

THE IMPACT OF INSECURITY ON THE SCHOOL SYSTEM IN NIGERIA

By

DALYOP, RETOGWI DIANA

Department of French, School of Languages,
College of Education, Gindiri Plateau State
Phone No.: 08067788963
email: dretogwidianad@gmail.com

DANG, CHANSHAK LUKA

Department of French, School of Languages
College of Education, Gindiri Plateau State
Phone No.: 08142149534
e-mail: dangchanshak@gmail.com

&

MUDUUTDAL, R.U.

Department of Agricultural Education, School of VOC & TECH
College of Education Gindiri, Plateau State Nigeria.
Phone No.: 08036060815
Email: auduclement@yahoo.com

Abstract

In recent times, the Nigerian School System has come under severe attacks which has led to the destruction of lives and properties and the abduction of many school children. The effect of these attacks has further destabilize the fragile school system which is key to sustainable and national development. Government and community leaders need to adopt stringent measures in trying to tackle the menace. Although certain efforts have been made but it has not yet yielded the desired results, as there are still frequent attacks targeting the school environment. If these incessant attacks are not properly dealt with, it will affect the quality of labour force and human capital needed for a sustainable economy. The main concern of this paper is to examine the factors responsible for insecurity and the roles played by Government and other major stakeholders in curtailing or putting an end to these incessant attacks on our educational institutions for the general improvement of education and preparing the education sector for the challenges of the new millennium. The paper recommends that Government and major stakeholders in education must continue to play their leading role in securing lives and properties of its citizenry and ensure that our educational institutions remain secured and conducive for teaching and learning to take place effectively and peacefully and education should properly funded.

Keywords: Impact, Insecurity, School System

Introduction

Education is a public good that should be directed at uplifting the social, economic, political, scientific, technological and cultural life of a nation and developing the talents of individual citizens. It is also seen as a social process for building an all-round human personality for the development of a democratic culture and for inculcating in citizens the sheer value necessary for the common life of people, Bako (2007). Olugbako and Asagba (2014) however opined that education is not only a public good but also a human right that is essential for exercise of all other human right and a panacea to global security challenge. Suffice to say therefore that the

higher a nation places education, the stronger the nation's security. Hence, education contributes to the security of a nation.

The Nigeria system of education operates in three governmental levels as follows: Federal, State and Local government. The federal and state government manage the public tertiary and secondary institutions, while the local government oversees the public pre-primary and primary institutions.

The school system in Nigeria was initially structured using the 6-3-3-4 system, which means 1 year pre-primary, 6 years primary, 3 years junior secondary, 3 years senior secondary and 4 years tertiary education. The tertiary education include universities, polytechnics, colleges of education etc.

However, the Federal Government in 2008 introduced the 9 years basic education curriculum to achieve the goals of the Universal Basic Education Program. Thus, the school system in Nigeria became 9-3-4, which means 9 years basic education, 3 years senior secondary and 4 years tertiary education. In other words, the system shows:

- i. Lower basic education curriculum from primary 1-3
- ii. Middle basic education curriculum from primary 4-6
- iii. Upper basic education curriculum from junior secondary 1-3

The 2014 National Policy on Education stipulates that the 9 year basic education program, with the recent curriculum changes was put into use across various schools in Nigeria. The basic education covers the Early Child Care and Development Education (crèche, daycare). It provides formal education training to children aged between 0-15 years. The distribution of the levels is highlighted thus:

- i. Early child care and development education from 0-4 years
- ii. Pre-primary education (1-year duration) 5 years
- iii. Primary education from 6-12 years
- iv. Junior secondary education from 12-15 years

The official language of instruction at the Primary School level is English, but they may adopt other indigenous languages depending on the location. Meaning teachers in a particular geo-political zone in Nigeria may choose to teach students in their local language such as Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, Berom, Mwaghavul, Ron, Pyam etc.

Senior secondary school education: the present curriculum prepares students to have vocational skills apart from their formal education training. Vocational training empowers senior secondary school students to gain skills such as fashion design, hair styling etc. while the formal education curriculum offers core subjects such as mathematics, English, civic education and entrepreneurship across the different fields of studies which include science, arts, technology and business. Students at this level are expected to pass the senior school certificate examination prepared by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) or the National Examination Council (NECO) to progress into tertiary institution. The certificate obtained is called a senior school leaving certificate. Students must pass either WAEC or NECO and the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Exam (UTME) to gain admission into a Nigeria University.

Tertiary Education: Nigeria tertiary education covers both universities, polytechnics and colleges of education. The National University Commission is the governing body that

regulates the activities of accredited universities in Nigeria. The curriculum is structured to prepare graduates to contribute towards national development and to develop entrepreneurs to create employment opportunities. Polytechnics provide specialize technical training and skill acquisition for students so they can contribute to the industrial and economic developments in Nigeria. Colleges of education are training centers for preparing young students who are interested in the teaching profession. They prepare students to become competent teachers in the society.

Conceptual Clarification

Impact: means having a strong effect on someone or something either negatively or positively. Impact in this contexts is basically the effect, challenges, disadvantage or problems of insecurity.

Insecurity: According to Ubong (2014), refers to whenever people have a feeling of self-doubt or vulnerability and susceptibility to injury or harm or even threat of a corporate body such as the threat the nation of Israel is made to feel by Iran and other neighboring countries. In simpler words, insecurity is an emerging or existing threat to one's comfort, physical, psychological, emotional well-being and related others. Insecurity has equally been expressed as an antithesis of security which has attracted common description as unsafe, danger, hazard and uncertainty, want of confidence, state of doubt, inadequately guarded or protected, instability, trouble, lack of protection and others. Achumbe et al (2013) and Onifade et al (2013). Insecurity is also a situation where human and national security is jeopardized by external and internal forces, interests and natural disasters.

School System: is the aggregate of public schools of an area under the administration of an executive officer who represents and is responsible to the board of education for that area. It means one or more than one elementary schools in which programs are offered for students progressing from kindergarten to grade xii; the boundaries and the schools to be included in a school system shall be determined by the school concerned.

The Impact of Insecurity on the school system in Nigeria

Globally, security has remained a subject of great concern. No nation or society can boast of being completely free from the problems caused by insecurity. In the last decades, schools in Nigeria have experienced different forms of violence; terrorism, kidnapping, insurgency, socio ethno-religious conflict. Suicide bombings and several other acts of criminality have risen and fast spreading and affecting the school system. As insecurity is heightening, the understanding of its manifestations and consequences is also evolving.

It is argued that the current challenges of insecurity in Nigeria education system stemmed from many factors such as opined by Crane (2007) who suggests that the inability of the Federal Government of Nigeria to deliver basic services to citizen is a prime cause of insecurity alongside the religion fighting and violent attack in the Niger Delta. This view is upheld by Igbuzor (2011) who sees the state of insecurity in Nigeria as a function of government failure. Among other factors that have promoted insecurity as revealed by literature are; unemployment, bad governance, lack of quality education, lack of inadequate basic infrastructure, corruption and corrupt practices of government officials, perceived victimization and marginalization, ethnic superiority and religious conflicts, disconnection between the people and the government, inequalities and absence of fairness and justice, domination and exploitation.

Lately, the occurrence of insecurity in Nigeria schools is a serious concern and has continued to attract research interest. The school system has come under series of violent attacks ranging from kidnappings to suicide bombings, raping and robbery, ritual killings, insurgencies, increasing violence between herdsmen and farming communities, banditry in the north to Niger Delta militancy and so many others. These personal and national aspiration of a good school system may not be achieved in the face of dominating current debates of global insecurity which Nigeria is not left out. This menace of insecurity has distorted and will continue to plague human right to development in every continent of the world if not checkmated. In Nigeria, an overview of the security situation as it affects the school system has been highlighted below:

Nigeria as a country has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity since the beginning of the present democratic dispensation. The pattern of insecurity has been regionalized: militia group in the south, insurgency in the north, kidnapping in the east and south, ritual killings in the east and west, political and non-political assassination across the nation. The regional pattern of insecurity has given rise to regional security formations in the country in a bid to curtail the alarming rate of insecurity. No nation can achieve a sustainable development in the face of widespread insecurity of lives and properties. The supranational issues of insecurity that stem from organized high profile crimes perpetrated through transnational syndication and racketeering has continuously posed threats to survival of nations. Nigeria's political history has recorded various forms of violent insecurity challenges ranging from civil war, election related violence, riots and protests, militancy, insurgency, herdsmen attack on farmers. However, the rise of Boko Haram sect created a new dimension to Nigeria's security problems. The main ideology of this deadly group is that Western Education is evil and should be rejected. The operations and activities Boko Haram against education came to limelight following the abduction of 276 students of Government Girls College, Chibok. This internationally well-publicized case of school kidnapping brought a new dimension to Nigeria's insecurity challenges as many secondary school attacks have been recorded thereafter. There were cases of kidnapping of teachers and students at Lagos junior Model College, Igbonla area of Epe (27 may 2017). There were cases of killing of students and their teachers. On the 10 of November 2014, bombs have been detonated in school assemblies leaving dozens 17 dead and 79 people injured in Potiskum Yobe School another attack in Yobe lead to school buildings burnt down in Buni Yadi in Yobe state which stops teaching and learning.

Iheamnachor (2015) had also reported five secondary school teachers were abducted at gunpoint from a school in Rivers State which left the people in the area in total fear and tension. There were also recorded cases of religious induced crisis which affected schools. (Mission secondary schools located in Nassarawa Gwong area of Jos was attacked by Muslim extremists). Cases of dormitory raping were also reported while many of these school attacks are not reported. Recent statistics showed that about 2,295 teachers have been killed and 19,000 others displaced in Bornu, Yobe and Adamawa States within 2009 to 2018, while an estimate of 1,500 schools have been destroyed since 2014, with over 1,280 casualties among teachers and students (Adesulu, 2019). Many of these incidents were never reported by the national media which affected the true situation. These attacks impinge on effective teaching and learning which serve as a drag to our national development.

According to Akintunde and Musa (2016), insecure school environment affect the learning of children. Situation of insecurity triggers traumatic disorder and **toxic** stress that affect learning negatively. General school attendance and enrolment are equally affected as parents pull their children out of schools while in some extreme cases, insecurity has led to the closure of schools. For instance in Borno State, schools were shut-down in major towns as a result of insurgency (Ameh, 2015). These attacks on schools usually lead to vandalism and

outright destruction of school facilities which discourage the establishment of new schools. Consequently, government resources are depleted as funds meant for other developmental projects are channeled to tackling the aftermath of the attacks. In the end, educational attainment in terms of quality of graduates and manpower suffers and this impinge on overall national development aspirations.

According to Todaro and Smith (2012), sustainability refers to meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations. In the United Nations classical definition, a development path is sustainable on the condition that the stock of overall capital assets remains constant or rises over time. Even though the essence of sustainability is mainly on environmental capital, it also include other types of capital such as manufactured capital (machines, factories, roads) and human capital (knowledge, experience, skill). A development is therefore sustainable if needs of the present is met without jeopardizing the ability of the future generation to meet theirs. The overall capital stock of an economy belongs to all the generations and to destroy that indiscriminately penalize both present and future generations. This implies that sustainable development should keep going on through preservation, improvement, innovation and investment in the capital stock of which education and human capital development is key. In order to reposition and achieve long term economic development, the Nigeria government created the Economy Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP). A core strategy in this plan is improvement in human capital. Following the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), government plans to invest in education to fill the skills gap in the economy by ensuring access to basic education for all, improve quality of secondary and tertiary education, and encourage students to enroll in science and technology courses. However, the prevalence of school attacks in Nigeria reveals the dwindling capabilities of state actors to achieve sustainable development and national security (Okoli, 2013).

Given the importance of education and human capital towards a sustainable socio-economic development, there is the need to deploy extraordinary measures to tackle the spate of attacks on schools in Nigeria. Securitization remains a veritable option as the security architecture of the nation seems to be overwhelmed by the ongoing insecurity challenges. Securitization is a process by which state actors can transform subjects into matters of security concern that enables extraordinary measures to be taken. This implies that ostensibly as existential threats to a referent object by a securitizing actor who thereby generates endorsement of emergency measures beyond rules that would otherwise bind. A typical case is United States and Europe's successful securitization of immigration due to the concerns of terrorist infiltration. Thus, extreme measures have subsequently been applied through tight border controls as well as the classification of migrants from certain countries of origin, diaspora, emigration and citizenship as potential securitization issues (Faist, 2005; Huysmans, 2006; Naujoks, 2015).

In addition, the political leadership failure and other systemic institutional uncertainties / irregularities that exists in Nigeria, it is lack of proactive security planning that have given rise to the recurrent and multiplicity of school related insecurity challenges. As no nation grows beyond its level of educational development, the need to adequately secure vulnerable schools environment cannot be over-emphasized. There is need for the entire educational system and infrastructure to be securitized.

Incidents of Attacks in Nigerian Schools

Here are list of some schools that have been attacked by the insurgency. Though most of these attacks were not reported in the media, their occurrence all over the country are not in doubt. Most of the reported cases of attacks took place in the northern part of Nigeria where the Boko Haram operations are more prevalent. The year 2014, when the Boko Haram invaded and abducted 279 secondary school girls at Government Girls College Chibok in Borno State marked beginning of disaster in terms of insecurity in our schools and this has continued till date. In a paper presented at a conference by Chinedu et al (2018), an attempt was made to mention some of the affected schools as follows:

1. On 14th April, 2014, the Boko Haram sect attacked Government Girls College in Chibok Local Government Area of Borno State and abducted 276 girls who were writing their exams.
2. On 19th February, 2018, 10 female students were abducted at Government Girls Technical College, Dapchi in Yobe State.
3. 5 secondary school teachers were abducted at gunpoint in Rivers State.
4. Teachers and students at Lagos Junior Model College, Igbonla were kidnapped.
5. On 6th July, 2013, a mass shooting occurred at the Mamudo Government Secondary School Yobe State. It was reported that 41 students and a teacher were killed while Boko Haram claimed responsibility.
6. On 29th September, 2013, in Gujba College in Yobe State were 44 people were killed.
7. On 25th February, 2014, Federal Government College Burni Yadi, Yobe State was attacked leaving 59 boys dead and the entire 24 halls in the college were burnt down.
8. On 2nd March, 2016, at about 8pm, 3 students of a private secondary school, Babington Macaulay Junior Secondary School at Ikorrodu, Lagos State were abducted.
9. On 13th January, 2017, 10 students and a staff of Nigerian Tulip international College, Isheri (formerly Nigeria Turkish International College) in Ogun State were abducted.
10. On 16th January, 2017, 2 teenage suicide bombers detonated bombs in University of Maiduguri. 3 people died including a professor.
11. On 25th may, 2017, a group of gunmen attacked Lagos State Model College, Igbonla, Epe. 6 students were abducted.
12. On 19th February, 2018, 111 school girls from Government Girls Science and Technical College Dapchi, Yobe State were abducted.
13. In February 2021, students in a secondary school at Kagara in Niger State were abducted.

The unfortunate victims of all these attacks are students, teachers and school administrators; with the attendant consequences: Parents were forced to keep their children away from school, schools were closed down, enrolment into schools became low, new schools were prevented from being open, psychological consequences on youths led to drug abuse, alcoholism and occult activities, child abuse, maligned and maladjusted youth among others.

The Responsibility of Government in Addressing the Security Situation in our School System

Education is a collaborative enterprise that involves the government, parents, local communities, national and international agencies and NGOs. Umar (2001), however opined that government should plays the key or leading role by demonstrating sufficient political will and deep commitment to the provision of education to all people through careful planning with

due regards to quantity and quality. An attempt was made in the past, for example, an enactment of an act by the National Assembly to prevent, prohibit and curb the act of terrorism. These attempts however have either not been well implemented or have not produced the desired effects. Therefore, the current increase in insecurity calls for more alternative reform strategies.

Otite (2012) opined that the state of insecurity in Nigeria could be attributed to lapses on the part of security agents of the state. Nigerian government as a state has a fundamental function to secure the lives of her citizens and make them live amicably. Any nation that cannot provide security poses a security threat to her people. Therefore, looking at the continuous attack on our schools, we strongly believe that government has not done enough and therefore there is still much that can be done in other to tackle this problem.

Conclusion

The over view of insecurity as it affects Nigeria's school system and the role and responsibility of the government have stressed the importance for education and security in a way that both can influence each other positively. Hence, education should be made responsive to the National goal of security and overall economic and development. Much efforts have been done by our security agencies in curbing insecurity as it affects the Nigerian school system, but more effort is needed to ensure that our schools remain safe for educational activities. Government must be proactive in tackling the insecurity, considering the importance of education as far as economic, social, physical, political and human development is concerned which can only be achieved in an atmosphere of peace and security. The urgent need for the government to put an end to incessant attacks in our schools must be holistic to promote development in the country.

Recommendation

1. There should be the provision of moral leadership that will ensure equal opportunity for all without corruption and ethnic sentiments.
2. Programs should be organize to promote national coexistence and unity among all tribes, regions and religion.
3. There should be serious commitment in the side of government to education and see education as a public good.
4. Government investment in the educational section should be improved especially by creating a special fund for security in the education sector.
5. Government should be more proactive in fighting against terrorism, banditry, kidnapping and others.
6. Government should create more employment opportunities for the young people.
7. There should be a form of school curriculum towards security consciousness.
8. Government policy makers should set achievable goals and objectives that will stimulate all sectors growth.
9. Government should establish a security based research institute that will work with existing security agencies.
10. Government should create a platform that allows for partnership with all the stakeholders in education and security.
11. Government should introduce the securitization policy in other to check the excesses of immigrants into the county.
12. Government should and the relevant stakeholders should make sure that our borders are well equip and protected against hoodlums and bandits.
13. Government must be proactive in managing intelligent information. Action must be taken to avert the attacks. In most cases, threat letters are received prior to the incidence that is why government needs to act fast to prevent such.

14. Government and stakeholders must intensify its efforts in gathering intelligent information. Because in most cases, the people are afraid to talk to security personnel for fear of being molested.
15. With the recent advancement in technology, government should invest in training security personnel with the modern facilities in locating the hideout and camps of the bandit and where victims are kept hostage.
16. Government should also ensure that the welfare of all security personnel is not toyed with and paid as at when due. Their promotion should not be delayed as well
17. Government should ensure that security personnel fighting insurgency should not be allowed to stay for more than a year in camp. They should be allowed to go back to their families because it has a way of affecting their mental health and ability to perform well.
18. I urgently see the need for government to request for assistance from other developed countries with high technical expert to come and help fight this insurgent once and for all.
19. Government should ensure that schools are well armed with security personnel most especially schools located in area that are vulnerable to such attacks.
20. I see a strong need for government to change the security architecture of the country by changing the service chiefs and other key offices to employ the services of news the need to refurbish the abandoned forces and bushes in Nigeria that bandits have turned as their camps and other criminal activity for economic importance to the country.

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