

EDUCATION AND CONTEMPORARY INSECURITY IN NIGERIAN NATIONS

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Abstract

Nigeria, the giant of Africa, has witnessed an unprecedented violent conflicts, choas and incidences of insecurity ranging from the activities of Fulani Herdsmen; Boko Haram Insurgencies, Armed Robber Attacks, Yahoo boys incessant killings and also the " unknown gunmen" saga etc. These challenges have made security a pivotal issue and has makes Nigeria an unsafe place of abode, a country included among one of the terrorist countries of the world. Using the method of critical analysis, the researcher discovers that insecurity affects education eg. Killings of school children, destruction of school building, restriction on the right of movement by imposing compulsory sit-at-home by bandits that call themselves " **unknown gunmen**". Therefore he recommends that the government should build a strong security agencies and policies to ensure safety of lives and properties.

Keywords: Insecurity, Education, Bandits, Security.

Introduction

The rate of insecurity in Nigeria has reached an alarming stage. It is now a threat to human existence and that of Nigeria. It has formed the news headlines of every broadcast station and newspaper and it has affected every sector including education sector. The alarming level of insecurity has equally raised tension and anxiety among the citizenry.

According to Meredith (2005), insecurity can be traced back from the period of Amalgamation of Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914 by Lord Frederick Lugard. This amalgamation brought together people of different cultures and religions. Ever since, Nigeria has passed through one crisis to the other and from one political instability to other, from one agitation to the other. Insecurity has taken different dimensions and shapes; day by day, a lot of bad news are recorded.

As a matter of urgency, questions about what would be the fate of Nigeria within the next two years are daily echoed in the minds of everyone. People are not sure of their security due to high crime rate, incessant killings and threats to lives and properties. There is every need to enlighten and educate the people on the need to protect and safeguard their lives and properties.

Hence, one begins to ask who the perpetrators of the programme are. What are the government efforts towards a complete eradication of this menace? Many are of the views that insecurity in Nigeria is politically masterminded (Campbell, 2015).

Nigeria is the giant of Africa as often said but what bothers most people across the African continent is the way and manner Nigeria is developing. Nigeria is rated among the third world countries that are yet to develop and there are no developmental changes in economy, infrastructure and social welfare? Looking at the complexity of insecurity, one begins to wonder the possibility of development in a nation that has not settled down for peace and unity; let alone, effecting some developmental changes.

Historical Background of insecurity till date in Nigeria

The amalgamation that took place in 1914, brought about the involuntary unification of culturally and historically diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria; some of which had been rivals and overlapping imperialists in the pre-colonial era (Ajayi & Alagoa, 1980). The birth of insecurity started with ethnic and cultural conflicts which was rooted in the 1914 merger of the Northern and Southern protectorates by the colonial administration of Lord Frederick Lugard.

Before then, each of these ethnic groups had their system of leadership, beliefs and culture. They had lived and practiced all these before the coming of the colonial masters who did not put these into consideration, before merging and declaring the state a sovereign nation. And ever since, Nigeria has passed through series of security challenges among others (Adofu & Alphassan, 2018).

Sadly, diversity is another major cause of insecurity in Nigeria. The colonial masters out of their selfish interests ignited the fire that is still burning uptil now. The clash between Muslims and Christians has come to occupy the centre stage (Adejoh, 2010). Religious violence has taken a

prominent shape in contemporary Nigerian democracy.

The Northerners are predominantly Muslim worshippers while the Southerners are more of Christians. The idea of merging these two ethnic groups was the highest mistake the colonial masters made. There is no way people of cultural and religious diversity can share one identity and still uphold peace and unity. It is obvious that the religious belief and practices of people often control most of their actions, likewise their cultural norms and obligations. The prevailing insecurity today is mostly rooted in religious violence as it can be traced back to the birth of Nigeria as a country in 1914. The issue of one nation is only professed by mouth and not by practice. (Schleischer, A ;2015).

Insecurity also borders on Insurgency in the Northern part of Nigeria powered across the borders of Cameroon, Benin Republic, Niger etc. Militancy in the South South region, banditry in the North spreading across the country. Secessionist movement hijacked by hoodlums nicknamed "unknown gun men".

These are just recent attacks, crimes and murders that cut across different regions and are being perpetuated by a seemingly faceless group of people popularly labelled as “Unknown Gunmen. Although the media, sometimes, tag them bandits or terrorists, apparently security agents seem to be reluctant in providing the true identity of these culprits or apprehending them. Hence, the onslaughts have continued unabated and the marauders, most often escape without capture.

The predominant question is, who are these “Unknown Gunmen” that have continued to unleash terror in many parts of the country? The inability to apprehend these “Unknown Gunmen” has undoubtedly led to the surge in crime and criminality across the country.

The spate of fear that has enveloped millions of Nigerians due to the protracted acts of these “Unknown Gunmen” is unprecedented. Interstate travelling by road has become a nail-biting experience. While intra-state movements are filled with caution and anxiety with many looking above their shoulders. Even when under lock and key in our homes, the fear is palpable due to the menace of “Unknown Gunmen.”Okonkwo, Ndubuisi-Okolo and Anigbogu (2015).

When all these continue to happen, then the issue of peace and unity becomes a mirage. For any country to achieve worthwhile development, insecurity must be constantly checked and controlled to the barest minimum.

Insecurity a predominant factor

According to Stoll, L. (2009) Insecurity can be seen as a feeling of uncertainty, a lack of confidence or anxiety about oneself. It can also be described as the state of being open to danger

or threat. Insecurity is a threat to human existence in all ramifications. It is also the state of being insecure or unsafe, exposed to danger, instability, liability to damage or loss and lack of assurance of one's safety.

Nigerians have experienced greater insecurity at different dimensions since the last two decades. The Boko-haram in the North-East, Fulani herdsmen in Benue, Enugu and other States and incessant killings in virtually all the parts of the country by bandits "unknown gunmen" and Yahoo boys activities, in the South, kidnappers and human traffickers everywhere and so many more. Most of these are no longer practised secretly but in public places. Many farmers have been killed in their farmlands, while many transporters have been trapped and killed in different high ways. It is not an understatement that the Nigerian government has made efforts to deploy security agents in attempt to arrest the situation; yet, it appears that nothing has started.

Many of the soldiers have lost their lives in the process of combating the pogrom. The citizens are yet to see the response of military personnel. Moreover, the government has continually made promises to the masses about their willingness and determination to combat the evil to the last which is to no avail.

Many people are now suspecting the government on this issue of insecurity. Adofu and Alphassan (2018) noted that the reason for government's failure to address the developmental needs is nothing but of the people which has forced them into forming alliance in different forms. Ordinarily, government has the capacity to fight and bring to control any negative force working against the peace and stability of the country. The effect of insecurity is very obvious as it presents itself in the destruction of lives and few available infrastructures needed for the industrial growth and development of the nation.

Apart from destruction of infrastructure, there is an increase in unemployment, increase in higher level of criminal activities, dwindling of government revenue, destruction of lives, obsession with social media, tension and negative feelings, ethnic suspicion and aggressive tendencies which can lead to war. No country of the world can develop without the needed prerequisite for growth and development.

The precarious situation at hand shows that government's effort has yielded nothing; rather, the menace is on the increase. Though, considering the large outlay of government's resources spent on curbing the menace of insecurity and the attendant of the few existing infrastructure, one can quietly assume that the challenges that insecurity posed to development are enormous. Therefore, a clear knowledge of the causes of insecurity helps to map out useful strategies in tackling the menace.

Understanding Education

According to Adejoh, R. (2010) Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs, habits, and personal development.

Educational methods include teaching, training, storytelling, discussion, and directed research. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of educators also known as teachers; however, learners can also educate themselves. Education can take place in formal or informal settings. “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world,” as Nelson Mandela said. Thus, we are able to shape a better society to live in by knowing and respecting rights, laws, and regulations and live in harmony.

Getting an education is not just a fundamental human right but is one of the most important investments a country can make in its future. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2014) Education refers to a set of knowledge that is accrued through learning using various methods of teaching for the purpose of providing answers to the challenges that face our environments. Education is understood as a wholesome process of human learning by which knowledge is generated and passed on from one generation to another. It is a lifelong process that ensures that culture is preserved, transmitted and changed in line with the prevailing situation in a given society (Achumba, O. S. Ighomereho, M. O. M. Akpor-Robaro 2013).

Education and Insecurity: The Nigerian Experience

The education sector has encountered ugly experiences in the recent times as a result of insecurity in the nation. Traceable among them is the issue of Chibok girls who were abducted in 2011 which caused the government a colossal amount of money to rescue them. This incident lasted for some years and it almost drained the federal purse. One can imagine the pains the parents of those girls have been passing through within this period of time. Even at that, some of the students are yet to be released. Another incident took place in Jos, Plateau State in which secondary school girls were equally kidnapped and government spent in order to save them.

Furthermore, the menace of Boko Haram in North East is a big threat to education and other institutions within that geo-political zone. Thousands of lives and properties have been lost. Apart from the North East, the Boko Haram insurgency has spread to every part of Nigeria leading also to internally displaced people (IDPs) as evidenced in many states. In this process, many schools, other government and private establishments have been destroyed. It becomes incumbent on the government to spend in order to settle those affected. Boko Haram group is not only opposed to Western Education but also Western culture and modern science (Duma, 2010). Another form of insecurity is the issue of Herdsmen that rear cattle in every nook and cranny of the country. It was reported last year that cattle rearers drove primary school pupils away from their classes as cattles were sent to settle in those classes.

An evident example is the unknown gunmen activities which has affected negatively to the smooth running of academic institutions in eastern region. Monday is made a day to sitt-at-home. Out of fear, schools are closed on Monday and any school that fails to do so is attacked. Apart from the actions of unknown gun men, what about the kidnapping of lecturers in universities?

Today, students are killed at every corner; either for rituals sacrifice or revenge by the cultists. This rampant killing and incessant kidnapping coupled with unknown gun men saga are major insecurity problems which affect development of education especially the Eastern part of the country.

Causes of insecurity in Nigeria

- **Bad Governance:** The increasing incidents of violent attacks are symptoms of weak, marginal or exploitative government systems in Nigeria. The government's inability to provide public services and meet the basic needs of the masses has created a group of frustrated people who are easily classified as violent by any event.
- **Poverty:** The failure of Nigerian governments to fix the challenges of poverty and the unequal distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities is a major contributor to the country's insecurity. When you have a poor population, you have a serious insecurity problem.
- **Terrorism / kidnapping:** Terrorism is the use of violent acts to achieve political goals or to force a government to act. Boko Haram is the most famous terrorist organization that has done the most damage to the country. Nigeria has lost many lives in the northern region to the Boko Haram uprising, that devastated the northern region of the country.
- **Other acts of terrorism include suicide bombings, assassinations, and kidnapping.** Terrorist activities have resulted in displacement of people, loss of life and property, distrust, anger and hatred, as well as psychological and emotional trauma and general insecurity.
- **Weak judicial system:** The weakness of the Nigerian judiciary system creates uncertainty in Nigeria. People feel insecure when criminals are released. Many criminals have bought their freedom with money in the country, the legal system has abandoned its people and released all kinds of atrocities.
- **Corruption:** Corruption is already a part of life in the country and, unfortunately, is now part of Nigeria's economic problems, and public appropriation. It has gained popularity in our system of government. This creates financial insecurity which has exacerbated poverty, there is corruption in public office at all levels and this has created a lot of instability in our country.
- **Unemployment:** According to statistics, a tenth of the country's young citizens are officially unemployed. Young people are overwhelmed by the high unemployment rate in Nigeria. Every year, universities make many graduates who were unfortunately thrown onto the job market with no prospect of job opportunities. And this has lead a lot into criminal acts. Unfortunately, due to bad government decisions, our factories are still not reactivating. Due to the unemployment among Nigerians, young people are now negatively attracted to violent crime.
- **Poor Security System:** This is due to inadequate government security equipment in both weapons and training. It contributes to the poor disposition of the security personnel. In many

cases, security officers tasked with certain security situations lack the experience and equipment to handle situations so that they will not arise.

- **Porous Border:** Nigeria shares borders with Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali. These borders are poorly secured by the Nigerian immigration and customs authorities. The porous nature of these borders has exacerbated the possible spread of terrorist activity in Nigeria. With terrorism in the country there will be no room for adequate development in our country.
- **Ethnic Groups and Religious Differences:** It should be remembered that the country's diverse ethnic makeup is not in itself a cause of insecurity in Nigeria. However, political and religious leaders across the country sometimes use ethnic sentiments to pursue their selfish ambitions, create mistrust and resentment between different ethnic groups and religions.

The Effects of Insecurity on the Development of Education in Nigeria

As already pointed out that insecurity is a major challenge facing the nation as a whole, it means that to achieve a better education system entails a thorough eradication of insecurity. Adejoh (2010) asserted that insecurity in Nigeria has taken three dimensions which are; religious, political and cultural. Religious dimension can be seen in the issue of Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen fighting to establish Islamic religion; political dimension can be seen in election protest and violence while cultural is evident in the growth of ethnicity and tribalism as seen in public services, unknown gun men and Biafra for freedom saga.

Since insecurity affects the entire nation's development both politically, economically and socially, it implies that no tangible budget can be made to address the challenges of education and to promote the level of education practiced in Nigeria. Most western nations developed rapidly due to the impact and role of education sector especially on technological advancement and skill acquisitions. This is about manpower development which leads to economic growth and social development. No nation can develop above the level of manpower development. Nigeria as a nation is backward because of the inability of the government to give education its rightful position in the nation building.

Today, insecurity has caused the destruction of school infrastructure. In a situation where the necessary facilities have been destroyed, what level of knowledge can be transmitted to the learners? In most cases, the money which would have been spent in other education programmes is spent on rebuilding the destroyed structures. To achieve the goals of education as stipulated in the national policy on education requires a vibrant educational system with well equipped infrastructure for research and skills acquisition. In this case, manpower development is assured. Loss of lives is another effect of insecurity on education. Most educationally trained personnel have been killed either by religious violence, Boko Haram or Fulani herdsmen. Insecurity has claimed the lives of many parents who would have been in the position to train their children. Most primary school pupils as well as secondary and University students have been threatened in so many ways leading to total discouragement from academic pursuit.

Solution to insecurity in Nigeria

- **Solidified border security:** The federal government must face the immediate challenge of boundary porosity. The government should make concerted efforts to recruit, train and deploy adequately equipped customs and immigration personnel across borders. The government needs to invest in more effective security technologies, which will benefit border security. These technologies can include body cameras, smart license plate readers, smart vehicle underbody scanners, and more. Border guards, serving to secure the border, must have adequate access to these types of resources that enable them to do their jobs effectively.
- **Human and Infrastructure Development:** We need to capitalize on demographic dividends by investing in health, education and livelihoods, especially for our young people. There is urgent need to draw a national development plan that require the three levels of government. There should be development projects in important sectors of national life all at the same time. The authorities must additionally increase people's dwelling requirements with the aid of setting up greater facilities of entrepreneurship throughout the nation.
- **Leadership development:** Nigeria must develop visionary leadership. Leadership positions should be for people who can convey to their people the idea of a common citizenship as a transcendent factor among all Nigerians, regardless of tribe, gender, religion, economic and social status that focuses on facts and pronouncements that will convincingly and positively affect all citizens of our nation. The process of developing such leadership can be challenging, but our country desperately needs leaders with a national perspective and an eagerness to change the nation.
- **Good Governance:** Good governance is the panacea to Nigeria's insecurity challenge. Good governance is required, in which the government is accountable and accountable to the people. Good governance is a function of effectiveness, foresight, transparency, reliability and credible political leadership, the driving force of which is the improvement of the collective well-being of citizens through well-designed and effectively implemented economic policies and human development programs. The focus on people as the primary goal of governance. It is time to give up negative behavior and bad political tactics so that the country can have peace.
- **Economic Development:** The country's economic productivity and opportunities for its citizens need to be improved. The challenge of insecurity in Nigeria can be solved by accelerating development in our country. Development in this context is about creating an economy with societal relevance, an economic and physical infrastructure for business activity and industrial growth, in order to create gainful employment, high-quality educational facilities and health care for the people.

- **Elimination of Corruption:** It is the cause of inequality and the unequal distribution of the wealth of nations among their citizens. Corruption at all levels must be eliminated in such a way that equal rights apply to all and rights and privileges of people are not agreed upon based on bribery and tribe but on merit, defined in relation to their Character content, their mental efficiency and their efficiency; where there will be no discrimination.
- **Building a proactive law enforcement agency:** There is a need to collect and monitor information so that law enforcement officers can be proactive and predict potential crimes with near perfect accuracy and not reactively. Government at all levels cannot compromise in enforcing the law. Law enforcement agencies must prevent and control behavior that threatens life and property, protect constitutional guarantees such as freedom of expression and assembly, resolve conflicts between individuals or between citizens and their government, and identify problems that may become more serious to individuals or authorities
- **Proper Security training and equipment:** More attention needs to be paid to the security department in order to conform to worldwide standard practice and the acquisition of modern technology. There is also a need to modernize security agencies through adequate training, advanced technology, motivation and change of direction.
- **Appropriate Education:** Education is a prerequisite for any form of development. Adequate education is the process of teaching, training and learning, especially in schools and universities, to improve knowledge and develop skills. This is very much for national development. It is time we know that education without skills is a disservice at the highest level. It is necessary to change our curriculum and reorganize our learning institutions even from elementary to tertiary education, the government needs to include skills acquisition as a central part of the academic curriculum. It must also provide students with the necessary opportunities to learn these skills.
- **Improvement of the criminal justice system:** The judiciary should have developed time scales for cases at this stage in our development. There should have been a time to determine a cause; Time to close this case; and time to pass judgment.

Conclusion

The government should map out useful strategies to combat insecurity. It is not enough to address insecurity problem on radio, television and news papers; rather it requires drastic measures. The security agents are defeated when confronted with insecurity due to poor ammunition. The perpetrators of Boko Haram and other social violence are well equipped with sophisticated weapons. Education sector will continue to experience setback if the challenge of insecurity is not properly addressed. The panacea for solving insecurity challenge in Nigeria is to address the issue of poverty, unemployment, inequality, religious and ethnic conflicts.

Recommendations

- The present government should enact policy on how to safeguard the lives of our children who are now the victims of insecurity. This policy should not be in words but in action; otherwise, security challenges will continue to escalate.
- There is greater need to send security agents like the police and the military to various schools in urban and rural areas to protect the educational personnel as well as the children. These security personnel should be well-equipped with sophisticated ammunitions. This measure will help to check the activities of the hoodlums around the school environment.
- Proper orientation should be given to our students on possible ways of protecting their lives during violence and any form of attack. Many have fallen victims of circumstances due to lack of knowledge on how to escape insecurity.
- **There should be equitable distribution of nation's economy.** Most of these security challenges are caused by those who feel they are marginalized. So, their struggle for survival results in kidnapping, killing and armed-robbery. This is the case of poverty and unemployment in the country.
- **There is also need for reorientation of the political leaders;** especially in this democratic dispensation. The issue of selfish aggrandizement will only worsen the situation in Nigeria. Democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people. It is never for selected few who are privileged in the society.

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