

TEACHER EDUCATION AND SECURITY CHALLENGES ON NIGERIA EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract

Nigeria as a major player in global affairs and a leading nation in Africa has had its fair share of insecurity emanating from diverse sources such as civil war, insurgency, terrorism, herdsmen/farmers crises, kidnapping, recurring violent religious crises, ethnic and poverty-induced militancy as well as crises occasioned by clamour for self-determination. Like it was before the attainment of political independence, security remains a major challenge in Nigeria. The most fundamental function of a state is to secure the lives of her citizenry and make them live amicably. Any nation that is unable to provide security puts a serious threat to the peoples' lives and their continuous corporate existence is in jeopardy. This paper examines the importance of teacher education to national security and development of Nigeria educational system, and the roles of quality education at addressing this challenge. The paper recommends among others the re-invention of, moral, civic, technical and entrepreneurship education at all levels with the aim of providing right political education and entrepreneurship skills to the people.

Keywords: Teacher Education, Security, Challenges, Nigeria Education System

Introduction

Security basically refers to the totality of measures undertaken to ensure protection of lives and tangible assets such as landed property, and even protection of vital data of various organisations in the country including government establishments. In line with this explanation, Odekunle (2012) succinctly averred that security is a protection or defence of people against all kinds of victimization including protection from external militancy attack, economic want, poverty, illiteracy, disease or ill-health, political exclusion, social exploitation, criminality act, etcetera. In order words, security could be said to encompass the socio-economic wellbeing of the people which enables the coexistence in peace and harmony of all agents of development, and enhances the ability of each to function without hindrance.

According to Ayodeji, Olutayo, Abimbola, and Saheed (2018), the security challenges of a nation could be internal or external. The internal ones in Nigeria refer to problems of armed robbery, Boko Haram, Herdsmen/Farmers crises, kidnapping and hostage-taking, terrorism, militancy, sea piracy. The problem also includes ethnic, religious and electoral violence as well as the Niger Delta crisis and IPOB "seat at home". On the other hand, the external security challenges are supposed to be coming from outside the nation. For now such problems are minimal. Apart from the Bakassi crisis between Nigeria and Cameroun over the ownership of the Bakassi peninsula, the country does not have much external threat. The problem of arms and human trafficking often reported by the media all result from the country's inability to effectively police her borders. It results more from systemic failures and corruption than any other thing.

Teacher education is an important training program in any educational setup. It deals with procedures, provisions, and policies, to make candidates learn and gain knowledge about various concepts (Teachmint, 2022). Under teacher education, the teachers can be trained on modern concepts and ideas in order to expand their boundaries of knowledge and adapt to the new learning environment. For example, with the advancing technologies, they are trained on e-teaching and virtual learning methods by teaching them how to handle the technologies and tools for effective teaching.

Teacher education or teacher training refers to the policies, procedures, and provision designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, approaches, methodologies and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school, and wider community (Wikipedia, 2019). The way the education is carried out is usually a subject of political discussion in several nations, which showcases both the value attached by different cultures and societies to prepare young people for their life. This education is an important element of any education system, which must be reviewed for effectiveness.

Education promotes human development both at individual and collective levels and this enhances better employment and a possible exit from the world of poverty. A formidable education system leads to employment and promotes gradual exit from poverty. The consequence of the decay in our education system is alarming as well as insulting. The truth about the unemployable status of most of our graduates due to obvious lack of defense of their certificates at job interviews is indeed worrisome. Internationally, Nigerian universities certificates are suspected in the international community following the fact that Nigerian graduates are subjected to series of stringent examinations before they can qualify to take up a job. In these countries, their reason is that Nigeria's education is sub-standard and therefore cannot be accepted as standard international qualification.

Back home, this can be said to be true to an extent because of the consequences of our dilapidated education system. Corruption, lack of and decayed educational facilities, professional teachers and funds hamper learning in the country. Obviously, when people are not properly trained to acquire requisite knowledge for good employment, unemployment results and poverty deepens. "Unemployment is one of the major economic problems facing Nigeria. Currently, it is estimated that about 40 million Nigerians are unemployed. A recent study on the unemployment situation in Nigeria by the World Bank revealed that one out of every five adults in Nigeria is unemployed just as only one out of every ten (10) university graduates in Nigeria is gainfully employed. Though in most cases, the job are not readily available forcing more than one-third of Nigerians to live below ₦100 a day. This is a very serious security challenge.

In recent times, education in Nigeria has become so expensive that it is unaffordable to the majority of the poor in Nigeria. It only appears that education is for the rich alone. The thriving of privately owned and well equipped citadel of learning over the dilapidated public or government-owned and controlled schools, takes education into exorbitant hands. Consequently, this has forced a lot of people out of school since they cannot afford it. The young men tend towards crime while the young girls are forced into marriages at tender ages and when not, go into prostitution and usually end up having unwanted pregnancies and even effected with HIV/AIDS. In this regard, our human security is endangered; indicative of an apparent need for a systemic revolution.

In light of these, we shall be discussing how teacher education can improve National security and enhance Nigeria educational system under the following subheadings:

1. Conceptualization of key words
2. Causes of insecurity in Nigeria

4. Quality education: Panacea for security challenges
5. Role of education in checkmating insecurity
6. Conclusion and recommendations

Conceptual Clarification

Security

We cannot define national security without, first of all, conceptualizing the word security. Wikipedia defined security as freedom from, or resilience against, potential harm (or other unwanted coercive change) caused by others, (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>), Nmom (2013) described this term security as a total peaceful state of mind of an individual, the group, the state, the nation at a particular point in time and space. He reasoned that it may not be an absence of violence or some sort of physical assault or some disruptions but a relative peace that can guarantee quality life and social cohesion for survival of the individual group or nation. From the above two definitions, one can deduce that security is perceived in terms of protecting the generality of the people, and it is a collective responsibility of the government and the people. Hence, the notion of community policing has become a recurrent decimal in security parlance in Nigeria. According to Mezieobi (2012) the term security brings to mind issues that pertain, predominantly, to one or a combination of the following whenever it is discussed:

- a. The defence and protection of national integrity or Nigeria's sovereignty, territorial and political jurisdictions from external and internal interferences or intervention;
- b. Personal safety of members of political class who are in control of the helm of affairs of governance, in addition to safeguarding or protecting their office, hence the incredible allocation of funds for security services;
- c. The security agents or forces, civil defence corps protecting the lives and properties of the mass of the defenseless citizenry against the menace of the men of the underworld;
- d. Forestalling or deterring possible internal attacks or crises and subjugating insurgency;
- e. Keeping the security agents on active security alert and readiness at all points in time;
- f. Checkmating impending or actual internal threats to state or national security or anti-social behaviours by those who are deliberately undermining or sabotaging government efforts;
- g. Checkmating social problems such as Boko-Haram saga and youth militancy, kidnapping/abduction that may pose threat to state and national security and detract the political cadre in control of state affairs from active commitment to their functions; and;
- h. Making the environment free from insecurity in order to attract international investment. This is in line with Robert McNamara's earlier quoted assertion on the relationship between growth, national development and peace and security.

From the definitions above, security therefore can mean the state of being free from danger, risk or threat. It covers freedom from anxiety, fear, the safety of a state or organization against criminal activities and attacks like terrorism, theft or espionage (Ogheneakoke, 2014). The security interests of any nation therefore include safety of lives and properties, economic, physiological, mental well-being and the freedom to pursue the attainment of objectives without hindrance (Otoibhi, 2012).

In the opinion of Brown (2013), National security is the ability to preserve the nation's physical integrity and territory, to maintain its economic relations with the rest of the world on reasonable terms, to preserve its nature, institutions and governance from outside disruption, and to control its borders. Also, national security is a condition where our most cherished values and beliefs, our democratic way of life, our institutions of governance and our unity, welfare and well-being as a nation and people are permanently protected and continuously enhanced.

It is the requirement to maintain the survival of the nation through the use of quality education, economic power, military and political power, diplomacy and power projection. It can be described as the aggregation of the security interest of the individuals, political entities, human associations and ethnic groups which make up the nation (Osakwe, 2013), Succinctly put, national security is the security of a nation state, including its citizens, economy, and institutions, which is regarded as a duty of government (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>).

National security therefore refers to policy enacted by governments to ensure the survival and safety of the nation-state, including but not limited to the exercise of diplomatic, economic and military power in both peace and war. In other words, it means the freedom from foreign domination which is the sine-qua-non for the sustenance of the state through the instrumentality of economic, diplomacy, power projection and political power.

Insecurity

The term insecurity can be conceptualized according to the discipline or subject of study. For instance, Nigerians talk of insecurity when describing a state or situation of declining safety of lives and properties, apprehension over increasing rate of terrorism, armed robbery, kidnappings, political upheavals, religious conflicts, assassinations, secret cults-related criminal acts, intra and inter ethnic strife, hijacking, riots, demonstrations, etc. But for the purpose of this study, we will adopt the definition of Effiom and Edinyang (2013) who 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.

Education

Education is very important to the development of any society. In fact, according to Freire (1970) education is a major weapon of social change and should not be neglected by any human society that craves for development in all ramifications of the word. The Nigerian government recognizes the importance of education to the overall growth of the nation and "as instrument for effecting national development" to the extent that the Nigeria's philosophy of education is based on the following set of beliefs:

- a. Education is an instrument for national development and social change
- b. Education is vital for the promotion of a progressive and united Nigeria
- c. Education maximizes the creative potentials and skills of the individual for self-fulfillment and general development of the society.
- d. Education is compulsory and a right of every Nigerian irrespective of gender, social status, religion, colour, ethnic background and any peculiar individual challenges: and
- e. Education is to be qualitative, comprehensive, functional and relevant to the needs of the society (FGN, 2004).

Teacher Education

Teacher education is an important training program in any educational setup. It deals with procedures, provisions, and policies, to make candidates learn and gain knowledge about various concepts. They get trained to equip themselves with the best teaching skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors which are required to perform effectively in any learning environment like a classroom or school.

Teacher education helps the teachers to learn how to deal with the students and make them learn effectively. It is an ongoing process as the industry is always evolving and new effective ways of teaching keep emerging. Under teacher education, the teachers can be trained on modern concepts and ideas in order to expand their boundaries of knowledge and adapt to the new learning environment. For example, with the advancing technologies, they are trained

on e-teaching and virtual learning methods by teaching them how to handle the technologies and tools for effective teaching.

When it comes to teacher education, there seem to be several distinct components of it, while the two major ones include pre-service education and in-service education. In pre-service education, the candidates are being educated before they have undertaken any teaching. Alternatively, in-service teacher education refers to education given to candidates that have already begun teaching.

The way the education is carried out is usually a subject of political discussion in several nations, which showcases both the value attached by different cultures and societies to prepare young people for their life. This education is an important element of any education system, which must be reviewed for effectiveness.

Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

Ogheneakoke (2014) identified a plethora of factors as causes of insecurity in Nigeria. These include, but not limited to, the following:

- i. Corruption
- ii. Marginalization
- iii. Social inequality
- iv. Ethnicity
- v. Poverty and greed
- vi. Loss of value system
- vii. Religious intolerance
- viii. Foreign infiltration - insurgency
- ix. Bad leadership
- x. Youth unemployment
- xi. Porosity of our borders
- xii. Falling standard of education
- xiii. Poor judiciary system
- xiv. Cultism and cult activities
- xv. High value for material things
- xvi. Manipulation of electoral processes by political parties
- xvii. Lack of trust on security agents
- xviii. Human right abuses
- xix. Injustice
- xx. Lack of transparency

Quality Education: Panacea for Security Challenges

Quality education is the one that frees the mind of its recipients from their misconceptions (Omoroje, Egbule, & Emuebie, 2020). Education has earlier been defined as a process by which individuals are assisted formally through proper direction and guidance to develop their capacities for their own benefits and that of the society. Omoroje, Egbule & Emuebie (2020) maintained that there is need to carry out a total overhaul of the curriculum at all levels of education with a view to providing its recipients broad based education in the development of the mind, soul and body; and in comprehending the environment and in the development of appropriate attitudes, skills, abilities and competencies to co-exist with and contribute to the development of the society. The country should train, sustain and nurture men to serve in her security and intelligence outfit; these people are selected from the best and the brightest citizens who are endowed with keen and subtle intellect. They asserted that recruitment into defense and military intelligence outfits needs scrupulous assessment of the

recruits' educational background, intellectual sharpness, smartness and patriotism. Graduates with the best grades should be deployed not those who got ranks by the federal character formula.

Education helps to create informed citizenry which is vital to our democratic society. It increases the potential for individual to perform as citizens. The introduction of vocational programmes into the school curriculum will be a good innovation that will go a long way to strengthening the popular liberal education. There is also the need to introduce moral and civic education into the curriculum. Graduates should actually be found worthy first in character and then in learning. Also political education should be given to the people. This type of education considers the conduct of public life in the polis or polity. This education is necessary to enable people acquire some basic skills, knowledge and competencies that distinguish them from others and may be used to describe their work as political education.

Role of Teacher Education in checking Insecurity

Teaching and learning in schools are expected to be in line with the demands of curriculum innovation. On this note, Obanya (2003) in Ozoemena (2016) explained that team building, teacher empowerment, delegation of authority, garnering of support for schools programmes, use of information and increased community participation in the provision of curriculum resources are parts of curriculum innovation process and could be seen as a process of influencing men and women to acquire the many physical, moral, social capabilities and the values the community demanded of them by the society into which they are born and within which they must function.

There is a significant relationship between national security and teacher education; a cursory look at the personality of Boko-Haram Islamists and bandits in the Northern region of Nigeria reveals high level or rate of illiteracy among them. It is in the light of this that the Emir of Kano, HRM Lamido Sanusi, admonished the elites of the region to establish schools, instead of building mosques. Also, in a bid to help reduce the rate of illiteracy the past administration of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan established Nomadic education and Al-Majari schools in the Northern region.

According to Nandi (2013), teacher education helps in developing intelligent social actors with the ability to make rational decisions and act intelligently. It also helps to address issues of poverty, violent crimes and illiteracy. Through teacher education, the moral personality of man is built up as it equips learner with the skills of moral judgment that in turn guides his actions and behaviours. In other words, the right type of values such as honesty, respect for elders, integrity inter alia is inculcated into the young ones. Quality teacher education also promotes the spirit of nationalism and patriotism among youths. Through teacher education, it has been discovered that youths develop positive attitudes of togetherness, comradeship and cooperation towards the entire nation.

UNESCO (2008) stated that "No development can be possible without humans, and no humans can reach development without quality education". It is in light of this, that Anadi (2008) opined that for a nation to be developed and secured, there must be a very considerable proportion of trained educated citizens in that nation not only to act as doctors, engineers, teachers, agriculturist, scientists, and the likes, but also to create a new class sufficiently large and hence, sufficiently strong to establish its own values of justice, security, selection on merit, flexibility, empiricism and efficiency. For this to be actualized, our education system (primary, secondary and tertiary levels) must be practical and functional. Therefore, quality teacher education is the primary agents of national security and development for bringing the vision of society into reality. "For example, if the militants, Boko-Haram, armed robbers and kidnapers were properly nurtured with quality formal, informal and indigenous education from the grass

root level, all these security threats/challenges such as terrorism, riots/civil unrest, demonstrations, intolerance, cult-related criminal acts, religious intolerance, arm robbery, intra and inter-ethnic strife, drug trafficking, human trafficking, kidnapping, hijacks and many other vices threatening lives and properties would not have been in existence" (Osakwe, 2013).

Conclusion

This paper believes that insecurity is a serious challenge to the corporate existence of Nigeria and to the lives of individuals. The country cannot afford to be indifferent and non-committal to these issues of national security challenges. The government has been taking panic approach of resolving the issue by making huge budgetary allocation to defence. The central lessons that inform and underpin every other recommendation to emerge from this paper is that quality teacher education should prepare citizens for proper integration into the society and that would make them useful to themselves and the society at large.

Recommendations

As a result of the revelations and implications of this discourse, the following recommendations become imperative:

1. The Federal Government (FG) should formulate and effectively implement policies and programmes capable of addressing the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria - such as high level of illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, dearth of infrastructural facilities, uneven development, among others.
2. Government should provide more fund to education in order to make quality and proper teacher education available to the people.
3. There should be regular revision and introduction of innovative curricula such as in Civic Education, Family living Education, Entrepreneurship Education which will help to bridge the gap between people's knowledge and practice.
4. Curriculum should include both teacher education and security education.
5. The government should resuscitate the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and reposition the agricultural sector so as to play active role in job creation for Nigerian youths. This is where quality vocational education/skill acquisition comes into play as we earlier postulated in this paper; establishment of technical schools and polytechnics should be given priorities when educational policies are being formulated.
6. Government policy should be premised on the rational pursuit of restoring the current educational arrangement to ensure that youths/adolescents legally have free and compulsory education up to the age of 18 years with good legislation made available to enforce its implementation and any other excellent provisions put in place, if possible, formulate a set of ethics or codes of conducts for parenting.
7. There is a need for collective security arrangement by all levels of government in Nigeria - Federal, State and Local governments. The current arrangement where security apparatuses are totally in control by the central/federal government needs to be looked into and redressed. This is where the issue of community policing comes into focus. This security configuration should produce a committee at village, community, local, state and federal levels with the responsibility of providing sensitive security information for security agencies at their areas of operation. This will ultimately assist in identifying criminals, their sponsors and hideouts in the country.
8. Lastly, government should reorganize the country's intelligence system and build a capable and more proactive security apparatus in Nigeria. This will add more values in checking incessant bombings, robbery, kidnapping and violent crimes/crises by hoodlums in the country.

* For all these to be achieved, quality teacher education for the masses is key.

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