

SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA EDUCATION SYSTEM: HISTORICAL REVIEWS

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Abstract

Nigeria education system has witnessed so many attacks as a result of cults related activities, banditry, boko-haram insurgencies, kidnappers and suicide bombers. These attacks have seriously threatened the unity and co-operate existences of Nigeria. Primary and Secondary sources of data collection was employed to answer the three research questions designed for the study by the researchers. Validity of the instrument were obtained by internal and external historical criticism. The study identified and examined the following as causes of security challenges in the education system as poor funding, porous school boundary, Government refusal to pay adequate attention on education and religious dichotomy and miss-interpretation of religious tenets. The consequence of insecurity in the education system led to burning of 24 halls in to ashes at federal Government College, Buni Yari, Yobe State, losses of lives and prosperities. Bokoharam alone killed an estimated 2,295 teachers and displaced over 19,000 teachers. Other incidence of insecurity in the education system in Nigeria includes gruesome murder of 4 Students by Cultist, at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife on 10th July 1999 and in November 6th 2018, 4 youth were gruesomely murdered in cross River State university. To exterminate or reduce to the lowest problems of insecurity in schools, the following are suggested as the way forward: (i) all students' needs to be taught how to respond to security emergencies and also need to be taught basic skills of self-defenses. (ii) Federal and States government should allocate 26% of their annual budget in line with United Nations' recommendation in funding education and (iii) state governors must be given the power to direct all Security Agencies in his State as the Chief Security of Officers in their respective states particularly on issues concerning insecurity in the State.

Keywords: *Insecurity, Challenges, Education*

Introduction

Education in Nigeria is bisected with myriad of security challenges which includes youth restiveness, terrorism and insurgence attacks; kidnapping and hostage- taking for monetary ransoms, political assassination, arsons, murders, cult-related activities, mass protest, militancy, rape, spiritual killings and other security threats bedeviling Nigerian education system. This is to say insecurity in Nigerian education system is seriously eating up the sector to the extent that both students, teachers and the government are being frustrated leading to educational decay (Daily Trust 2022).

It is disheartening to know that education which is accepted worldwide as a tool through which nation's quest for progress and development is being threatened in Nigeria by diverse security challenges. For instance, it is on record that 800 secondary school and university students have been kidnapped in coordinated attacks and about 19,000 teachers were displaced by terrorists and bandits as of today most especially in the North Eastern Nigeria (Adesulu 2019, Chinedu, Ukwunna and Joseph 2019)

Causes of Insecurity in the Education System

The issue of insecurity in the nation's education system come to the noticed globally with the incidence on 14th of April, 2014 when bokoharam sects attacked Government Girl's College, Chibok Bornu State and kidnapped 276 girls who were writing their exams. Since the attack of 14th April,2014 series of attacks had taken place on the nation's education system. Scholars, authors and public commentators like Owonikoko (2021), Olambi (2014), Innocent, Musa and Jacob (2021), Akogun and Zubair (2020) attributed the following to be causes of insecurity in the nation's education system:

1. Poor funding
2. Porous school boundary/ borders
3. Religious Dichotomy and miss-interpretation
4. Government neglect or Paid little attention to Education
5. Unequipped police and other security agencies
6. Unpunished crimes
7. Weak local government leadership
8. Nonchalant attitude of school administrators
9. Lack of comprehensive school security policy to guide action
10. Non execution of security duties by incompetent guards

Poor Funding

Present economic down turn has been bane of security Nigeria education system to the extent that the budgetary allocation to education has been very low. Budgetary allocation to the sector that are distributed subventions or grants to different levels of education mad through respective education ministry or coordinating agencies of education like NUC, NCCE, NABTEB, SSEMB, TESCOM, UBEE and SUBEB are grossly inadequate. For instance, United Nation and UNESCO recommended 26% of annual budgetary allocation to education but the federal and state government annual allocation to education has been functioning about 5 to 6 and 7 percent from 2014 to 2022. The most pitiful aspect of the situation is that the inadequate annual budgetary allocation to education is usually not cash-backed or released to the ministry of education or coordinating agencies for onward transmission to every unit of educational departments. In this situation of under-funding how would schools be able to hire qualified and competent security officers to man their school effectively. In most cases, school compounds are not fenced and where some were fenced, the fence are not strong enough to prevent either boko-haram or terrorists from gaining easy entrance to the school compound. There is no money for the school authorities to invest in the use of technology security network to assist in security surveillance of their campus or school. This device could have been help in reducing the activities of cultism and other minor related activities on the schools.

Porous School boundary/ borders

The porous nature of most schools' boundary made it so difficult for security officers to check everybody coming inside the school. The number of security officers to man schools whose fences are not properly erected or not fenced at all, the cost could not be afforded by school authority. This make it easy for miscreants, thugs, devil minded people to gain access to the school compound. People coming inside the school can easily beat the security guards to pass through the school and some of these category of people might be suicide bombers.

Religious Dichotomy and Miss-Interpretation of it tenets

Most Nigerian are either Muslim or Christian aAlthough there is some traditionalist but the most two pronounced religions are Islam and Christianity. This two religions groups differ in beliefs and practices particularly in some certain aspect of their religious practices. Like of recent, some Muslim students wanted to exercise the provision of the Nigerian constitution that states 'Freedom of worship for all Nigerian citizen'. What did they do, they wear 'Hijab' on top of their school uniforms but to the Christian

students and some teachers it doesn't go well between the two religion groups. This generate a lot of crisis to the extent that it led to loss of live of a Muslim student in Anglican Grammar School Ijagbo, Oyun Local Government, Kwara State, the school was closed in order for peace to reign inside and outside the school environment in the state. The case of Osun state is also fresh in the minds of the people. The problem was about wearing of 'Hijab' to school. In Sokoto, a student (Deborah, M.S) of Shehu Shagari College of Education was accused of blasphemy and consequently the student was mob beaten and hit with sticks and later burnt to death. The governor ordered the School to be shut down and directed security agencies to investigate the matter (The Guardian,2022) The two holy books did not permit any of its adherence to take law in to his / her hands without trail in accordance with the laid down procedure any person(s) without following the established rules have committed grievous sins in the side of God.

Government Neglect of Education

The federal, state and local government neglect education of her citizens for so long although concerted efforts were made during the administration of General Olusegun Obasanjo 1976 when he launched universal primary education 1999 UBE Universal Basic Education. The area that interest these researchers mostly is the UBE law as adopted by the Kwara State government which states 'Government should compel the parents of children of school-going age to send their children to school instead of making them hawk and wander about streets'. This government education policy was never implemented no wonder then you see school-going age children hawk or wander about streets during school hours, most of these children when they grow-up are already made recruit for boko-haram and other insurgence groups. This was collaborated by Jonathan (2022) he said, why I built alimajiri school in the north was to infuse western education curriculum into Islamic education to make the pupils employable and to check incessant crisis and insecurity. He was of the opinion that development was based on education as there cannot be functional society without functional educational system, nothing that education remains the key to change the country. As of today, the federal government neglected the alimajiri school program in the north.

Unequipped Police

The Nigerian police are specially trained to deal with insecurity within Nigeria. Nevertheless, they cannot deal with the monster because of lack of equipment or modern weapons. The weapons the Nigerian police are using could not match or withstand weapons the bokoharam, bandits and other criminals are using. Whenever there is information that the Bokoharam and other mindlessness criminals are coming to attack schools, the police personnel are usually go into hiding. Soldiers that are drafted into curbing the attacks on schools could not achieve much on the complaint of less superior weapons to what the dear devils bokoharam are using. Whenever bokoharam and bandits are operating for hours; it is not likely any invited security agencies would listen and rise to the occasion on the complaints of poor equipment. This is to say criminals gain easy access into schools and abducted any pupils or students and later demand for ransom to be paid before regaining their freedom from captivity.

Unpunished Crimes

Crimes has become a hobby in Nigeria. Some people earn their living through banditry and hostage taken that is, banditry is no longer a crime. This will lead us to ask a question. How many bandits or people are arrested as suspects terrorists. Have the nations criminal justice sentenced? For instance, cultists murdered five Obafemi Awolowo university students in 1999, those arrested none of them got punished for the murders (Exam Ethics Marshals International, 2019).

Weak Local Government system

Local government as the third tier of government are responsible grass root development and mobilization of people in Nigeria but unfortunately, the leadership in the sector is so weak. In most cases, Chairman in the LGAs are self -appointee by the state governor, they have no financial autonomy as stated in the

constitution. The fund allocated to each Local government are hijacked by the various state government. No wonder most state government failed to conduct local government elections into the LGAs instead, the governors preferred to employ their surrogates to govern the third tier of government. What one is deriving from the above discussion is that bokoharam sect members and bandits do not live on the moon or heaven. They are human beings who live among us. Even if they live in the forest, the forests are within the local government areas that is, the forest exists in the locality. Strong leadership within the local government areas should be able to break them down. They are allowed to operate freely among us due to weak leadership in the local government to check the excess at the on-set before it advanced to thus present level.

Nonchalant attitude of school Administrators

Some schools' administrators paid little attention to the security situation in their schools. Many school administrators have forgotten that Akintunde and Musa (2016) submit that Insecure school environment affect learning of children. It also triggers traumatic disorder and causes toxic stress that affect learning negatively. General school environment and attendance are equally affected as parents withdraws their children out of school while in some cases insecurity led to the closure of schools. All school administrators need to live up to the expectation on their school security. The school administrators can install CCTV cameras in some sensitive areas of their schools. This could be procured from PTA levies and other internally generated revenue. This may to small extent curb the activities of rape, sexual harassment and cultism.

Incidence and Consequences of Insecurity on Education System

Security lapses and challenge manifest on the daily basis in schools in Nigeria and such challenges are many as discussed in the early part of the paper. Many people have fall victim of suicide attack arsons, shooting at sight, abductions, hostage taking. Victims of the dangers mentioned in few that escaped death or injury during such attacks, that have seen the situation the safety and security of school administrators, teachers and students and the whole community. Where schools are located are no guaranteed particularly in the North-east Geo political zone where activities of Bokoharam insurgence are much pronounced. Schools are no more accessible because of the inherent dangers that have remained a serious problem to the teachers, learners and other stakeholders. In the schools that were attacked, their traumatic experience could not be forgotten or erased in their minds as those that witnessed the attacks, the fear instills on the teachers and the students could not make them return back to the schools (Wilson 2019)

A safe school is one that fosters peaceful, possible or cordial relationship among students, teachers and administrators while Insecurity is concerned with feelings of uncertainty and injustice, dangers, threat to life, fear, anxiety among others. Also where an individual does not have control over a situation, the result may be frustrating and where there is threat and conflict within the communities around the schools even if the schools are not yet attacked, it often has serious negative effect on the teaching and learning activities of such school. Whenever schools are attacked sometimes, the entire school structure or buildings are burnt down. For instance, on the 25th of February, 2014 when federal government college, Buni Yari, Yobe State, 24 halls in the college was burnt down into ashes. This was a signal that the bokoharam sect was out to exterminate every form of western education in Nigeria. Parents and guardians became terrified to send their wards to school. Boko haram sects alone has killed an estimated 2,295 teachers and over 19,000 teachers have been displaced by the conflict. The United Nations children's fund (UNICEF) estimated that, more than 14,000 schools have been completely destroyed, damaged or looted in the North-east and more than 600,000 children have lost access to education (Adesulu 2019). Iheamnochor (2015) submits that abductors abduct five teachers in Rivers state and demanded 25m Naira ransom for their release.

Incident and attack on school

Incident of attacks by cultist, bokoharam, bandit, ritual killers are enomus to be mentioned but refence would be made to some of those incidence to show the alermine rate and daily occurences of attacks on education system in Nigeria. There is high time for all stakeholders to rise up to the occasion to end this shameful and sinful acts in Nigeria. On the influence, cases of campus cuits activities alarmic canction and steps must be taken to curb it. On the 10th of July 1999. There was a violence attack at obafemi awolowo university (O.A.U) ile ife, osun state, Nigeria, the attack was perpetuated by 40 masked member of black axe confraternity and murdered four students, others students to belongeted escaped the attacks. Added to education system present security woes. The activities of cultists have been on the increase to the extent that, it has been spreading to secondary schools and primary school levels of education. For instance, Edo state order shutdown of two secondary schools over cultism on april 2nd, 2019 (exam ethics marshals international, 2019).

The incidence of bokoharam, bandits and abductors activities, could not be and damages they have cause the victim of hair attacks on education system is not measurable.

On the July 6th 2013, a mass shooting at mamudes Government Secondary School, Yobe State. 41 Students and teachers were killed, bokoharam sect claimed to be responsible for there attack on September 29, 2013; in Gujba college in yobo state, 44 pupils were killed on 25th of February, 2014; federal Government collegeBunni Yari Yobe state was also attacked having 59 boys dead. On 14th of April, bokoharam sect attacked Government Girls College chibok, bornu state, 296 girls who were writing their exams was kidnapped.

On 2nd of March, 2016 at Lagos state, 3 students of a private secondary school Babingtori macnly junior secondary school, ikorodu were abducted by unknown (punch 2016) on 13th of January, 2017. 10 students of Nigeria Tulip International college, Isheri (formally Turkish International college) ogun state were abducted. On 16th January, 2017, 2 teenage suicide bombers detonated bombs in university of Maiduguri, killed 3 people includes a professor. On 25th may 2017, a group of gunman attacked Lagos model college igbonla, Epe and abducted 6 students. On 19th of February 2018 a repeat of what look like Chibok Girls attack, 111 School girls at science and technical college Dapchi, yobe state were abducted through most of the girls were released (Adesulu, 2019 & Chinedu, Ukwunna and Joseph, 2019).

North West and some other part of Nigeria was not left out in the spate of kidnapping, abduction and other attacks of education systems in Nigeria. For instance, Owonikoko (2020), reported that, on 11th of December 2020, 344 male students were abducted from their hostels in Government Science Secondary School, Kankara, Katsina State. On 20th December 2020, 80 pupils of Islamiyah School, Mahuta, Kaduna state were also abducted. On 17th September 2021, 27 student were abducted from Government College, Kagara, Niger State. In Zamfara State, 279 girls of Government Secondary School, jangebe were abducted in February 26th, 2021 at the federal college of Forestry and Agricultural Mechanization, Afaka, Kaduna State, 39 of its students were kidnapped. On March 11th, 2021 bandits attacks on Greenfield university led to the abduction of its 23 students. On April24th, 2021; at federal University of Agriculture, Markudi, Benue State, 275 Students of the university were abducted but they were recently released. 4 of Green field students were killed. They were; Dorith Yohanna; precious Nwakacha; Sadiq Muasu; and Benjamin Habilla. Families of those who had their children back home are left with mixed joy in one hand for having their love one back home alive but they are swarming in debt they had incurred to raise millions of naira as a ransom for their release.

Way forward to combat insecurity in schools

In a bid to stop the spate of insecurity in education system, the federal Government, State Government should as a matter of urgency pass a bill, the federal house and state house of assembly to place death

penalty on kidnapping, abduction, banditry and all other related criminality that have the other of disrupting the education system in Nigeria.

The government at all levels should find the means of erecting very strong fence around the school. Abide fencing the school security system must be strengthened. This could be done by employing competent and able security guard to school. CCTV camera and other leach enological security devise be installed in the schools to aids the security in the school.

State governor as the chief security officer in the state should not be over whelmed alone but be put into reality. All security agencies should allowed to take directive from state governors particularly on security matters. The governors be given the power to direct the operations of security agencies in matter that related to security issues.

The Nigeria police should try to manage the internal security of the nation. The police must be properly trained and well equipped with modern weapons. When the police were equipped with modern, it will enable them to face any challenges confront the security of that state.

There is need to install national consciousness in the mind of every individual and raise our national intelligence as a Nigerian to fight the menace of terrorism and kidnapping because they are intelligence driven which lead to be lacked by everybody. Students must be taught how to respond to security challenges and need to have knowledge of self-defense.

School authority should be encouraged to invest in security infrastructure to make it less valuable to kidnapers. Round the clock surveillance system and well tit surrounding are turn off for kidnapers. School must also arrange with lead enforcement agencies for periodic patrol and inspections within and outside the school fence in order to ensure there are ongoing breaches.

Conclusion

The picture of security challenges in education system especially with the spate of killings and bombing, suicide mass arch by bokoharam and other related evil minded in Nigeria seems to be painting the nation as under segue and it look alike the security agencies could no longer deals with the ever increasing insecurity in the land. This calls for all good citizen of Nigeria to join hands together to pull down all criminal element in the society. This could be achieved by thinking and acting more holishecally and address the socio-economic factors that facilitate kidnapping, banditry, abductions which they are all quote products of poverty, injustice, nepotism, marginalization corruption etc.

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