

SECURITY ISSUES AND EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN NIGERIA: JOURNEY SO FAR

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Abstract

In Nigeria, students have been risking their lives for an education. Like in most parts of the world, schooling comes with its fair share of challenges but when students risk losing their freedom or lives at school, our tomorrow is under attack, this paper take a cursory look of the security challenges of targeted attacks on our educational sector in Nigeria by non-state actors. The discourse was for the purpose of understanding the security challenge facing our educational sector in Nigeria. This paper will employ a desk-review qualitative research methodology with the use of secondary sources of data to examine security challenges facing our education in the hand of non state actors, how to tackle the challenges, and assess the level of achievement so far. The paper will suggest and recommend ways to get over it in Nigeria.

Keywords; Security, Educational system

Introduction

In Nigeria, students have been risking their lives for an education. Like in most parts of the world, schooling comes with its fair share of challenges but when students risk losing their freedom or lives at school, our tomorrow is under attack. Where going to school is tantamount to charging into battle amid a swarm of bullets, what chances do the average Nigerian child have for a better education? The abduction of the Chibouk girls sparked global outrage and condemnation for the then government in power but outrage is not enough to solve a hydra-headed challenge such as kidnapping. If anything, the frequency of these abductions now, in a way, normalizes the nightmare. Once outraged, Nigerians are now in a state of acceptance. Acceptance that education in Nigeria will never be safe; that schooling is a risky venture that portends the loss of life and freedom; that it is normal to scurry around to raise millions in ransom for your child.

Education is a tool of empowerment in a highly competitive and dynamic socio-economic environment. Economic and social progress cannot be achieved without a vibrant and efficient human capital. For Nigeria to reach her full potential, investment in education is crucial and of utmost importance. Education is the bed rock of any development for a country to develop Education sector needs to be given a priority.

Education is the tool for integration of individual effectively into a society so that the individual can achieve self-realization, develop national consciousness, promote unity and for social, economic, political, scientific, cultural and technological process. When citizens of a

country are educated; they would think right, act right and bring about positive change for the development of their nation and the world at large. This corroborates Fahd al-Qudah (2006) thus: if a nation is successful in developing (educating) its people as strong and complete individuals, it will be able to realize a glorious future for itself, promote peace within its boundary and defend its sovereignty. Education therefore is important to the growth and development of the society because of its power to fashion an individual to be integrated into his society, and to become a promoter of his societal culture and development it's a weapon for acquiring skills, knowledge and competence for survival in a changing world. The education sector crisis has been made worse by the intractable insecurity in various parts of Nigeria, the girl child educational inequity, and poverty that has made quality education unaffordable to many Nigerians.

Nigeria is at a tipping point regarding security, human capacity development and economic growth. However, the biggest challenge we face as a country is not about the challenges of today but a bleak future stirring Africa's biggest economy and the most populous black nation in the face. Looking beyond the 2023 general elections, one sees our leaders' deliberate insensitivity and indifference at various levels to the destruction of one sector that offers us hope to safeguard and recover the future. That is the educational sector.

Nigeria, in recent times has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity such as Boko Haram, activities, banditry. Kidnapping, Fulani herder's farmer clashes that resulted in Ondo state issuance of Quit notice to Fulani in the state. This has made national security threat to be a major issue for the government and has promoted a huge allocation of the national budget to security. In order to ameliorate the incidence of crime, the federal government has embarked on the criminalization of terrorism by passing the anti terrorism act in 2011, fundamental surveillance as well as investigation of criminal related offence heightening of physical security measures around disrupting potential attack

There is a total loss of confidence by stakeholders in our education system. According to UNICEF,(2013). One in every five of the world out of schoolchildren is in Nigeria. Even though primary education is officially free and compulsory, about 10.5 million of the children aged 5-14 years are not in school. Only 61 percent of the 6-11 years old regularly attend primary school and only 35.6 percent of children aged 36-59 months receive early childhood education. This statistics is even worse in the Northern part of Nigeria with only 53% net attendance rate, meaning almost half of the children's population is out of school.

Oluwatominwa, O. & Nonyelim,C. (2022) There is zero public school registration for West African Examination Council (WAEC) in Sokoto, and Zamfara states and some candidates in some south east state cannot participate in Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) due to Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) sit at home. The effects of insecurities on education are numerous, but worthy of mention is the significant drop in enrollment rate from the considerable gains that were made in years before. According to reports, enrollment rate has declined by a whopping 23% which can be attributed to parents deciding against releasing their wards to school for fear of being abducted or kidnapped. Many of the parents who defy the odds to send their wards to school now rue their choice.

Dakuku, (2022), the loss of confidence in Nigeria's education is led by the political and other elite class. Over 95 per cent of the elite leaders in government, business and technocratic professions are educating their children in tertiary institutions in Europe and the United states. Consequently, there is hardly any serious policy discussion about education in Nigeria. It is disturbing to note that the generation that had good government-funded basic education in the '80s and '90s is struggling to function productively nowadays; how much more will the

children of this generation with poor education or no education, in some cases, become productive at all. The irony is on all of us .

Concept Clarification Security

Dasuki(2013), defined Security as absence of insecurity as a result of action of law enforcement agencies . He further stressed that security was understood to be the job of the defense forces of the National frontiers and of the police inside country Such perception sum up security to be equal to a system of law and order maintenance. Security, according to Yusuf and Babatunde (2009), is the condition which enhances the ability of government, its agencies and its citizen to function without hindrance. National security is the broad sense implies the threat to life, property and socio economic wellbeing of the people. A proper understanding of security is important for an adequate explanation of remote cause of breach of peace and security, whether historical, religion, social and political.

Education is defined as the acquisition of knowledge, development of faculty and the training of skills towards making the individual become relevant to him and the society to which he belongs. Education goes beyond schooling. Education is believed to be a means whereby knowledge, skills, and habits are transferred and imparted from one generation to another. This is done through a process of training with the aim of helping the recipient develop self consciousness and make choices and decision that would improve his total well being. It's pertinent to know that, Education is no longer preparation for development itself. It sensitizes people towards participation in the social economic, political and cultural development in their area It is a critical pillar of human development.

Security challenges facing Nigerian Education

Security lapses and the challenges certainly do manifest on daily basis in schools in Nigeria such challenges range from youth restiveness, terrorism and insurgent attacks, kidnappings and hostage _taking for monetary ransoms. Political assassination, arsons murders, cult related activities mass protest and so forth. While many have falling victims to any of the danger aforementioned very few have actually escaped death or injury during such attack s in the prevailing circumstances , the safety and security of school administrators, teachers, and students and entire community where the school are located are no longer guaranteed most especially in the northeast geo political where the activities of Boko Haram insurgency are much of recent now sit at home syndrome was also pronounce in southeast by non state actors

Nigeria is beset with a lot of security problems such as Boko Haram, militancy, kidnapping, ethno-religious conflicts, drug trafficking, agitation for resource control, communal riots, arms smuggling, and criminality that erode national security. No country can survive economically, socially and politically in a climate of insecurity. This problem has affected schools in the five South-East states, where 20 per cent of the time allotted to education is lost each week. Students in the South-East states missed examinations scheduled for Mondays nationally during necessary national examinations like West Africa Examinations Council (WAEC), National Examinations Council (NECO), and Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination UMTE.

School attacked are not also excluded from the effect of the crippling security challenges that threaten the security and unity of the Nigerian state in general .Some of these challenges are also directly or indirectly linked to critical security challenges that certainly have made school vulnerable to attacks in Nigeria. They are

1. Inadequacies in manpower recruitment and training of security forces and law enforcement agencies

2. Lack of timely and promptness in the handling of security issues by government
3. Lack of citizen involvement in state security management.
4. Low standard of security awareness
5. Lack of effective security networking

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Educations promote security. Many conflicts arise from ignorance and manipulation of ethnic and religious identity Education not mere schooling, produce tolerant and civil citizens who are able to understand and live with people from different economic religious ethnic and cultural back ground and other form of identities. The children we do not educate today will pose a danger in the future, and they may fuel insecurity, criminality, and total dependency on the state for survival, not to mention the lost opportunity cost in productivity they would have given, were they educated. Now is the time to pay attention and call for a “state of emergency” in our education sector.

How To Curb Menace

The major problem facing Nigeria as a country today is insecurity, which has snowballed into kidnapping of students. Government should come up with strategies to end kidnapping, insecurity in school. Students have become soft targets for kidnapping in recent times. Schools are not safe yet governments at all levels continue to treat the problem of insecurity with kid gloves. The following are ways in which the federal government can come up with proactive security strategies that would put an end to the problem.

1. Government should prorogate laws that will stipulate death penalty for kidnappers: this will instill fear in the mind of potential kidnappers
2. Government should include security Education in the our school curriculum
3. Displaced students should be given sufficient opportunity to go on with their learning.
4. Government should also ensure that school provide adequate security for students while there should be regular orientation on how students can stay safe from kidnappers
5. Government should provide security gargets in schools like cameras, hidden CCTVS etc
6. We must bring all ideas, talents, skills, and resources to the table to resolve some of the crises threatening to mar the future of the next generation of Nigerians. It is not just a policy and monetary issue. We need to focus on security challenges that send almost 1.5million children out of schools so that our future can be protected and development that will place us among the developed nation can be achieve.

Journey So Far

In a fast changing world, Driven by digital technology, government directed that the Nigeria police must continually evolve on its structure and operations to make greater impact in checking crime particularly in the virtual space. In a world where insecurity is constantly

evolving: low enforcement responses have to equally evolve not just to keep up but to stay ahead.

Also as part of efforts to modernize the Nigeria police force this government has intensified both international and local training of our officers and men in addition to providing new platforms and other resource including clamoring for community policing which will expose all the criminals within the community.

Boko Haram insurgency, the Indigenous people of Biafra, Eastern security Network, and Banditry in some parts of the country over time which posed a potent threat to the country, had been significantly degraded and relative normalcy had returned to most town and villages.

Conclusion And Recommendations

Conclusively, the future we want to build for our children will be worse than what we have now if we do not prioritize education. A stitch in time, they say, saves nine. We must focus and refocus all our physical and intellectual energies to rescue our education from total shambles and, that way, safeguard the future we desire.

Arresting this menace of insecurity will not only protect lives and properties of citizens, but also improve the fortunes of the country in all ramifications. Governments at all levels must begin to realize the gross impact of insecurity on the fortune of the nation, especially in an important sector such as education, and engage all physical and human resources in combating it.

Security of life in any society is paramount government need to be proactive no Nation can develop where security is lacking therefore, our security architecture need to be up and doing.

Our judicial system need total overhauling the situation where highest bidders get justice should be stop with so that the country can forge ahead. The cases of Wadume still remain in the mind of Nigerian. Wadume was not just a kidnapper but also murderer so 21 years Imprisonments is not commensurate with the offence committed.

Security challenge in Nigeria actually affect our economic sectors which directly or indirectly affect our Education for instance most of foreigners that see the country as a potential Nations that are coming up but the security actually give us set back so Government should rise up to the challenges so that our country can be a home to be living.

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