

## **EFFECT OF SECURITY CHALLENGES ON STUDENTS AND TEACHERS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA THE NEED FOR SCHOOL SAFETY PRECAUTION**

**By**

**ESTHER SAMUEL LONGVWAM**

General Studies Department , Federal College Of Education Pankshin, Plateau State

e-mail: estherlongvwam@gmail.com , 08065014791

**and**

**MARTHA PAUL PWASPO**

General Studies Department , Federal College Of Education Pankshin, Plateau State

e-mail: marthapwaspo@gmail.com, 08077237024

### **Abstract**

*The study focused on the effect of security challenges on students and teachers of secondary schools in Nigeria and the need for school safety precaution. The recent threats to life and property experience in Nigeria has assumed an alarming dimension on educational system especially the secondary school, where students and teachers are kidnapped for ransom. Schools are supposed to be safe for learning to take place effectively and to ensure that every child is protected and allowed to get quality education in a conducive atmosphere. The paper therefore examine the concept of security, insecurity and school safety. And discussed the concept of secondary school education and its objectives. The paper further considers the effect of insecurity on students and teachers of secondary schools in Nigeria. It also x-ray some causes of insecurity threat and the need for school safety precautions. Finally, the paper recommended that there is need for security agencies to teach students and teachers about safety and security requirement in the school environment. There is also need for civil societies to raise public awareness about attacking innocent students through kidnapping or bombing of schools.*

**Keywords:** Security, insecurity, school safety, secondary school students and teachers.

### **Introduction**

The issues of insecurity affecting secondary school education is a thing of major concern. The breakdown of security system in the country which has impacted the secondary school education is one issue that is bordering many individuals in the society today. And how to improve the security architecture of the country and by extension the secondary school education at the same time will motivate the students for better academic performance. The impact of insecurity is well felt by the students in home and in the school and many students manifest fear and low attitude to school attendance. (Aduwa 2021)

Security lapses and challenges certainly do manifest on a daily basis in schools. Such challenges ranges from “youth restiveness, terrorism and insurgent attracts, kidnappings and hostage – takings. This is for monetary ransoms, political assassinations, arsons, murders, cult related activities, mass protests and so forth. While many have falling victims to these problems, very few have actually escaped death or injury during such attacks. In the prevailing circumstances, the safety and security of school administrators, teachers and students and entire community where the schools are located are no longer guaranteed; most especially in the north-east geo-political zone where the activities of Boko Haram insurgents are much pronounced. In addition, schools attacked are not only in the northeast, the effect is tripling all over the country directly or indirectly making schools vulnerable to kidnappers, bandits and terrorist which affect school attendance.

According to Akintunde (2016), insecure school environment affects the learning of children such situations of insecurity triggers traumatic disorder and toxic stress that affects learning negatively. Generally school attendance and enrolment are equally affected as parents pull their children out of school while in some extreme cases, insecurity has led to the closure of schools in many states of Nigeria. For instance Plateau, Niger, Borno, Yobe states, etc. Other evidence as clearly reported by Agbonglasede & Olulube (2021) indicated that the poor academic performance in classroom and their inability to settle down and perform well both in internal and external examination is clear indication that insecurity has threatened the secondary school education.

### **Concept of Security/Insecurity and School Safety**

The importance of security in secondary school education cannot be over emphasis. In any atmosphere or environment where security is absent the life of the people living in that area is put to danger. Likewise any school environment where there is breach in security; the students, teachers, and the school administrators life is at risk. Security is one of the basic needs of human in the society. According to Mubita (2021). The term security is related to presence of peace, safety and the protection of people and their resources. It also relates to the absence of threat to human life and dignity. Stones (2009) in Mubita (2021) opined that security is about freedom from threat and ability of the state to maintain peace against forces of change, which they see as hostile e.g. bandits, kidnapper, drug addicts and terrorists like Boko Haram that will not want students to be educated.

Dibu (2015) defines security as a state of safety and freedom from danger and protection from physical harm or abuse. While insecurity is the state of threat to life. It is concerned with the negative feelings involving fear and anxiety, uncertainty and injustice among others. That is a state where the individual is not sure or cannot predict what will happen in the next minute. The raising rate of insecurity in the school today is a thing of concern. It has made it impossible for the secondary education not to achieve its goal especially providing primary school leavers with the opportunity for secondary education irrespective of sex, religion, ethnicity and social status National Policy on Education (NPE 2004). This is one of the secondary school objectives which is supposed to be achieved. Most parent are scared of sending students to secondary school especially the boarding schools. .

According to Effion and Edinyang (2013) defined insecurity as the state of being subjected to danger and injury. It is a feeling of unusual nervousness that may be triggered by perceiving of oneself to be vulnerable. Security also involves existence of environmental factors that instill peace of mind in an individual in order to empower him/her to function optimally in the society. Poor human relations between communities, teachers and students can hamper student's mental health and cause insecurity. Poor infrastructural designs in schools can expose students to insecurity problems like some female students feel threatened as a result of rampant incidences of sexual abuse and rape in schools and the society (Akintude, 2015). (As cited in Nwosu and Ukwunna 2019).

Safety is a concept that includes all measures and practices taken to preserve the life, health and bodily integrity of individuals. According to Mubita (2021), safety is the condition of being protected from harm or other non-desirable outcomes. Safety can also refer to the control of recognized sources of danger (Hazards) in order to achieve an acceptable level of risk. Squelch (2001) as cited in Mubita (2021) define a safe school as one that is free from danger and possible harm, were non-educators, and educators learn without fear or ridicule, intimidation, harassment, humiliation or violence.

### **Secondary School Education and its Objectives**

The secondary education is the median education. Secondary education is the education received by a child between the primary education and tertiary education. According to the NPE (2004), defined secondary education as the education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage. The NPE (2004) went further and stated that the broad goals of secondary education shall be to prepare the learner for useful living within the society and for higher education. These broad goals of secondary education were further split into specific terms by the NPE (2004) as follows

- i. Providing all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of higher level irrespective of sex, social status, religion or ethnic background.
- ii. Providing trained manpower in applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades;
- iii. Offering diversified curriculum to cater for differences in talents, opportunities, and future roles;
- iv. Developing and promoting Nigeria languages, arts, and culture in the context of the world's cultural heritage;
- v. Inspiring students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellences;
- vi. It will fostering national unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity.
- vii. Secondary education will raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, appreciates those values specified under our broad natural goals and lives as a good citizens.
- viii. Secondary education will provide technical knowledge and vocational skills, necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial, and economic development (National Policy on Education 2004).

The goals of secondary education stated above by the NPE (2004) covered the three (3) domains of the learners, namely, cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. Secondary education is a stage of education that exposes the students to wide range of subject areas when compared to primary education and tertiary education. However the majority of the secondary schools controlled and managed by the various private, state, and federal governments, especially those schools located in the rural areas, does not really look like ideal school environment. There is no fence, some are located far away from the community with poor infrastructure and poor infrastructure design that the exposes the students to danger, making it easier for undesirable elements to create fear of kidnapping and rape of other social ills on innocent students.

### **Effect of Insecurity on Students and Teachers of Secondary School in Nigeria**

Poor academic performance in many secondary schools today has been tagged as a major effect of insecurity in Nigeria. Both students and teachers are afraid of going to their various schools because of kidnappers, gun-men, and communal crises respectively. Students and teachers are been kidnapped and killed in schools. Evidence as cited by Nwosu (2018) stated that five secondary schools teachers were adopted by kidnappers at gun-point in Omoku and this situation left the students and residence of the area to abundant their houses and schools for the fear of been kidnapped.

The activities of Boko Haram most especially in the north-eastern part of Nigeria has affect school attendance in the areas. There is a significant decline in school attendance among female students in areas vulnerable to Boko Haram attacks. Though urban schools are often protected during such insurgency by government security forces. The rural schools are often

neglected and the children live in perpetual fear of attacks, hence the students are apprehensive when it comes to going to school. (Manomi, Sarki & Dornubari, 2019)

Most secondary school female students risk attending school even in the face of the fear of attack and thereby losing their lives to Boko Haram insurgents. Joda and Oluwosilu (2015) posted that insurgency have affected students education negatively in North Eastern Nigeria and is now all over the country. In which they observed that majority of school girls have been hurt in the presence of other fellow students, during attack in their schools and also since the abduction of the Chibok girls in April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014. The female students were afraid of been kidnapped which prompted them to stay away from school in the most affected states of the region. Their findings also showed that majority of the schools in that region has been closed indefinitely and most teachers working in the affected areas had escaped during series of attacks on their communities. This means that majority of the teachers are displaced internally and lack of teachers will affect the secondary school education, further more teaching and learning process cannot be properly conducted in unsafe school environment since the teachers, students and the community members are not safe from activities of insurgency.

Phuong Nguyen of premium times said that United Nation Children Fund (UNICEF) reported that terrorist destroyed 1,400 schools, forced more than one million children out of school and killed 2,295 teachers between 2009 and 2020, it caused school in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states to close. Alibi (2021) also said in Nigeria the number of out school children according to UNICEF 1.5 million before the effect of the conflict, humanitarian crises and Covid-19 Pandemic were felt. With the total or partial closure of school in Zamfara, Katsina, Adamawa, Kaduna, Niger and others states due to kidnapping and adoption of school children, the number of children that could be prevented from accessing education in Nigeria could be on the increase.

#### **Some causes of Insecurity Challenges in Nigeria**

The causes of insecurity threats in Nigeria are many, as outline by Akinsowon (2021) identifies the following as root causes of insecurity.

- a. **Breakdown of our Cherished Cultural Values:-** Cultural values link the community with their ancestors and with God. The value of the sacredness of life helps to eschew all attitude contrary to the promotion of human life while the value of communication stands against all attitudes that tends to promote excessive individualism and despotism. Both values help to create a humane community where other values, which are antidotes to moral crises are cultivated.
- b. **Poverty/Unemployment/Poor Remuneration:-** Effiong (2019) says Nigeria is faced with acute poverty, unemployment saga as well as poor remuneration for workers. Retired civil/public servants in the country are equally carrying of ill prepared pension schemes and lack of welfare plans. The unemployed youth do find solace in a devils workshop to commit crimes and pose security challenges, while the under paid employees resort to official corruption and dwindled productivity. Retires resort to complaints and attacked to the government.
- c. **Unchecked Inflows of Lethal Weapons:** This is proliferation of light weapons. Some politicians who procure lethal weapons for unemployed youths to use in guarding them to succeed in campaigns and elections did not recover such weapons from the youths. They now use those weapons to form cult groups or armed robbery and kidnapping for ransom. The end result is increased in violent crime and security challenges in our nation.
- d. **The Menace of Fake and Illicit Drugs:** Our young people have become drug addicts which influence their attitude and behaviour to commit crimes. Even most of the drugs

are taken for man's well-being but unfortunately, they have been abused in various ways.

- e. **Greed and Self Centeredness:** Religion is meant to support the social norms, and to reassure the people that their cause is just. But people have exhibited a self-centered life which is breeding conflict and quarreled in the country by trying to control the natural resources rent found within their areas.

### **The Need for School Safety Precaution in Schools in Nigeria**

In the face of incessant security threats which do not exempt primary and secondary school or any aspect of the society should be a thing of concern in Nigeria. Learning does not take place in areas that there is no peace. Peace supposes everything in life if we need development, education is tool for development and cannot be taken for granted. Our learning environment need to be given adequate attention in the following ways:

- a. **Incessant Awareness on Security Issue:** Students and staff must be well-informed about security issues of the immediate community and society at large. School administrators should brief staff and address students on the assembly ground on daily basis, the subject matter should not base on academic issue alone. It is necessary to provide them with current news on security. Such news must be authentic and not rumor. The manner of presentation should not create fear in staff and students, but enlightens them on steps and logic to be taken immediately, if there is any bad rumor.
- b. **Adequate Fencing of School Premises:-** Schools have to be fenced to safeguard indiscriminate entry and exit. The school administrators whose schools do not have fence can sensitize parents, old students, Non-Government Organization (NGO) philanthropists and government on the necessity of fence. A school that is without fence is prone to security threat. Hoodlum can easily penetrate into such school without the knowledge of security men.
- c. **Secure Entrance Entry and Exit and use of Metal Detector:** It is not sufficient to have a fence that is as tall as prison yard fence, but there should be secure entrance and exit. The gate at the entrance should be functional and strong. The security men too need to be up to the task. Corrupt men should not be engaged as security men. For the fact that somebody is an ex-soldier does not qualify him for security job, his integrity and track records matter a lot. There should be metal detector to discover harmful object like guns, arrows, cutlasses and other metal objects that could be used as subjects of destruction.
- d. **Strict Regulation of Visitors in School Premises and Effective use of Visitor's Book:** There is need for regulation and control of visitors and the time of visit during the session. Though a few school observe visiting hours during the session, it has to be intensified. Parents should be educated on the need for such regulation. If they know that this is done in the interest of their wards (for safety and effective learning), they will comply. The use of visitors' book is essential to monitor personalities that visit the school. If it is possible, the visitors should be requested to provide evidence of identification. This will send a signal to people that have ulterior motives to stay clear from the school premises.
- e. **Installation of Closed Circuit Camera:** Cameras can be acquired by the school management. There is no amount of money that is too much in guarantying security of lives. This camera can be used to monitor activities of students, staff, visitors and other stakeholders in the school. This will help to prevent perpetration of evil acts like planting of bombs, kidnapping, rape and the likes.

- f. **Regular Inspection of School Premises:** Regular inspection of school premises to uncover strange objects is essential. Security men and assigned staff have to move round the school premises once or twice in a day to find out if crime activities or strange objects will be discovered. If strange objects or unusual signs are observed, they should be reported as soon as possible to the concerned authority.
- g. **Safety Measures in School Plant Construction and Classroom Designs:** As part of safety measures, contractors who handle construction of school building and classrooms should be instructed to incorporate safety preventions. For instance to have entrance and exit doors. This is very important to forestall stampede in case of emergency. The chairs in the classrooms have to be spacious to facilitate easy movement.  
In addition, car park in the school should be constructed not too close to school buildings. If it is possible, car parks should be closed to the school gates. This will prevent driving towards the school buildings and suicide bombers' attempt to hit school buildings. Infact, barrier that can easily prevent vehicle movement towards school building could be mounted.

### Recommendations

- i. There is need for security agencies to teach students and teachers about safety and security requirements in the school environment.
- ii. Students, teachers and parents should observed safe travel routes to and from the school to avoid meeting with miscreant on the road.
- iii. There is need for good school mapping and planning that should not be far away from the community.
- iv. Government need to place security agencies in various schools to prevent rampant cases of kidnapping and killing innocent students to prevent paying of heavy ransom before released from captivity.
- v. There is need for civil societies to raise public awareness about attacking innocent students through kidnapped or bombing schools.

### Conclusion

The security threats on Nigeria secondary school education have led to the destruction of lives and properties. Many parents, students, and teachers are afraid of going back to school or being posted far away for studies because the challenges are on the increase in schools, if the nation wants to move forward there should be the need for providing safe school environment in secondary schools because they are still at the tendered age to be traumatize by activities of terrorists, bandits and other kinds of insecurity that make their life not safe for either study or living.

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