities can overcome enmity by working together and fostering mutual respect.
iv) 'Diversity and Coexistence', folktales often depict animals of different species cooperating, symbolizing the value of tolerance and unity in diversity. For example, the story of the tortoise (*kunkuru*) and the bird teaches that differences can be strengths when combined for a common goal.

Fulani Folklore, Proverbs, and Stories on Peace and Harmonious Coexistence
Like other cultural groups of Nigeria, Fulani people of Sokoto had in the past used oral culture that emphasised and sustained peace, morality and tolerance among their youths and between them and Hausa people. The knowledge of the culture was transmitted through Fulani folklores, proverbs, stories and songs as follows:
Fulani Proverbs on Peace
i)   *Ciwon da ba ya kashe mutum, yana kara masa karfi* (a problem that does not kill makes one stronger): This encourages resilience and patience in conflict situations.
ii) *Ardo mai hakuri ne yake samun alheri* (a patient leader achieves success): This highlights the Fulani value of patience, particularly for leaders, in maintaining peace.
iii) *Malam ba ya hura wuta, sai ya kashe ta* (a wise man does not fan the flames but extinguishes them): This teaches the value of wisdom in preventing and resolving disputes.

Fulani Folklore
i)   'The Tale of the Wise Cow', in Fulani tradition of Sokoto, cattle are highly revered and central to their culture. One popular folktale involves a wise cow that prevents a conflict between two herders. The two herders dispute ownership of the cow, but the animal demonstrates loyalty to its true owner by returning to him. The community elder uses the situation to teach the herders about truth, fairness, and the importance of avoiding disputes over material possessions. The story underscores wisdom and truth as tools for conflict resolution. It was widely communicated among both Fulani and Hausa people of Sokoto.
ii) 'The Parable of the Shepherd and the Straying Lamb**',** this story was transmitted among the people of Sokoto for conflict resolution through dialogue. The story tells of a shepherd who patiently retrieves a lamb that strays into

another herd. Instead of resorting to anger or violence, he uses calm words to resolve the situation with the other shepherd. The story emphasises the Fulani values of patience (*munyal*) and dialogue in resolving disputes.

iii)   'The Myth of *Njeddo Dewal* and Peaceful Coexistence', *Njeddo Dewal* is a figure in Fulani mythology often associated with the forces of balance and harmony. In one story, she warns a village of the dangers of pride and unnecessary quarrels, urging them to value peace over material wealth or power. Those who heed her advice live prosperously, while those who ignore it face misfortune. This legend teaches the importance of humility and prioritizing communal harmony. This story was quite communicated among the Hausa and Fulani of Sokoto.

iv)   'The Story of the Peacemaking Elder', a folktale often told among the Fulani features an elder who mediates between two feuding families. Instead of taking sides, he listens carefully to both parties and uses parables to demonstrate the futility of their conflict. His wisdom and calm demeanor lead to a peaceful resolution, and the families learn to value dialogue over violence. This story was equally transmitted across all and sundry in the area of what is today Sokoto State.

The Fulani Code of Ethics (*Pulaaku*)

The Fulani people follow *Pulaaku*, a code of conduct that includes principles like patience (*munyal*), respect (*semteende*), modesty (*haakilo*), and wisdom (*ngorgu*). These values are passed down through folklore and teach individuals to avoid rash actions, resolve conflicts amicably, and prioritize the well-being of the community.

Songs of Reconciliation

Sokoto Fulani herders often sing songs while tending their cattle, many of which contain messages about reconciliation and the importance of avoiding disputes. These songs remind listeners of the interconnectedness of life and the value of maintaining peace within the community.

Through these folktales, proverbs, code of ethic, songs and other traditions, Sokoto Fulani were able to emphasise the values of and maintained patience, peace, morality, dialogue, and mutual respect as fundamental tools for fostering peace and preventing conflict among themselves and between them and Hausa people.

4.   Applying Indigenous Knowledge to Address Youth Violence

In light of the foregoing discourse on how in the past Hausa and Fulani people of Sokoto ensured morality, peace and tolerance among themselves through transmission of indigenous knowledge, the need to apply such mechanisms to address the phenomenon of Area Boys in Sokoto has become imperative. According to the findings of this study, addressing the phenomenon, requires integrating traditional values, community structures, and cultural practices to foster discipline, reconciliation, and social cohesion. Thus, the following strategies have been extracted from the findings of this study:

i)   **Reinforcing Indigenous Values and Social Norms:**
Teach and promote core Hausa values such as *gaskiya* (truthfulness), *mutunci* (respect), *zumunci* (kinship), and *hakuri* (patience). Community programmes should be organised to instill these values in youth through oral traditions, storytelling, and proverbs that discourage violence and emphasize respect for life and property.

ii)   **Conflict Resolution Mechanisms**
Optimal utilisation of traditional mediation practices involving elders, *malamai* (Islamic scholars), and community leaders to address grievances and disputes among youth before they escalate. There should be reconciliation ceremonies and restorative justice sessions for affected families and communities to rebuild trust.

iii)   **Youth Engagement in Communal Activities**
There should be opportunities created for youth to participate in traditional economic activities such as farming cooperatives, trade, and crafts to foster a sense of responsibility and productivity. Cultural festivals, sports, and competitions need to be organised to channel youthful energy positively and reinforce communal bonds.

iv)   **Religious and Moral Education**
There should be constant and consistent use of Islamic teachings that promote peace, forgiveness, and harmony to address the root causes of violence. Religious and moral lessons at (*makaranta allo* or *Islamiyya* schools) and Western education schools up to tertiary level should be regularly taught. The schools should be provided with innovative courses built upon Hausa and Fulani values for morality, peace tolerance to instill moral values and discipline in youth.

v)   **Economic Empowerment Programmes**
Unemployment and or underemployment, a key driver of youth violence, should be addressed by reviving traditional apprenticeship systems, were skilled artisans' mentor young people in trades like leatherwork, tailoring, or blacksmithing.

vi)   **Strengthening Family and Community Ties**
Promoting intergenerational dialogues between elders and youth to bridge gaps in understanding and values is one of the leading strategies. This will further help strengthen the practice of extended family involvement in guiding and mentoring young people.

Finally, the respondents accounted that the key players to apply the Hausa and Fulani knowledge in address the phenomenon of Area Boys in Sokoto State include:

i)   Traditional Institutions:

His Eminence, the Sultan of Sokoto, the district heads, and village areas' chiefs should in accordance with Hausa and Fulani norms and values act as custodians of peace by mediating disputes and promoting dialogue between conflicting groups. They should also support youth empowerment initiatives by leveraging their influence to secure funding or partnerships for skill acquisition programmes.

ii)   Elders and Other Custodians of Hausa and Fulani Cultural Heritage

Elders should play a key role in providing mentorship and guidance, acting as moral exemplars for younger generations. They should also do as they did in the past, lead awareness campaigns to promote indigenous conflict resolution techniques. As the custodians of Hausa and Fulani cultural heritage, they are to play a role in organising cultural events, such as *Durbar* festivals, to showcase the rich heritage of peace and unity in Hausa society. Their role should include reviving storytelling sessions where elders share moral lessons and proverbs addressing the dangers of violence and the benefits of harmony. They should play a key role in documenting and disseminating Hausa and Fulani indigenous wisdom through media platforms accessible to youth.

iii)   Religious Leaders:

The responsibility of religious leaders in addressing the phenomenon of Area Boys using indigenous should include delivering sermons and teachings emphasising nonviolence, respect, and reconciliation based on Islamic principles as well as Hausa and Fulani traditions. They should be helping in the organisation of interfaith dialogues to address divisive narratives and promote unity among diverse youth groups. They are to be mediators during conflicts involving religious undertones, leveraging their authority and trust within the community.

iv)   Community Leaders

The role of the community leaders should include establishing neighbourhood forums where youth can express concerns and grievances without resorting to violence. They will help encourage traditional forms of collective responsibility (*hadin kai*) to monitor and support at-risk youth.

v)   Parents and Families

As in the past, parents and family members would play a key role as the first line of moral and cultural education, instilling discipline and Hausa values in children. They should continue to foster open communication with youth, offering guidance and emotional support to deter them from violent behavior.

5.   Conclusion

Hausa and Fulani indigenous knowledge values, deeply embedded in their historical practices, have proven to be a vital foundation for community harmony. By prioritising collective welfare, justice, and peaceful coexistence, these values have enabled the Hausa to maintain stable and cohesive societies. Their relevance continues today as models for conflict prevention and societal development. Thus, revitalising the knowledge that is rooted in Hausa and Fulani values of morality, peace, and tolerance offers a promising approach to addressing the violent activities of area boys in Sokoto State. The deep cultural heritage of the Hausa and Fulani people of Sokoto, anchored in communal harmony and respect for moral principles, provides an ethical and practical framework for social reform. By integrating these values into education, conflict resolution strategies, and community engagement, Sokoto society can foster a sense of belonging and responsibility among disaffected youths. Additionally, leveraging traditional leadership and grassroots participation ensures that interventions resonate with the cultural context and have a lasting impact. Emphasising these indigenous values not only curbs violence but also strengthens social cohesion, reinforcing a culture of peace and tolerance essential for the sustainable development of Sokoto.

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