

CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF INSECURITY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Secondary schools in Nigeria need a peaceful atmosphere devoid of violence or any form of insecurity to ensure quality teaching and learning. For secondary schools to achieve their goals as stipulated in national policy on Education, the school environment must be friendly and conducive both for the teachers and the students. The study provides the causes and the effects of insecurity in Secondary Schools in Nigeria. For the purpose of effective study, the concepts of school environment, students and insecurity were elaborately highlighted. The study equally observed the role of parents in combating the menace of insecurity in secondary schools. It was recommended among other things that students should be taught the dangers and effects of insecurity in their academic pursuit especially during school moral instruction; security education as a subject should be made compulsory for both junior and secondary students in all secondary schools in Nigeria and school management should make maximum effort to ensure that school rules and regulations are well implemented in secondary schools.

Introduction

Within 10 years, secondary schools in Nigeria have taken another dimension especially, the rise of insecurity witnessed so far within school environment. A situation where teachers and school management are afraid of students in their schools. It has been observed that modern technology has negatively empowered the younger generation into involving in all manner of atrocities. The use of phones has introduced a lot of evil activities to the extent that students are no longer afraid of their teacher and parents. Some of the students smoke Indian helm; some are drug addicts, some are kidnappers, armed robbers, some belong to one cultism or the other; some are into human track-finking etc (Osaat & Ekechukwu, 2021).

There are cases of rape among students. These 21st century students are no longer afraid of their parents, principals and teachers. During school riots, or violent demonstration students carry dangerous weapons and ready to kill their fellow students. Some go as far as destroying school properties. One begins to wonder the type of education we are running in Nigeria. The authenticity of our education becomes questionable. Such cannot happen in developed countries where students are civilized and they have sound moral values. There can never be proper education where students have constituted themselves to all manner of evil vices. As earlier

pointed out that insecurity among students is partly caused by the level of corruption and moral decadence in the society.

Generally, for some time now, Nigeria's security challenges appear to have worsened with her secondary school education system increasingly threatened on daily basis. News of abductions of students in schools are no longer new: with instances such as the kidnapping of 276 school girls in Chibok (2014) by Boko Haram and very recently, the abduction of 344 male students of the Government Science Secondary. Kankara Katsina State on the 11th of December. 2020 as well as the abduction of 27 students from GSS College, Kagara. Niger State on 17th February, 2021 (the guardian.com). There are also cases of cultism, rape, drug abuse, extortion, killer herdsmen, agitation, ritualism, kidnapping, etc in the society leading to fear and tension among citizens.

Secondary Education

Secondary education is the level of education after graduation from primary school. It is the level of education in-between primary and university education. Secondary education is very important level of education because it prepares its recipients for university education or vocational level of training. This level of education must be protected and sustained. This level is characterized by distractions and influences either positive or negative. It is normally a time of indecision by the students who are faced with diverse opinion. Juvenile delinquency is normally encountered by people within this level of education.

It should be noted that crimes committed at this level may not be taken to the law court because the children are seen as under-aged or minor. Therefore, secondary school level should not be allowed to be destroyed by terrorist, cultists and other criminal elements in our society. School administrators, government at various levels to look for strategies of reducing insecurity in secondary schools in Nigeria. There should be powerful strategies and series of planned actions to achieve secured learning environment for our students in secondary schools (Sambo, 2013)

Concept of Students

Student is primarily a person enrolled in a school or other educational institutions and who is under learning with goals of acquired knowledge, developing professions and achieving employment at desired field. In the broader sense, a student is anyone who applies themselves to the intensive intellectual engagement with some matter necessary to master as part of some practical affair in which such mastery is basic or decisive.

In the United Kingdom and most common wealth countries, the term "student" denotes those enrolled in secondary schools and higher institutions like University, Colleges of Education or Polytechnics. But the major target here is, students in Secondary Schools ranging from Junior Secondary to Senior Secondary.

This level of education has some objectives as stipulated in the national policy on education which include: to provide trained manpower in applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades; to provide entrepreneurial, technical and vocational job –specific skills for self-reliance, economic development; to inspire students with the desire for self-improvement

and achievement of excellence; to raise morally upright and well-adjusted individuals who can think independently and rationally with respect to the views and feelings of others appreciate the dignity of labour; to foster patriotism, national unity and security education with emphasis on the common ties inspite of our diversity and others (FRN, 2014).

All these objectives are achievable if there arise no security challenges as we keep witnessing in Nigeria, especially in secondary schools. In a situation where there is tension, and fear, everybody including the students are afraid of their lives, then, to achieve these laudable objectives becomes impossible. Being that secondary students have grown to the level of understanding the implication of their actions and the effect of insecurity, they should not just be allowed to continue to perpetrate evil. Plans should be made by school administrators and the government to handle insecurity in secondary schools students and schools are now the most affected people especially on the issue of abduction, ritual killing, rape cases, armed robbery, cult clashes etc.

Concept of Security and Insecurity

There are different forms of insecurity in the world today. Various countries of the world are challenged either by natural disaster or human vices. These have hampered industrialization and sustainable development especially in developing countries like Nigeria and other African countries. In defining insecurity, one can assert that it is the presence of threat to (a) the sovereign powers and territorial integrity of a nation; (b) safety of the person and property of citizens (c) the capability of a country's government as well as (d) freedom of citizens from oppressive rule. Insecurity means the feeling of not being safe, having fear of being hurt or harmed by other people. Generally, insecurity manifests itself in violence, criminal activities, discrimination and exclusion, economic exploitation, loss of life and property, diseases, starvation, homelessness, ignorance, and illiteracy, environmental degradation, fear and tension, and every other form of structural and criminal violence. It is also considered as lack of protection from danger, fear, violence and those harmful situations that are capable of imparting the full development and wellbeing of citizens (Ojukwu 2017, Miller & Cunnighan, 2011)

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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 (Brinkerhooff, Fredell & Friders, 1997; Oroka, 2009).

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

- a. Physical insecurity as in violent personal and property crimes;
- b. Economic insecurity as in poverty and unemployment;
- c. Public insecurity such as violent conflicts, terrorism and insurgency;
- d. Social insecurity such as illiteracy, ignorance, malnutrition, illnesses, water borne diseases, discrimination, hatred and exclusion;
- e. Political insecurity such as denial of good and social democratic governance and
- f. 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. Koffi Anan a two term UN former secretary General has 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).

Causes of Insecurity in Secondary Schools in Nigeria

There are numerous causes of insecurity in schools. Insecurity in schools can be caused by so many factors arising from the actions and inactions as well as complicity of individual students, groups, school management, hosting community, government and external forces.

Some of them are:

- ❖ We are in a time when there is 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, deviant 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).
- ❖ Poor supervision and monitoring of students in terms of holding arms and dangerous weapons in school compounds.
- ❖ Poor response by security personnel especially during crisis moment or the emergency situations in secondary schools.
- ❖ There is greater need for well-equipped, effective and accountable security agencies to prevent or control the country security challenges during their evolution.
- ❖ Culture of impunity entrenched in school system where wrong doers are not apprehended and dealt with appropriately (Bednote, 2014).
- ❖ Widespread poverty in the society over the past three decades.
- ❖ Proliferation of ethnic militias involved in spreading ethnic intolerance, hatred, violence and xenophobia.

- ❖ Lack of political will by government agencies and officials who have the duty to develop and implement plan to deal with criminality, violent ethno religious conflicts, corruption, cybercrimes, illegal oil bunkering and other forms of insecurity.
- ❖ Widespread insecurity in the society, including political and ethno-religious violence.
- ❖ Manipulation and co-optation of religion and ethnicity into the perpetration and perpetuation of bad governance (Bech, 1971).
- ❖ Culture of violent and fraudulent elections that produce incompetent, corrupt, unaccountable and non-responsive government that rule without legitimacy but impunity to encourage violent reactions from students including formation of ethnic and religious militias as well as organized criminal groups.
- ❖ 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 conflict, insurgency and terrorism.
- ❖ Proliferation of religious sects involved in spreading religious intolerance and violence in the country.
- ❖ Proliferation of illegal arms and ammunition in Nigeria.
- ❖ Lack of respect to professionalism and meritocracy in terms of position and employment.
- ❖ Manipulation of students' scores during exams and forging of academic results and certificates even by those at the corridors of power.
- ❖ Appointment of educational officers through what do have nepotism and bribery.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Decline in the quality of school facilities, administration and relationship.
- ❖ Extreme pressure on staff and students to conclude lectures, grade papers and release result in spite of requisite quantity and quality of teachers, classrooms, offices, library, space, internet services as well as relevant journals and books.
- ❖ Frequent increase and multiple levies without enough consultation and corresponding services in schools.
- ❖ Excessive admission and overcrowding of lecture rooms, hostels and libraries (Ilori, 1994).
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Rising tide of ethnic and religious bigotry in society that undermines fairness, scholarship, accountability, harmony, productivity, discipline and effective administration on the campuses.
- ❖ Decline in intellectual discourse and commitment which lead to the widespread activities of unveil ethnic, religious and cult groups on the campuses through which conflicts and violence are perpetrated (Emenu, 2015).

- ❖ Inability of school management to punish students who perpetuate evils in school. For education to be effective, school management should ensure that discipline is maintained at all time.
- ❖ Lack of proper supervision of students by school management. Students should be properly monitored to checkmate assesses while in school.
- ❖ Inability and weakness of the school management to implement school rules and regulations. There must be guiding principles otherwise, school environment becomes a den of lions.
- ❖ Parent's inability to report the wrong doings of their children to the school management for necessary disciplinary actions.
- ❖ Lack of perimeter fencing around the school compound to prevent intruders and hoodlums into the school.
- ❖ Lack of school gate and security personnel at the school gate at least to monitor and control unnecessary movement of the students and visitors.

School Environment

School environment should be of a priority in all ramification. The school environment where learning takes place is very fundamental in the promotion of education, hence the need for it to be secured at all times. If the school environment is not safe both teaching and learning becomes difficult. According to Obi, Johnson and Lawani (2014), the school environment represents all human and material resources available in the school, in which a child can see, hear, touch, smell, taste, feel and respond to. Likewise, Miller and Cunnighan (2011), maintained that school environment is multi-dimensional since it possesses the physical, social and academic dimension. They listed the physical dimension to include the appearance of school building and classrooms, laboratories, libraries, hostels, sporting games and recreational facilities. Others include instructional materials, school size and ratio of student –teacher in the classroom. Also are the order and organization of classroom in the school the position of chalk or white board and the availability of resources to afford safety and comfort. They treated the social dimension aspect as relationship as in the quality of interpersonal relationship between and amongst students, teachers and administrators, equitable and fair treatment of students by teachers and staff the degrees of competition and social comparison amongst students and the degree to which students and teachers contribute to the decision-making process of the school. The scholars equally added that the academic dimensions of the school environment include the quality of instruction given to the students and the teachers' expectations for good achievements from students.

School environment for (or climate) also refers to the way students and staff feel about being at school each day. It could be regarded as the setting in which young people can learn a sense of membership in and obligation to a group (Glew, fan, Katon, Rivera & Kernic, 2005). It is expected that people will be more concerned about fellow students and more inclined to dissuade them from engaging in behaviours that might endanger themselves or others in such an environment.

According to Ejiogu (2000), a symbiotic relationship exists between education and security in the sense that insecurity undermines/relegates 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 example, in the United States of America, an education-military complex encourages military-industrial complex. Their education system supports their security dreams just as their close security networks offers a safe atmosphere for learning. Again, a lot of 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.

Furthermore, in a school environment characterized by insecurity, failure, poor quality education and lateness to school are the norm and students are allowed to freely use handsets and phones. Yearly, the external results of the school are always bad as a result of poor teaching climate as having been shown by recent WAEC results. Other instances of insecurity may include that sometimes, female staff and students complain of being raped or impregnated leading to school dropout. Likewise, parents complain that their children are bullied and injured and the classrooms are overcrowded, poorly ventilated and lit (Ojukwu & Nwanna, 2015). These tendencies may most likely affect student's academic performance. Thus, the levels at which the aforementioned variables can positively interact with each other in the school environment will usually help to make or mar teaching and learning (Ojukwu, 2017). The result is that it produces effectiveness in the classroom, enhances student's cooperation and learning promote love and efficient planning by the school authorities where it is positive and vice versa where it is negative. The negative impact may further help to encourage low academic performance.

There is also cultism in our secondary schools which is on the increase; due to its harmful effect. According to Dengain Onete (2020), cultism has led to the destruction of human, infrastructural and economic resources. He further claimed that cultism has elicited a serious challenge to human and material resources development including school achievement across the country. For instance, in schools where cultist activities prevail student's graduation may be prolonged due to disruption of academic calendar. This implies that the business of learning on the part of the Nigerian child is negatively affected. Apparently, cultism promotes calamity of human and development as thousands of students lose their lives and property worth millions of naira are destroyed during clashes (Dominic, 2018). The frequent cultist's activities in many of our secondary schools have appeared as a cancer that breeds fear, panic and psychological disequilibrium which in turn affects the learning of our students resulting in low academic achievement. Hence, the continuous activities of cultists in schools are threatening the unity, peace and love among students paving the way for conflicts of different degree and magnitude.

Members of secret cults have signs and symbols that may not be meaningful to outsiders except themselves and are mostly recruited through application, invitation or by force (Denga & Denga 1998); while some of them are lured into it on the excuse of holding a party particularly for new students in undisclosed venues. Such activities are often nocturnal. Also, the members behave in ways that are despicable in the society. These cultist are involved in special rituals in order for them to be initiated and promoted from one level to another use dangerous weapons such as guns, axes, cutlasses, charms, black juju, daggers, swords among others to perpetuate their evil deeds

on their fellow students/human beings; thereby causing panic and fear, and sometimes anxiety among learners in a school environment (Adebayo, 2013).

Furthermore, a lot of persons apprehended for criminal behaviours lack high education which frequently influence their criminality their vulnerability to living conditions that subject them in serious scrutiny and their inability to prevent detection, arrest, trial as well as conviction. Low education is also displayed in the absence of competitive skills sufficient.

Effect of Insecurity

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

- 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)
- 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.
- Disruptions of academic administration by demonstrations, agitations, protest and strikes, by staff and students union severally as a result of absence of effective and responsive dispute resolution mechanisms.
- 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 defense of these are sometimes moved to its Abuja Liaison Office (Akinpelu, 1983).
- 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.
- Destruction of school infrastructure and disruption of activities by staff and students on demonstration (Bednotes, 2014).
- Kidnapping of students. In April 2014 over 250 female students were kidnapped by terrorists in Chibok.
- Decline in enrolment in areas engulfed in insecurity. Violent conflicts, insurgency and terrorism in Nigeria if not combated in time, may cause or aggravate educational inequality between communities within and outside conflict zones.
- Disruption of effective learning, teaching, research and administration by terrorists.
- 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).
- Increase in the level of exam malpractice leading to production of unintelligent students who cannot defend the certificate they claim to possess.
- High increase of mad people all over the society caused by addiction to harmful drugs.

- Decline in the respect of school constituted authorities. A situation where students claim equality with teachers and school administrators.
- Flagrant disregard to school rules and regulations. A situation where the laws or policies of the school are trampled upon with impunity.
- Decline in the proper disciplinary measures to correct certain abnormalities in school as it is used to be in the past.
- Closure of schools especially those

The Roles of Parents

Insecurity in schools is both internal and external as observed so far. The internal aspect of insecurity is mostly caused by students who engage in fighting, riot, violent demonstrations where they carry dangerous weapons; it can be cult clashes between two cult groups showed their power of supremacy or revengeful attacks. It is notable that during these vicious activities by the mischievous students, there is tension and fear within the school environment. This is a threat on the lives of the students who should have enjoyed a peaceful atmosphere in their various schools (Ekechukwu & Osaat 2021).

It has been observed that some of these students that wreck havoc in schools have had family background. Their parents are not disciplined and civilized. Such parents encourage their children to perpetrate evil in schools.

However, Ekechukwu and Osaat (2021) are of the opinion that some children from wealthy families are over-pampered to the extent that they become useless in school. Some of them joined cultism while some have no respect to the school authorities since their parents can handle whatever that results from their actions. To this effect, school rules and regulations are no longer effective as they ought to have been in a normal school setting.

Ideally, there should be a synergy between parents and school authorities. Every student in secondary has a family where he came from. For effective training of students in schools, it is the sole responsibilities of parents and school management. Both parties must be actively involved. But unfortunately, parents have abandoned everything for teachers and school management. This is not proper because students do not spend all their time in school.

Through investigations, it has been observed that most parents have been over-pampering their children. Such parents no longer have control over their children. The children do whatever they like without fear or prejudices. Some parents are afraid to report the evil conducts of their children to the school authorities. And when such a child comes to school, he or she begins to commit all manner of atrocities with high level of impunity.

So, it has confirmed that children with low education are more likely to be recruited as thugs, insurgents and terrorists through indoctrination. Limited education thus is itself insecurity and is a source of vulnerability to other forms of insecurity (Alamika, 2006; Dowrick, Dunlop & Oniggin, 2003). A country with poor standard of education will lack citizens that can generate or

manage competencies and resources that are needed for developing and sustaining strong institutions and leaders for national development.

Conclusion

Secondary school level should aim at empowering students with a lot of skill acquisitions which will enable them to be self reliant. This level of education is integral in a child's development and where it is not properly harnessed, the future of such a student will be in jeopardy. When a student is not properly trained in secondary school, it will be difficult for him or her to be discipline if gains admission into and university. In a situation where the atrocities, the tendency that the students will be negatively influenced remains sacrosanct. This is the more reason the parents, teachers and school administrators should focus on the total measures to eradicate insecurity in secondary schools. It will be a collective responsibility to ensure that the futures of secondary school students are secured. The rising cases of insecurity in secondary schools in South Eastern Nigeria can be fully addressed if necessary proper measures are taken. This will go a long way to reposition and re-focus our secondary school students.

Recommendations

- 1) Students should be taught the effect or implication of insecurity in their academic pursuit especially during school moral instructions.
- 2) School management should make maximum effort to ensure that school rules and regulations are well implemented this time around.
- 3) Parents should work in synergy with the school authorities to address the rising cases of insecurity in Secondary Schools.
- 4) The school management should also work harmoniously with security personnel in order to restore conducive learning environment in secondary schools
- 5) Effort must be made by teachers and school management to discipline, suspend or expel any students who perpetrate insecurity in school.
- 6) Parents should not hesitate to report to the school management the negative behavior or evil conducts of their children at home for proper disciplinary measures to be taken.
- 7) Security education should be made compulsory for junior and Senior classes in all secondary schools in Nigeria.

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