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Education and Security Challenges in Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper described the concepts of education, security and insecurity. It showed what education can do in order to minimise the issue of insecurity in the country. One of such things from the angle of education is called political education. Through political education much awareness will be created among the citizenry in respect of insecurity. The paper went ahead to discuss the types of insecurity and causes of insecurity. Among such causes is issue of unemployment of youths in the country. This is because it is through unemployment that youths capitalized on for various types of crimes. The paper made some recommendations that are within the suggestions the authors made and the major recommendation is that our education system has to be reformed through overhauling of our curriculum to reflect the needs of Nigerian people. It is through such curriculum where various skills will be emphasized that will lead to self employment and thereby minimizing unemployment in the country.

Introduction

The Nigerian government has over the years adopted the military option of counter insurgency and other traits to security like banditry, Boko Haram, Kidnappers but failed to yield the desired result. As if to say that these groups are not enough, another group called unknown gunmen emerged. It has become obvious that a new road map should be drawn to get to the root of the problem in order to halt the insecurity that is threatening the country.

Given the preponderance of misleading ideologies being espoused by the terrorists, Ezenwa and Igwilu believe that it behoves of the government to initiate and indeed sustain political education across the nation to stem the tide of separatists' agitations, insurrections, insurgencies and armed banditry.¹ Political education represents a viable strategy to achieve and ensure the realization of sustainable national security in the country. To educate the masses politically for Fanon is to make the totality of the nation a reality to each citizen. Political education goes to the roots of the national ethos, core values and emphasizes the countries manifest destiny.² The category of people involved much in insecurity are the youths. The reason of their involvement could be because they are not well educated and thus jobless, unemployable, poor and disenchanted, or are educated and are still jobless. Young people who are poor find it difficult to resist temptations to commit crime provided through that they will have some coins in their pockets to solve some immediate basic needs.

The major issue of unemployment one may say is that our education system is not rooted to the needs of Nigerian people. This could be the reason why our graduates are rejected before ever they leave the various institutions they attended. The curriculum planners do not have the interest if commerce in mind while churning out curricula for different levels of education in the country. For instance, Daramola called for a review of curricula and pedagogy owing to the limited success associated with them. For him, Nigerian Universities curricula are inadequate, lacks quality, and as such limited to chances of graduates in getting employment with public and private employers.³ In the same way, Akwara, Akwara, Enwuchola, Adekunle and Udaw strongly believed that unemployment of trained people including University graduates in Nigeria is growing. It is important to note that unemployment especially among youth has implications on Nigeria's national security. Youth within the age bracket of 18-45 quite frequently get involved in various crimes constituting insecurity. Further, they note that most of the people paraded by law enforcement agencies belonging to criminal groups are within the age bracket of 18-45 years. The most disturbing aspect is the fact that some of those involved in the various crimes are educated/learned. They are involved in urban conflicts, militancy, sectarian violence, crimes, terrorism brought about by joblessness.⁴ This statement of fact necessitates the urgent need for meaningful education reforms to enhance employability of Nigerian school leavers and graduates. One can comfortably say here that unemployment leading to insecurity has two major aspects, the uneducated youths who are jobless and educated youths who are also jobless. What we mean by educated youths are those who graduated from higher institutions and those who never reach or go beyond secondary education. These two categories constitute serious threat to national security. With this brief introduction, effort will be made to define or describe various concepts involved in this paper.

Education

Education for Ogbidi is the acquisition of knowledge development of faculty and the training of skills towards making the individual become relevant to himself and the society to which he belongs⁵ According to Okeke, education is seen as a process by which individuals are assisted formally through proper direction and guidance to develop their capacities not only for their own benefit but for the society at large.⁶ Although there are many definitions of education but these two have been chosen for the purposes of this study. The question that may be raised here is whether Nigerian education system has been able to equip individuals to such capacities and skills? If the answer is in the affirmative, then, why is it that our school learners and graduates of higher institutions are rejected before ever they graduated from their various institutions? This could be the reason for many Nigerians to cry for falling standard of education. This has made many to suggest total overhauling of Nigerian system. To do this probably will enable us come out from the 'grammar' type of education handed down to us by the colonial masters to the more functional type of education which is education for sustenance and development since it is said that the quality of education of a nation determines the quality of the people and the quality of the people determines the development level of the nation. In times of insecurity, what then is education expected to do? In other words, what will be the role of education in minimising the threat of insecurity?

What Education Can Do

With all the challenges of insecurity in the country, Nigeria can survive this through the process of galvanizing and mobilizing the people to shun the divisive enticements and embrace the consciousness of common identity as a nation. This is the reason for political education to be

first among equals because it involves the concept of democracy, encourages civic participation according to Annatte as well as the development of political knowledge through the activities of active learning in the community.⁷ The political education process as an ethical paradigm shift would ultimately checkmate the power of elite class who employs dubious ways to confuse and confound the masses into involving in sundry ethnic violence, electoral malpractices and other forms of criminality.

Political education for Azeez and Ebenezer is a concept which is concerned with those aspects of the general education process which inculcates political values, proscriptions within the culture of a given society or community. It encompasses the entire gamut of the political super structure - the institution of the state, government and governance, the electorate and indeed all elements of the democratic establishment.⁸ Further more, they maintained that political education means getting people to take part in their government, to assume their responsibilities of contributing to the development of the society, to make them aware of their rights and defend them without fear. Also, to harness and tap the latent forces in the people, to make them see politics as an essential aspect of the entire social fabric to make them less vulnerable to induced influences in the political process.⁹ This shows that political education cuts across all aspects of the society in the sense that politics is conceived as ‘the authoritative allocation of scarce resources’. Political education also helps individuals to understand ‘who gets what’, ‘why and how’ through the management of state power and authority. Thus, Onuigbo et al maintained that political education refers to the transmission and acquisition of political knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary for informed participation in the political process.

A politically educated citizen is a citizen that has acquired basic political knowledge and awareness that enhances the citizen’s involvement in conventional political activities such as registration as a voter, voting in elections, running for political positions, and membership of political party.¹⁰ On his own part, Alemika sees education as something that makes people to be tolerant of other people’s religion, belief, culture, limitations and promote social harmony and security. It is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self confidence. A good number of conflicts often arise from ignorance and manipulation of ethnic and religious identity. In fact, education is not just passing through the four walls of the school system but produces tolerant and civil citizens who are able to understand and live with people from different ethnic, economic, religious and cultural backgrounds and other form of identities.¹¹ Any nation that gives her citizens good education-education which is functional makes it difficult for such people to turn against their government. This is because at the end of schooling, the people will find themselves well fitted in the society to earn a living.

It is meaningless to talk of security in the absence of the right type of education. Thus, Radda believes that education when well imparted and utilised has the potency of promoting national security. This is because it is mostly uneducated jobless and educated jobless youths that easily attracted to crimes thereby constituting insecurity in a country. While western education that is not geared towards self reliance (non-functional education) may be dangerous (as it is in our country today), lack of western education or non-functional education is even more dangerous. Non- functional education often translates to absence of competitive skill, adequate income, exclusion from participating in vital political and economic social organizations and relations, lack of access to adequate food and nutrition, housing, health care and efficient public emergency and safety services – all which are element on human security.¹²

For Ogbidi, there are a lot of private benefits education can provide for individual and these include: better employment prospects, high salaries and greater ability to save and invest. It has been that the absence of literacy in the life of the individual and society can lead to problems of conflict and insecurity. The achievement of national goals is dependent on her education, so that people can manage every change effectively. The Nigeria educational system needs peace and tranquillity as the only ingredient for growth and development. Education as either a system process or goal does not exist in a vacuum. Its meaning is derived from the social context and the predominant world view and ethics. Education must be able to produce the kind of citizens with appropriate skills, relevant knowledge and positive values that will increasingly make life meaningful to the individual and society in general.¹³ Now that we have discussed the concept of education and what education can do, it is the right time to talk about the concept of security and insecurity.

Definition / Description of Security and Insecurity

National security was defined by Iredia in Odunayo and Nkoro as the ability of a state to overcome any form of her challenges no matter what the challenge is.¹⁴ He further explained that national security is wider than military might defence or law enforcement, pointed out other basic dimensions like employment, water and food security. On his own part, Ogbidi maintains that security can be used in many ways to mean human security that deals with the violence such as environmental destruction, over population and spread of infectious diseases, food supply, energy crises, physical, mental harassment, racism and others, endanger the well being of any daily lives.¹⁵ Similarly, Fayeye defined security as the composition, structure and responsibilities of the security sector and comprises the personal and communal state of being secured from a wide range of critical and pervasive threats including but not limited to all forms of violence, injustice and violation of human rights.¹⁶

According to Akin, security is seen as the situation that exists as a result of the establishment of measures for the protection of persons, information and property against hostile persons, influences and actions. It is the existence of conditions within which people in a society can go about their normal daily activities without any threats to their lives or properties.¹⁷ With this, security is guaranteed atmosphere for accelerated development. Politics, economy, technology and the likes develop where security of life and property are assured. On the other hand, Beland sees insecurity as the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection. In Nigeria, insecurity which is the breach of peace and security either historical, religious, ethno-regional, social, economical and political that have contributed to recurring conflicts, is but a trauma incapacitating government to execute development agenda including delivery of quality education.¹⁸

Describing security, Ezenwa and Igwilo said that security is the absence of insecurity-the condition that assures one of the safety of life and property. It is a situation of peace, free from danger. Security is at the core of the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy as enshrined in the Nigeria constitution.¹⁹ According to Eme and Onyishi, the state is secure only when the aggregate of people organized under it has a consciousness belonging to a common sovereign community, enjoy equal political freedom, human rights, economic opportunities and when the state itself is able to ensure independence in its development. Security therefore is the assurance by the state that citizens can freely exercise and enjoy their fundamental human rights within the law without let or hinder.²⁰ For Audu, Lukeman and Mohammed since the end of the cold war, there appears to be shift from viewing security from

state-centric perspective to encapsulates human security, human rights and national development. They explained security as any mechanism devised to alleviate the most serious threats that prevent people from pursuing their cherished values.²¹

Further more, Iredia sees national security as the capacity of a state to overcome challenges confronting her. He continued by saying that national security is not limited to military might defence or law enforcement, it covers basic dimensions like job, water and food security. National security is seen as a state or condition in which most cherished values of country and the people are permanently protected and continuously enhanced²² Nwanegbo and Odigbo are of the view that security has to do with freedom from danger or threat to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values, legitimate interests and enhance the well being of its people. Internal security implies freedom from danger to life and property.²³ From all indications all these definitions point out to one thing which means that state or individuals are unsafe at any point in time. A state where people are not safe is heading towards anarchy. Thus, Alemika categorized insecurity to different dimensions with few examples:

- a. Physical insecurity- violent personal and property crimes,
- b. Public security- violent conflicts, insurgency and terrorism,
- c. Economic insecurity- Poverty, unemployment,
- d. Social insecurity- illiteracy, ignorance, diseases, discrimination and exclusion,
- e. Human right violations- denial of fundamental rights by state and non-state actors in different states,
- f. Political insecurity – denial of good and social democratic governance.²⁴

All these categorizations of insecurity according to Anan are interwoven and cannot in a strict sense treated in isolation and he stated thus:

Today we know that 'security' means for absence of conflict. We know that lasting peace requires a broader vision encompassing areas such as education, health, democracy and human rights, protection against environmental degradation and the proliferation of deadly weapons. We know that we cannot be secure amidst starvation, that we cannot build peace without alleviating poverty, and that we cannot build freedom on the foundations of injustice. These pillars of what we now understand as the people-centered concept of human security are interrelated and mutually reinforcing.²⁵

The concept security according to Mkpa is categorized into the following:

1. Political security which implies certainties and possibilities of developing a political system in a country or group of countries and it concerns stability of the countries themselves,
2. Military security is related to the lack of military threats and in the event of an occurrence of such threats it is associated with the ability to counter the said threats with own armed forces,
3. Economic security is linked to the protecting a nation's or state's economic development. It implies putting in place economic conditions necessary for the survival of the well being of the society. It implies the deliberate policy design and implementation aimed at confronting situations and conditions that inhibit economic development,

4. Ecological security aims at the preservation of the national environment to guarantee the survival of the present and future inhabitants of the land,
5. Social security concerns the protection and development of the national or religious identity of a given society that inhabits a given territory,
6. Cultural security pertains to cultivation, protection and preservation of cultural values which define national identity. It is also the insulation of a people's cultural traditions from the invasion of external values and traditions from other countries,
7. Ideological security concerns the creation and consolidation of the community of view points as we pursue the implementation of national interests. It seeks to counteract some extreme ideologies such as fascism, nationalism, conservatism, liberalism, and communism: including to protect against concepts which justify the activities that are inimical to national interest.²⁶

For Odunayo and Nkoro, the country is bedevilled with different cases of insecurity that have cut short peoples lives. The insecurity comes in different shades such as election related killings, robbery, kidnapping, assassination, human trafficking, hunger, military terrorism, banditry, (unknown gunmen), ritual killings among others. All these happen in Nigeria on daily basis and thousands of Nigerians have been killed, maimed or displaced.²⁷

Still talking about insecurity in the country, Joshua, Ibietan and Azuh describes different types of insecurity in various parts of the country. According to them, some of the indicators of insecurity in Nigeria are: ethno-religious conflicts, violence, kidnapping, terrorism among others. Insecurity has taken different dimensions in the various regions in Nigeria. For instance, in the Niger Delta region, the militants slugged it out with oil companies in the area. In South – East, kidnapping, ritual killing and armed robbery have been the nature of insecurity in the region, same with the South – West region of the country. Boko Haram insurgency has been the greatest challenge to the internal security in the North – East, North – West and North – Central from 2009 till date.²⁸ Looking at the different types of security/ insecurity, it is pertinent to ask: What are the causes of insecurity in Nigeria? A number of factors may be responsible both known and unknown ones, but here we will examine very few known causes.

Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

One of the major reasons for threats to national security is the prevalence of political illiteracy among Nigerian people. Not only that, unemployment is another major factor. For instance, Nigerian Bureau Statistics stated in 2011 that about 35 million Nigerian youths are unemployed. This was 2011, one could imagine what it will be between that year to present time. At the political level, desperate intolerant and ruthless politicians put up efforts to win elections at all costs, they recruited hungry youths to perpetrate attack on their opponents and at the end of the day, scores of innocent citizens are maimed and killed. Kidnapping is now a daily routine that attracts a global attention and make Nigeria unattractive to foreign investors and insecure for citizens. Armed robbers are now kings as they unleashed terror on innocent citizens at any available opportunity. It has gone to such extent that no one is spared and no one is safe, the nation is in trouble as nobody is sure of coming back when he goes out. The same question Sunny Okosun sang in one of his albums is felt to be appropriate here – which way Nigeria? It was on record according to Odunayo and Nkoro that analysts are quick to blame the Boko Haram catastrophe on unemployment, hunger, and deprivation. Specifically, the United States government submitted that illiteracy, unemployment and inexorable demands

of survival from the effects of poverty make the Northern youths vulnerable and ready for recruitment into crime and social vices including terrorism of the Boko Haram genre.²⁹

In the same way, Yakubu maintained that religious crises, drug addiction, secret cults, armed robbery in higher institutions are either instigated or practiced and aided by the products of the system of education. The high rate of unemployment among youth attests to the faulty premise of the Nigerian educational system. For instance, observed that in 2008, 15% of the Nigerian workforce was unemployed and in 2011, the figure rose to 20% and the victims of this phenomenon are the youth who till date still have the highest percentage of unemployment in the country.³⁰ On his own, Akinwumi established a nexus between education and national security stating that, Nigeria's education system had increased rural – urban migration and that many of the young people had migrated to different urban centres in the country to look for jobs that do not exist. This resulted into disappointment and frustration. Many of them take to crime to survive. Thus, unemployment has been the cannon fodder in the orgy of violence and violent disorder in the country. This is because unemployment exposes people to poverty and the twin problems combined to provide a fertile ground for activities that constitute threat to national security. The rise in crime rate is a direct consequence of unemployment and poverty.³¹

Again, insecurity can come as a result of injustice one does to the other. It can be as a result of deprivation, poverty, lack of access to essential necessities of life. With this, insecurity can be the absence of safety and peace, a problematic condition. Insecurity is a venomous threat to the individuals and their environment which destroys the root that holds the existence of any nation. Thus, in Nigeria parlance, Ogbidi pointed out that Nigeria's security challenges are an offshoot of several imbalances in the society. For instance, the recklessness displayed by those who piloted the affairs of this country, the involvement of good number of affluent people in organized crimes such as armed robbery, smuggling, political thuggery, terrorism, money laundry, pipeline vandalization, embezzlement, official corruption, Boko Haram, (Banditry, kidnappers, unknown gunmen) among others. It is even disturbing to note that some of these culprits successfully wriggle their way into position of power and subsequently determine the fortune of this great republic.³² He further said that unemployment is another serious factor in the securing challenges facing Nigerians. Corruption and poverty also constitute serious challenges. So many Nigerians face economic depression, lack of freedom, inability to provide the basic needs of life for self and family, lack of access to loans and credit, inability to save and own asset.

We are where we are today because the northern masses are made to believe that the south through colonialism has marginalized the north through colonial educational policies. The southern masses are made to believe that the northerners have marginalized the south through their continued stay in power since 1960 thereby establishing northern hegemony over the south. In the same way, Jega posited that our federalism has become structural context for class struggle and completion between factions of the ruling classes of diverse nationalities that comprises the Nigerian socio – economic formation. What the elites do to gain or retain power is to whip up reactionary to gain followers from poor masses for political support purporting that their course of action is in the overall interest of the entire primordial society not even to talk of the entire civil society.³³ In like manner, Imobighe stated that because the country refused to use the good opportunities that came her way positively, we are today plagued with both internal and external security challenges. He classified the reasons to include:

1. Lack of broad public participation in the affairs of the state
2. The politics of resources allocation.
3. Resource management control.
4. Annulment of June 12, 1992 election result.
5. Arbitrary use of power.³⁴

Still on causes of insecurity, Mkpa outlined the following: unemployment, corruption, socio – economic imbalance, porous open Borders, influx of illegal arms, Narcotics, slavery, criminal situations, weak judicial system, injustice and nepotism, religious fanaticism and ethno – religious conflicts, absence of instructional capacity resulting in government failure, gross inequality and unfairness, weak and poorly funded military, inability to prosecute perpetrators, and so on. All these are causes of insecurity from different angles. For instance, it is painful that the unemployment rate in Nigeria as at the second quarter 2020 was 27.1% showing that 21.7 million Nigerian are unemployed. The combined figure of the unemployed and the under – employed is 55.7% (National Bureau of statistics as at August 14, 2020). Another related cause is the recent decline in the nation’s economy. The decline has led to the laying off of many workers while new employments are not being made correspondingly. When people are unemployed they create usually some unwholesome means of livelihood. Armed robbery, banditry, kidnapping, ritual killing, election thuggery and other forms of obnoxious behaviour readily become viable alternative means of livelihood.³⁵ The literature has shown us the magnitude of insecurity in Nigeria the question is: what should be done to minimize such? In a way of conclusion, we will try to make some suggestions.

Conclusion and the Way Forward.

The impact of insecurity in Nigeria are numerous as observed by Eme and Anthony. Such include: social dislocation and population displacement, hostility between indigenes and settlers, dislocation and disruption of family and communal life atmosphere of mistrust, fear, anxiety and frenzy dehumanization of women, children especially in the area of rape, child abuse and neglect, deepening of hunger and poverty, atmosphere of political insecurity and instability, declining confidence in the political leadership and apprehension about the system.³⁶ A country that in its budgetary allocations where education receives the least is bound to face crime and insecurity. Education seems to be the major key that can unlock every door of crime in the society. It solves both social, political and career problems. It addresses conflict, empower the individual with knowledge, skills to read and write and what the individual can do to learn, earn and eat. Illiteracy leads to insecurity and conflicts. The literate person can easily participate in all the spheres of life and become conversant with what is happening around.

No doubt that education will do all the things listed above but the major issue lies with the perception of Nigerians towards the core value of sanctity of life. Do we still have much value to the sanctity of life and the dead? Do Nigerians still realise that we are not the creator of life? It appears to us that many Nigerians think less or nothing at all about the living how much more the dead. Until the core value of sanctity of life is enshrined in ourselves, the threat of insecurity will continue to face us. The recommendations are embedded in what we regard as the way forward. 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

and in comprehending the environment and in the development of appropriate attitude, skills, abilities and competencies.

In such a curriculum, education should be based on solid moral principles which will lead to the formation of 'good' human beings for the development of the society. With this, education will not only be functional and sustainable but also leads to the development of all round individual. Through such individual, people's attitudes and desires will be geared towards positive direction and challenges of insecurity will be drastically minimized. The practical aspect of vocational education will be emphasised. This will go a long way to strengthening the 'grammar' type of education currently being practiced. Emphasis on 'grammar' type of education is on theoretical aspect while the practical aspect is almost ignored.

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