

# INSECURITY AND QUALITY OF NIGERIAN TERTIARY EDUCATION

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## **Abstract**

This paper titled “Insecurity and Quality of Nigerian Education” discusses how Nigeria as a nation can achieve national security through, not just education, but qualitative education. National security has been described in this paper, as freedom from or resilience against potential harm caused by others. The purpose of this study is to examine how insecurity affects the quality of Nigerian tertiary education and to propose some possible solutions these problems. No nation can attain development in all ramifications in the absence of peace, justice and security. The level of insecurity challenges in Nigeria has assumed an alarming dimension that does not only require a narrow approach in tackling it but a multi-dimensional approach. Matters of safety and security remain an integral part of any human society irrespective of size and structure. The impact of this massive sense of insecurity in tertiary institutions and indeed other similar sectors cannot be overestimated. The paper maintains that, unless Nigeria's education is reformed in such a manner that it will make youths to be self-reliant, the end of insecurity perpetrated by youths is not yet insight. The paper recommends that, the federal government should formulate the and effectively implement policies and programmes capable of addressing the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria such as high level of illiteracy, poverty, unemployment among others. It also recommends that, there is need for a quality education for the masses which is the key.

## **Introduction**

In the contemporary world, the security of life and property remains significant to the socio-economic survival of any given society. To achieve that, the government owns the responsibility of adequately providing security in a given social formation. Security is the most vital element in human life. Without it, social, economic, and political achievements cannot be attained. Every nation struggles to protect and deepen its core values, aimed at enabling people to lead their lives in free and secure environments according to their shared common beliefs by preserving their national interest, identity and sovereignty. Rising of insecurity is on the verge of being Nigeria's heritage as no single day goes by without acts of insecurity<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Osakwe, N. R. Achieving National Security and Development through Quality Education in Nigeria, *Research Journal in Education*, 19(1), 80-83. (2013).

The high level of insecurity in Nigeria has become a social problem and a hydra-headed monster that cannot be over-emphasized because of its far-reaching implications and direct consequences on education, the economy and society in general. Most worrisome is the emerging new forms insecurity challenges in contemporary Nigeria which have taking a disturbing dimension to the extent that it has almost crippled the various sectors, especially the education sector in Nigeria.

### **Education**

Education has been defined as a process by which individuals are assisted formally through proper direction and guidance to develop their capacities for their own benefit and that of the society. It is geared towards developing the individuals for them to live effectively and efficiently in the society and to contribute to its advancement and upliftment. Hence, through education the behaviour patterns of the citizens could be changed in the desired direction. In other words, with sound education people will start to understand and appreciate one another better and try to restore the dignity of man. Hence, we have to recognize the role education plays in equipping individuals with requisite knowledge and skills for survival and societal progress<sup>2</sup>.

### **National Security**

We cannot define national security without, first of all, conceptualising the word security. Wikipedia defined security as freedom from, or resilience against, potential harm (or other unwanted coercive change) caused by others<sup>3</sup> described this term security as a total peaceful state of mind of an individual, the group, the state, the nation at a particular point in time and space. The reason here is that it may not be an absence of violence or some sort of physical assault or some disruptions but a relative peace that can guarantee quality life and social cohesion for survival of the individual group or nation.

From the above definitions, one can deduce that security is perceived in terms of protecting the generality of the people and it is a collective responsibility of the government and the people. Hence, the notion of community policing has become a recurrent decimal in security parlance in Nigeria. From the definitions above, security therefore can mean the state of being free from danger, risk or threat. It covers freedom from anxiety, fear, the safety of a state or organisation against criminal activities and attacks such as terrorism, theft or espionage.<sup>4</sup> The security interests of any nation therefore include safety of lives and properties, economic, physiological, mental well-being and the freedom to pursue the attainment of objectives without hindrance.<sup>5</sup>

The term National Security became prominent in Nigerian society during the upheavals that followed the political imbroglio of 1966 which heralded the Nigerian civil war, beginning from 1967-1970. It gained ascendancy and became a household parlance in our polity at the

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<sup>2</sup>Anadi, C. C. "Governments and Education in Nigeria: Concern for Sustainable National Development": *Issues in Education, Government and Development*. Benin-City: Institute of Education, University of Benin. (2008).

<sup>3</sup>(<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>) 2013.

<sup>4</sup>Ogheneakoke, E.C. "Social Studies and National Security" in W.P. Akpochafo and D.I.Mezieobi(ed.),*Social Studie and National Security in Nigeria*, Enugu; Oshilo Consults. (2014).

<sup>5</sup>Otoibhi, B. "Resolving National Security Challenges": Our Reader, July 5<sup>th</sup> 2012.

return to civil democracy in 1999, following the withdrawal of the military from the active politics and governance of the country.

In the opinion of Brown,<sup>6</sup> national security is the ability to preserve the nation's physical integrity and territory, to maintain its economic relations with the rest of the world on reasonable terms, to preserve its nature, institutions and governance from outside disruption and to control its borders. Also, national security is a condition where our most cherished values and beliefs, our democratic way of life, our institutions of governance and our unity, welfare and well-being as a nation and people are permanently protected and continuously enhanced. It is the requirement to maintain the survival of the nation through the use of quality education, economic power, military and political power, diplomacy and power projection. It can be described as the aggregation of the security interest of the individuals, political entities, human associations and ethnic groups which make up the nation.<sup>7</sup> Succinctly put, national security is the security of a nation state, including its citizens, economy and institutions, which is regarded as a duty of government<sup>8</sup>

National security therefore refers to policy enacted by governments to ensure the survival and safety of the nation-state, including but not limited to the exercise of diplomatic, economic and military power in both peace and war. In other words, it means the freedom from foreign domination which is the sine-qua-non for the sustenance of the state through the instrumentality of economic, diplomacy, power projection and political power.

### **Insecurity.**

Insecurity is just the opposite of what we have as security. Insecurity like security is often used in a number of ways. Many people would take it to mean lack of safety or the existence of danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of trust; doubtful; inadequately guarded or protected; lack of stability; disturbed; lack of protection and unsafe<sup>9</sup>. Insecurity will make you lose trust, be frightened, unsettled, oppressed, lose focus be devastated and lose your humanity.

Adebajoke<sup>10</sup> opined that insecurity is the state of being subject in every respect to terror, threat, risk, molestation, bullying, harassment, etc. Insecurity, for example, can be conceived as a threat to the state that often accounted for the arms and nuclear weapons race to protect the state.

According to the Oxford dictionary insecurity is the state of being unsafe or insecure or a state of mind characterized by self-doubt and vulnerability. It can be anything from childhood, disturbing situations, mistreatment and individual fears.

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<sup>6</sup> Brown H. "National Security": <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/nationalsecurity>. Retrieved 7th June, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Osakwe, N. R. Achieving National Security and Development through Quality Education in Nigeria, *Research Journal in Education*, 19(1), 80-83. (2013).

<sup>8</sup> (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>).

<sup>9</sup> Achumba et al, 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Albert, I.O. (2004): *Explaining the security challenges in contemporary Nigeria*. <http://www.fellow%zo.investiture{1}pdf.retrieved12/7/21>

## **Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria**

Nasiru Z. in Nweze<sup>11</sup> have pointed out some causes of insecurity in Nigeria as follows:

### **1. The Menace of Unemployment and Poverty**

It is a fact that unemployment causes poverty and extreme poverty leads to a crime that gives rise to insecurity. Aliyu<sup>12</sup> characterized poverty as a situation in which people live below a defined standard of living income so that individuals and nations are classified and identified as poor. While unemployment is defined as when people are not engaged in meaningful work and are lacking the basic needs of life. Every year, tertiary institutions graduate many students who have been unfortunately thrown into the labour market with no hope for job opportunities in sight. Many become frustrated in an effort to keep mind and body together and engage in violent and criminal acts such as lucrative kidnapping, militancy and armed robbery. Others have been terrorists' victims and are quickly radicalised.

### **2. Corruption**

Corruption is largely responsible for government failure and systemic infrastructure collapse, resulting in large-scale insecurity in Nigeria. The state of insecurity in Nigeria is unquestionably a result of government failure, traceable to widespread corruption. Corruption is responsible for Nigeria's massive unemployment, it is the reason Nigerian youth and businessmen lack electricity to run their businesses, it is the reason many businesses fail. Unemployment and deprivation are the two main causes of Nigeria's insecurity. By creating unemployment and poverty, corruption leads to instability in Nigeria.

### **3. Weak security apparatus**

Nigeria's security system is seen as very poor in both personnel and equipment. Security officers are poorly trained and poorly remunerated. As a result, the requisite expertise is not available to meet modern security challenges. The contribution of the security personnel to the Nigerian project of ensuring general safety is equally of serious concern. This weak security system can be due to a number of factors including corruption, insufficient police and other security agencies funding, lack of modern equipment, poor safety personnel health and inadequate staff.

### **4. Porous border**

The country's unstable frontiers, where human movements are essentially untracked, have led to Nigeria's level of insecurity. There is an unregulated inflow of small arms and light weapons into the country as a result of the porous borders which has enabled militancy and crime in Nigeria. It is reported that Nigeria hosts over 70% of about 8million illegal weapons that have been used to create a security crisis. In addition, the porous condition of the Nigerian borders has contributed the uncontrollable influx of migrants, predominantly young people, from nearby countries such as the Republic of Niger, Chad and the Republic of Benin

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<sup>11</sup>Nasiru Z. (2020). "Insecurity in Nigeria" Causes and Solutions" Journal of Studies in Social Sciences, Federal University, Dutse.

<sup>12</sup>Aliyu, A. (1998). Nigeria Economic Breakthrough: The Abacha Strategies. Abuja: The Family Economic Advancement Programme.

into the country accountable for some of the insecurity promoting criminal activities in Nigeria.

## **5. Bad governance and poor Leadership**

The fact remains that Nigeria's fundamental cause of insecurity from the past till now is bad governance and poor leadership. Any government anywhere has the primary function of providing basic services such as water, electricity, good road network, quality education, and general infrastructure. Ironically, these basic things are not there in Nigeria and the people, in general, are frustrated and demoralised. Demoralisation and anger logically provide a strong fertile ground for aggression and general insecurity. The scarcity of these basic amenities in Nigeria is embarrassingly not due to a shortage of funds but rather to corruption at the highest level of leadership structure.

### **Insecurity and Quality Of Nigerian Tertiary Education.**

Quality education cannot be achieved in a condition that is characterized with insecurity and violence. Quality education is one that is pedagogically and developmentally sound and educates the student in becoming an active and productive member of society<sup>13</sup>. A quality education is not one that is measured purely by a test score or by how many words per minute one can read but by the environment, the productive level of the learner and its impact of society in the long run. This makes a secured environment an important aspect of achieving quality education in Nigeria. It is an issue that should be seriously tackled as Nigerians look towards building a strong education system, just, democratic and egalitarian society. Although, the issue of insecurity has attracted much public debate over the years, interest in solving the insecurity equation appears to be waning and even when the issue is addressed, little or no attention is paid to the socioeconomic, political implications it may have caused. No society can grow beyond its level of education. Therefore, any nation that is poor in education will invariably be a poor state. Education therefore remains a major catalyst in nation building<sup>14</sup>.

The country Nigeria has witnessed a drastic and frantic insecurity challenges in the last few years. These are in various forms-communal, political, socioeconomic etc. with varying degree of casualty, mostly affecting innocent citizens of the country.

Nigerian tertiary educational institutions were set-up with the aim of providing quality education and to bring about the overall development of society. Statistics has shown that many of the institutions are finding it increasingly difficult to achieve these set out goals as a result of the high level of insecurity in the country<sup>15</sup>. Insecurity has been described as a breach of peace and security whether historical, ethno, religious, civil, political and psychological that have contributed to prevalent conflicts the country has witnessed over the years, resulting to war and destruction and loss of lives and properties, in which the education

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<sup>13</sup>Osakwe, N. R. Achieving National Security and Development through Quality Education in Nigeria, *Research Journal in Education*, 19(1), 80-83. (2013).

<sup>14</sup> UNESCO (2010). *The Quantitative Impact of Conflict on Education*. UNESCO institute for statistics.

<sup>15</sup>Osakwe, N. R. Achieving National Security and Development through Quality Education in Nigeria, *Research Journal in Education*, 19(1), 80-83. (2013).

sector has not been left untouched. He explained further that during the pre-colonial and colonial era, insecurity was a small matter handled mainly by the federal government through the ministry of internal affairs.

The spate of insecurity in Nigeria particularly Northern Nigerian states has literally halted tertiary education to the effect that most students and lecturers alike now learn under fear. This has not only slowed down the level of human capacity building in the states, it has drastically hindered and affected the quality of the delivery of education in the affected institutions.

The following are some of the examples of some of the incidences that just happened recently concerning insecurity in some higher institutions in northern part of Nigeria:

1. Firstly, Federal University Dutsinma in Katsina State was attacked by the armed bandits on 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2023 and the bandits were reported to have kidnapped several students and up to the time of this research, they remained in captivity.
2. Secondly, Federal University Gusau in Zamfara State as well was attacked on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2023. The bandits were reported to have kidnapped more than 24 female students and up to the time of compiling this research, about twenty (20) of them remained in captivity. The incessant kidnappings of students often recorded in parts of these universities in both Katsina and Zamfara States, has left these institutions in desolation as most of the students in these institutions have now overstayed in their programmes, thereby leading to frustration and further breed of insecurity in the state. For example, most students that ought to have proceeded for their several levels, National Youth Service Corps, labour market or marriages, are unable to do so due to delays and fear that was thrown into their minds.
3. Third is another example of an incidence that just happened on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2023. Around 8:00 PM, there was an information concerning another attack by the suspected armed bandits in Usmanu Danfodio University, Sokoto that thrown most of the students in fear which led the students to run helter-skelter in the university and to even outside for their lives. As a result of this, most of the students are currently living in fear of being attacked, the fear that will definitely without doubt affect the quality of their education. There were already several information concerning the movements of the bandits and their attacks in the nearby villages closer to the institution for long.
4. Lastly, in the University I came from by name Umaru Musa Yar'adua University Katsina (UMYUK), which is also nearest to Federal College of Education (FCE) and Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic (HUKPOLY), there were several attacks by the bandits in the nearest villages few kilometers away from these institutions that even led the State government to deploy the military officers to safeguard these areas. There is a presence of military personnel currently in Umaru Musa Yar'adua University safeguarding both male and female hostels as well as the staff quarters. They are also going round day and night in the entire environment. This made most of the students to live in fear of being attacked by the bandits and this fear will without doubt affect the quality of their education.

So, considering the above mentioned examples and several others, one will easily understand that, the students will not be totally focused on their studies as they will not have peace of mind. They will always be in fear in their schools with the menace. Evidence shows that, deviant behavioural traits are on the increase in the country generally and in the higher education system specifically.

In the view of Omorogbe,<sup>16</sup> the insecurity in the country possessed the capacity to drastically reduce the performance, aims and objectives of the education system and if not checked, may totally destroy the education sector in the country. Nigerian tertiary educational institutions are established with the primary purpose of giving the students a sound and qualitative education so as to be able to function effectively in any area they find themselves so as to be productive in society. Most of the Nigeria tertiary institutions are finding it pretty difficult to actualise these goals due to the incessant insecurity in the Nigerian state. Under the present insecurity situation in the country, effective teaching and learning cannot be realizable<sup>17</sup>.

Quality education also promotes the spirit of nationalism and patriotism among youths. Through education, it has been discovered that youths develop positive attitudes of togetherness, comradeship and cooperation towards the entire nation.

UNESCO has stated that “No development can be possible without humans, and no humans can reach development without quality education”. It is in light of this, that Anadi<sup>18</sup> opined that, for a nation to be developed and secured, there must be a very considerable proportion of trained educated citizens in that nation not only to act as doctors, engineers, teachers, agriculturist, scientists, and the likes, but also to create a new class sufficiently large and hence, sufficiently strong to establish its own values of justice, security, selection on merit, flexibility, empiricism and efficiency. For this to be actualized, our education system (primary, secondary and tertiary levels) must be practical and functional.

Therefore, quality education is the primary agents of national security and development for bringing the vision of society into reality. “For example, if the militants, Boko-Haram, armed robberies and kidnapers were properly nurtured with quality formal, informal and indigenous education from the grass root level, all these security threats/challenges such as terrorism, riots/civil unrest, demonstrations, intolerance, cult-related criminal acts, religious intolerance, arm robbery, intra and inter-ethnic strife, drug trafficking, human trafficking, kidnapping, hijacks and many other vices threatening lives and properties would not have been in existence.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Omorogbe, E.A. (2016), The Ugly Trend of Insecurity in Nigeria and its Impact on Education. *Journals of Africa Educators*. Vol 5, No 3.

<sup>17</sup> Iyoha, et'al, 2010

<sup>18</sup> Anadi, C. C. “Governments and Education in Nigeria: Concern for Sustainable National Development”: *Issues in Education, Government and Development*. Benin-City: Institute of Education, University of Benin. (2008).

<sup>19</sup> Osakwe, N. R. Achieving National Security and Development through Quality Education in Nigeria, *Research Journal in Education*, 19(1), 80-83. (2013).

## Conclusion

Tertiary education is a very important educational system that its contribution to the socio-economic and technological advancement cannot be underestimated. Tertiary education is the type of education that cannot be overlooked because of its roles in the transformation of the society and country at large. Although, the achievement of total or absolute security would be a mirage or to say the least an exercise in futility, as no country in the world or any known human society has achieved such an enviable feat. The contemporary security challenges in the country have not only raised critical questions bordering on the formulation, implementation and execution of Nigeria's educational policies cum philosophy and internal security policies but also the effectiveness of the security agents to perform their statutory responsibilities with patriotism. The purpose of education in modern times is wider in scope than in preliterate societies. Education now shapes politics, culture, family, economy among others. As the society is dynamic and constantly changing and growing, education must follow suit. In fact, changes most often are affected through the educational system of a country. Educational system must change to meet the aspirations of individuals and those of their countries, otherwise, it becomes irrelevant.

## Recommendations

On the basis of this, this paper recommends the under listed points/suggestions, as panacea for this seemingly intractable insecurity challenges in Nigeria:

- i. The Federal Government (FG) should formulate and effectively implement policies and programmes capable of addressing the causes of insecurity in Nigeria – such as high level of illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, dearth of infrastructural facilities and uneven development among others.
- ii. There is a need for collective security arrangement by all levels of government in Nigeria Federal, State and Local governments. The current arrangement where security apparatuses are totally in control by the central/federal government needs to be looked into and redressed. This is where the issue of community policing comes into focus. This security configuration should produce a committee at village, community, local, state and federal levels with the responsibility of providing sensitive security information for security agencies at their areas of operation. This will ultimately assist in identifying criminals, their sponsors and hideouts in the country.
- iii. Federal Government should reorganise the country's intelligence system and build a capable and more proactive security apparatus in Nigeria. This will add more values in checking incessant bombings, robbery, kidnapping and violent crimes/crises by hoodlums in the country.
- iv. The federal government should formulate the and effectively implement policies and programmes capable of addressing the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria such as high level of illiteracy, poverty, unemployment among others.
- v. There is need for a quality education for the masses which is the key.

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