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Relevance of Security in Human Development in Nigeria Education System

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Abstract

Insecurity appears to be the biggest problem Nigeria is currently facing apart from poverty and corruption. All over the country, the insecurity level is very alarming. Unfortunately, all the promises by successive governments in the country to end insecurity appear to be mere lip talks as nobody seems to be safe anymore. Just as in Thomas Hobbes state of nature where man was in constant fear of his fellow man, the situation in the country is not much different. Consequently, we have cases of insurgency, terrorism, ritualism, armed robbery, killer herdsmen, agitation, etc. Many lives have been lost, businesses affected, some schools shut down and education has been affected terribly in the process. Education, being the light without which a nation's citizens will be in darkness, cannot thrive in an insecure environment. It is education that produces right manpower which helps to drive development in any society. The absence of this makes the nation deficient in manpower that can assist in building the country. In view of these, the paper analytically attempts to elucidate the meaning and relevance of security in any society as well as causes and implications of insecurity; especially to the Nigerian education sector. The paper has also been strengthened by Thomas Hobbes Theory on the State of Nature. A major suggestion thus postulated is that every effort should be channeled toward securing our education at all levels in the country. For instance, federal government should partner with all state governments in the country to tackle insecurity. Also, state governments should have a blue, print of their own in handling insecurity. Equally, there should be adequate security parameters in all our schools. Likewise, school administrators and heads should be security conscious and ensure that their security measures are constantly updated.

Introduction

For the past 8 years, Nigeria's security challenges appear to have worsened with her education system increasingly threatened on daily basis. News of abductions of students in schools and unexplainable killings are no longer new; with instances such as the kidnap of 276 school girls in Chibok (2014) by Boko Haram; the abduction of 39 students of the Federal College of Forestry Mechanization in Mando, Kaduna State on Thursday the 11th of March, 2021; the murder of Dr Chike Akunyili – widower of late Prof Dora Akunyili by unknown gun – men near Onitsha in Anambra State on the 29th of September, 2021; and more recently, the killing of 40 people in Sokoto market by bandits on the 19th October, 2021. There are also cases of insurgents, terrorists, armed robbers, killer herdsmen, agitations, cultists, ritualists, kidnappers, rapists, extortionists, etc disturbing different parts of the country. These are very worrisome, putting people in panicky mood and threatening to destroy the country. Likewise, it is difficult to study or have meaningful development in places where insecurity is prevalent. Rather, what one experiences is underdevelopment and backwardness.

The idea of human development is derived partly from developing the learner (Emenu, 2015). Similarly, human development is a fulcrum to natural development. This implies that as individuals are trained (e.g. in schools), they graduate into useful persons in the society who make meaningful contributions toward the development of the society. Thus, the more developed humans we have, the more developed the country becomes (Amaele, 2010).

Defining Security

In defining security, Alamika (2006:1) asserted that security is the “absence of threats to (a) the sovereign powers and territorial integrity of a nation; (b) the capability of a country's government; (c) safety of the person and property of citizens, and (d) freedom of citizens from oppressive rule, economic exploitation, discrimination and exclusion, diseases, homelessness, starvation, ignorance and illiteracy, environmental degradation and all other forms of structural and criminal violence. It is also considered as protection from danger, fear, violence and want that harm or is capable of impairing the full development and wellbeing of citizens.

Security is in both objective and subjective dimensions. The objective dimension shows the extent of security or insecurity of individuals, families, communities, societies, classes, nations and humanity while the subjective dimension of security pertains to feeling of security or insecurity by individuals, groups and nations. However, both dimensions are interrelated (Brinkerhoff, Fredell & Frideres, 1997; Oroka, 2009).

Just like security that has its dimensions, insecurity has its dimension; the most significant ones being:

- i. Physical insecurity as in violent personal and property crimes;
- ii. Economic insecurity as in poverty and unemployment;
- iii. Public insecurity such as violent conflicts, terrorism and insurgency;
- iv. Social insecurity such as illiteracy, ignorance, malnutrition, illnesses, water borne diseases, discrimination, hatred and exclusion;
- v. Political insecurity such as denial of good and social democratic governance; and

- vi. Human rights violations as in denial of fundamental rights by state and non-state actors (Alamika, 2006).

The dimensions of security are inter connected and cannot be treated in isolation. Also, the UNDP report of 1994 classified human security into seven components; namely food, economic, health, personal, community environmental and political. Kaffi Anan, a two term UN former secretary General had this to say on security:

Today we know that "security" means far more than the absence of conflict. We know that lasting peace requires a broader vision encompassing area 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 (Koffi, 1998:13).

According to Ejiogu (2000), a symbiotic relationship exists between education and security in the sense that insecurity undermines education just as low quality education for citizens constitute a constraint in the quest for sustainable security in multifaceted dimensions encapsulated in human security designs. For instance, in the United States of America, an education-military complex aids military-industrial complex. Their education system supports their security dreams just as their close security networks/ operations provide a safe atmosphere for learning. Again, many conflicts arise from ignorance and manipulation of ethnical and religious identity whereas education facilitates tolerant and civil citizens who are able to understand and live with people from different ethnic, economic, religious and cultural backgrounds among others.

Also, a lot of persons apprehended for criminal behaviours lack high education which frequently influence their criminality; their vulnerability to living conditions that subject them to serious scrutiny as well as their inability to prevent detection, arrest, trial and conviction. Low education is also demonstrated in the absence of competitive skill, sufficient income, exclusion from participation in essential economic, political and social organizations and relations; poor access to adequate food and nutrition, shelter, healthcare and efficient public emergency and safety services- all of which are core elements of human security. It is further observed that children with low education are more likely to be recruited as thugs, insurgents and terrorists through indoctrination. Lack of education thus is itself insecurity and is a source of vulnerability to other forms of insecurity (Alamika, 2006; Dowrick, Dunlop & Quiggin, 2003). In addition, a country with poor standard of education will lack citizens that can produce or manage competencies and resources that are needed for developing and sustaining relevant and strong institutions and leaders for national development.

Thomas Hobbes Theory of State of Nature

Insecurity has always been a threat to the existence of mankind. In his theory of the state of nature, Thomas Hobbes, a famous philosopher, born in 1651, said that from the beginning, man had been in conflict with his fellow man. At that time, there were no laws, no sense of justice

and injustice, no authority, no notion of right and wrong. Humans simply went after their self-interest and desires. Thus, in an attempt to satisfy their appetites, men clashed, quarreled and fought among themselves (Oputa, 2018).

Thus, there was continual conflict in the state of nature; a state of war and insecurity among men (Dewey, 1968). Men opposed each other; conflicts, struggles and wars prevailed. People actually lived in constant danger and fear of death. There was no definite ownership of anything by anyone; whatever anybody could grab was his as long as he was able to retain it; a stronger person could come and snatch it from him and become the owner until someone else does the same. In this state, according to Thomas Hobbes, there were no progress, peace, development, account of time, and accurate knowledge. Life was, nasty, brutish and short (Papineau, 2014).

It is important to note that in any society where people are faced with insecurity, there will be problems. Likewise, developments are affected in such places as there will either be stagnation or retardation of progress earlier made. Again, citizens depend on their leaders for guide; and in the absence, of these, they become disappointed.

Causes of Insecurity

Insecurity can be caused by so many factors arising from the actions and inactions as well as complicity of individuals, groups, government and external forces. Some of them are as a result of:

1. Over emphasis on acquisition of wealth and power without giving corresponding attention to self – discipline, integrity, hard work and accountability; giving rise to widespread corruption and fraud, deviate behaviours, armed and violent crimes to acquire wealth and power, competition and violent conflicts among students, academic staff, individuals, groups and government bodies (Chukwunta, 1983).
2. Lack of political will which led to failing to maintain professional lecturers, well-equipped and effective and accountable security agencies to prevent or control the country's security challenges during their evolution.
3. Lack of political will by government agencies and officials who have the duty to develop and implement plan to deal with criminality, violence, ethno religious conflicts, corruption, illegal mining, illegal oil bunkering and other forms of insecurity.
4. Culture of impunity entrenched in university system where wrong doers are not apprehended and dealt with appropriately (Bednotes, 2014).
5. Widespread poverty in the society over the past three decades.
6. Proliferation of ethnic militias involved in spreading ethnic intolerance, hatred, violence and xenophobia.
7. Proliferation of religious sects involved in spreading religious intolerance and violence in the country.
8. Proliferation of illegal arms and ammunition in Nigeria.
9. Decline in the quality of governance at all levels which result in lack of patriotism, professionalism, justice, capacity and effectiveness in planning, decision – making and service delivery by all tiers of government.

10. Manipulation and co-optation of religion and ethnicity into the perpetration and perpetuation of bad governance (Bech, 1971).
11. Culture of violent and fraudulent elections that produce incompetent, corrupt, unaccountable and non-responsive government that rule without legitimacy but impunity encourage violent reactions from students including formation of ethnic and religious militias as well as organized criminal groups.
12. Persistent high rate of youth unemployment and diminishing opportunities along with growing disillusionment with the country which leads to increasing recruitment and involvement of young persons in economic – related crimes such as cybercrimes, kidnapping, robbery, ethno- religious conflicts, insurgency and terrorism.
13. Widespread insecurity in the society, including political and ethno- religious violence.
14. Rising tide of ethnic and religious bigotry in society that undermines fairness, scholarship, accountability, harmony, productivity discipline and effective administration on the campuses.
15. Decline in intellectual discourse and commitment which lead to the widespread activities of uncivil ethnic, religious and cult groups on the campuses through which conflicts and violence are perpetrated (Emenu, 2015).
16. Decline in the quality of hostels facilities, administration and relationship.
17. Extreme pressure on staff and students to conclude lectures, grade papers and release result in spite of requisite quantity and quality of lecturers, classrooms, offices, library, spaces, internet services as well as relevant journals and books.
18. Frequent increase and multiple levies without enough consultation and corresponding services by schools.
19. Excessive admission and overcrowding of lecture rooms, hostels and libraries (Ilori, 1994).
20. Preponderance of admission of students through influence peddling, corruption, primordial considerations and racketeering instead of merit which resulted in majority of students lacking the necessary discipline, capacity and motivation for study in the university and turning to crime and cult.
21. Off – residence by majority of the students facilitates easy infiltration of campuses by criminals and extremists to commit crimes and terrorists' attacks, indoctrinate and recruit students and staffs.
22. Connivance between groups within outside school campuses to influence decisions with regards to the appointment of principal officers, employment of staff and admissions of students.
23. Undue interference in the autonomy and affairs of schools by external supervisory or oversight bodies (Ibekwe, 2015).
24. Inconsistency in education policies and ineffective oversight of schools by relevant regulatory agencies. Ineffective security services in the schools.
26. Academic incest – excessive recruitment of former students and their family members undermine quality, innovation, discipline and create a system of patronage that fuel conflict.

27. Violent and non- violent disruption of activities by student and staff unions, compounded by impunity and absence of efficient, accountable and responsive university management. (Enoh, 2009).
28. Ethnic and religious intolerance and violence worsened by nepotism and other primordial considerations by school administration in recruitment, appointment and promotions, student admissions and discipline of staff and students.
29. Absence of good governance culture causes impunity which includes government failures to respect agreements with staff unions, adequately fund education, ensure effective oversight of the finances, decisions, policies and performances of schools; which is responsible for conflict- generation environment and disruption actions in the education sector (Bebibiafiai, 2003).
30. Failure of school administration to promptly, transparently and adequately address grievances by staffs and students' unions.

Implications of Insecurity

Insecurity in Nigerian education system has severe implications; some of which are:

1. Decline of quality of education which is associated with erosion of integrity; high failure rates; lack of skilled personnel required for driving the economic, political and social development of the country as well as the decline in international competitiveness of Nigerian education. (Chukwu, 2008).
2. Decline in ethical conducts such as excellence, incorruptibility, fairness, tolerance, justice, hard- work and patriotism among scholars and students and the promotion of vices such as corruption, mediocrity, discrimination, nepotism, incompetence, ethno-religious intolerance and violence as well as political fraud which threaten national peace and development.
3. Incessant attacks leading to unrest, death and injuries. One of the instances is the terrorist attack during Sunday worship in Bayero University in Kano on the 29th of April, 2012 where many students and lecturers were killed (about 20) and others injured. This kind of attack is common in many of our schools particularly those in the northern parts of the country.
4. Destruction of school infrastructure and disruption of activities by staff and students on demonstration (Bednotes, 2014).
5. Kidnapping of students. In April 2014, over 250 female students were kidnaped by terrorists in Chibok.
6. Disruptions of academic administration by demonstrations and strikes by staff and students' unions severally as a result of absence of effective and responsive dispute resolution mechanisms;
7. Declining quality of education due to closure of school, displacement and shortage of lecturers. Some lecturers left the University of Maiduguri because of Boko Haram insurgency; also some crucial academic and administrative activities, including defence of Theses are sometimes moved to its Abuja Liaison Office (Akinpelu, 1983).

8. Disruption of effective learning, teaching, research and administration by terrorists.
9. Gender inequality as a result of withdrawal or non-enrolment of females or recruitment of males as combatant by government forces or rebel and terrorist groups (Amaele, 2010).
10. Decline in enrolment in areas engulfed by insecurity. Violent conflicts, insurgency and terrorism in Nigeria if not combatted in time, may cause or aggravate educational inequality between communities within and outside conflict zones.
11. Inability to attract qualified students and lecturers from within an outside Nigeria, due to fear of crime and violence on campuses and in the country.
12. Interrupted and shortened school year due to riots on campus and community. Many staff and students have been killed or injured during various violent conflicts and terrorist attacks between 2014 and now; which call for serious thinking.

Conclusion

A nation prospers only where security thrives. In the absence of security, all the sectors in the country suffer including education. There is no sensible parent who will want to send his child to a school in an insecure environment. Equally, no sensible government will want schools to be on-going in the midst of insecurity; hence, the relevance of security in human development cannot be fully measured. Being that education is the success tank behind every sector's success in the country, when the education sector suffers, all other sectors suffer. It thus means that the issue of security should be thoroughly and adequately tackled by all in the society to ensure a hitch – free and conducive atmosphere / environment for learning in schools. Both the governments (federal and states) and other education stakeholders should synergize to actualize this. Very interestingly, schools present unique opportunities for students to learn essential values such as honesty, truth – telling, chastity, respect for persons and constituted authorities, industry, cooperation / unity, etc. Such students are also taught to eschew worthless vices such as killings, banditry, armed robbery, corruption, worldliness, greed, cultism, ritualism, hatred, internet and cyber-crime, etc.

Solutions / Suggestions

With what is ongoing in the country, all hands must be on deck to tackle insecurity. Consequently, the following are suggested:

1. Federal government should partner with all state governments in the country to tackle insecurity.
2. State governments should have a blueprint of their own in handling insecurity.
3. There should be adequate security parameters in all our schools.
4. School administrators and heads should be security conscious and ensure that their security measures are constantly updated.
5. There should be adequate policing in our society.
6. Students should be trained on security measures they can use individually when the need arises.

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