

## **INSECURITY IN NIGERIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL MANAGERS**

**BY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The quality of education anywhere in the world is determined by peace and security in the learning environment. This paper therefore examines causes, forms and consequences of insecurity on educational system in Nigeria and its implications to educational managers. It posits that, lack of good governance, poor parental upbringing, poverty, frustration and unemployment are factors that bedevil the security situation in educational institutions in Nigeria. The paper identifies cultism, violence, armed robbery, sexual harassment, abduction and kidnapping as forms of insecurity in educational institutions in Nigeria. It also considered school drop-outs, poor academic performance, loss of school resources and fear in students, teachers and parent as consequences of insecurity in Nigerian educational institutions. The functions of educational managers are not just limited to managing the activities of the school but also to ensure the security of the learning environment. This paper therefore suggests that, educational managers should take comprehensive strategies to deal with the state of insecurity in educational institutions by training security personnel and make them brave to face any security challenge in schools and that government should recruit sufficient security personnel in the country with electronic based security gadgets for easy access to and detection of criminals in society.

**Key Words:** Insecurity, Educational System, Educational Managers, Educational Institution

### **Introduction**

The Nigerian education system is deeply in crisis of insecurity and the challenges are predominantly in the northern Nigeria, which is already the less educationally developed region in the country. Peace and security are important factors for successful teaching and learning in schools. Students cannot learn in a state of fear and anxiety so also the teachers cannot teach in such situation. The term "Security" originated from the Latin word "Securus" which means 'free from care'. Security simply means feeling safe or free from danger. Hornby in Akinlabi and Ezioliaku (2013) defines security as all activities involved in protecting a country, building and person against attack, danger, harm or

damage, theft or terrorism. There have been reoccurring crisis of insecurity in educational institutions which constitutes a serious challenge to the Education system in Nigeria. The previous abduction of school girls in Chibok and Dabchi in Northeastern Nigeria precisely Borno and Yobe States, the abduction of school boys in Kankara community in Katsina state, Niger state, Kebbi and many other schools and recently in Zamfara State as well, are clear examples of insecurity in the education system in Nigeria.

Learning environment must be provided with full security for effective teaching and learning. It is the responsibility of the government to provide security to the life and property of its people. It is only when the environment is secured and safe that people can go out for schooling and other business activities. The security situation in Nigeria hampered the educational and economic development of its people, a lot of people do not go to some areas for schooling or business activities. Hawkins, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) representative in Nigeria in 2022 remarked "school attacks and students abduction in parts of Nigeria have instilled fear among communities stopping at least one million children from returning to school, so far this year, there have been 20 attacks on schools in Nigeria, with 1,436 children abducted and 16 children dead. More than 200 children are still missing," Hawkins (2021)

Nigeria has recorded incidents of security threats in educational institutions in recent past as follows: In 2012, about 40 students of Federal Polytechnic Mubi were massacred by Boko-Harram insurgents. On August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013, a female student of Abia State University was held hostage for over one hour and gang-raped by persons suspected to be cultists, On April 14<sup>th</sup> 2014, about 276 girls were abducted from Government Secondary School, Chibok. The girls were in the process of writing their school certificate examinations when they were abducted. Some of the girls have been released while others are still in captivity till date. On August 29, 2015, a 4<sup>th</sup> year law students of the University of Calabar was sexually assaulted by her lecturer. On 16<sup>th</sup> January 2017, two suicide bombers attacked University of Maiduguri, killing three people including a professor. On 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2018, 111 secondary school girls from Government Girls Science and Technical College, Dapchi, Yobe were abducted. On February 17, 2020, an Associate Professor in the Institute of Public Administration, University of Calabar was kidnapped in his house. The sum of N50 million ransom was demanded by his abductors and in April 2020, three students of the University of Port Harcourt were kidnapped, killed and subsequently buried in a shallow grave. (Ekpoh. Aniefiok &Nse 2020). This paper therefore examines the causes, forms and consequences of insecurity on educational system in Nigeria with the view to providing a lasting solution to the menace in Nigerian educational institutions.

### **Concept of Insecurity**

Insecurity is the opposite of the word security. Therefore, insecurity is a situation whereby people of a nation or community are not safe and free from any crime or

violence that destroys, harms or destabilizes the continuity of their livelihood. Beland (2005) defines insecurity as “the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection.”. It refers to lack of or inadequate freedom from danger. Achumba, (2013) defines insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly, the author sees insecurity as the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly insecurity is perceived as the state of being open to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. Insecurity underscores a major point that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but they are also vulnerable to the threats and dangers when they occur. According to Eric (2021) insecurity is a common feeling that nearly most people will experience at some point, and it can stem from numerous sources. Generally, it presents a lack of confidence, anxiety, and uncertainty. By working to accurately identify and address insecurity, a person can minimize its unwanted impact, find renewed security, stability, and a sense of worth that propels them towards happiness and improved well-being.

#### **Causes of Insecurity in the Education System in Nigeria**

Jacob and Andrew, (2015) pinpoint the following as responsible factors for the general state of insecurity in Nigeria. namely: unemployment, bad governance, lack of quality education or training, lack of or inadequate basic infrastructures, corruption and corrupt practices of government officials, perceived victimization, arrant poverty in the midst of affluence, ethnic superiority, religious superiority, domination and exploitation, materialism and the display of it with impunity, etcetera. According to Ishaq, Tope and Abdulhafiz (2019) ineffective education is the leading factor responsible for insecurity syndrome in Nigeria followed by unemployment, corruption, poverty, poor security infrastructure, mismanagement of national resources, selfishness, high rate of illiteracy, poor information and communication technology, inadequate database and under funding of the security agencies in Nigeria.

Akintokunbo in Ishaq, Tope and Abdulhafiz (2019) links insecurity in Nigeria to massive and unchecked corruption, greed, selfishness, lack of patriotism, lack of political will and conscience, and of course, lack of vision and purpose. Manga (2019) noted that the cause of insecurity in schools are included non- challant attitude of some school administrators towards security matters, lack of a comprehensive and well disseminated school security policy, lack of execution of security duties by the school security guard among others. Many factors cause insecurity in the educational system in Nigeria but worthy of mention are as follows:

- 1. Lack of Good Governance:** This is the major cause of insecurity in Nigeria. This is because any nation that is characterized by absence of rule of law, no accountability, no fair legal framework and no consideration of what is needed for sustainable human development and how to achieve the goal of such

development, such a nation may experience threats of insecurity. According to Oke, (2021), leaders in Nigeria feel above others because of their level of insincerity when in position of authority and this poses serious security challenges to the society.

2. **Poor Parental Upbringing:** Parents are the first teachers of children; they are the first to teach them and train them in good character. Parents are supposed to tell their children what they are expected to do, which should be based on the acceptable life style of society. The loose moral values of the family which throw the children into deviant behaviour at the initial stage follow him to the school (Oke, 2021). As a result of modernity, parents over-pamper their children by not enforcing strict discipline on them, and so they are more likely to Foster children that are rude, arrogant and wayward (Obasi, 2007). Most children that lack moral upbringing may probably become rapists, thieves, thugs in the school and society.
3. **Poverty:** Poverty is a major problem in Nigeria that affect many people. Those who are subjectively poor and cannot afford the basic needs of life are more than the few who live in affluence, and most theories on poverty show that there is a connecting trend between poverty and insecurity. (Adebukola, 2014).
4. **Corruption:** Corruption is also a major cause of insecurity. According to Oke, (2021) if the government is corrupt and embezzling public funds, citizens may react by kidnapping those corrupt politicians in an attempt to recoup some of the stolen money. Therefore, corruption makes our judicial system very partial which is a major cause of violence and fighting in a society.
5. **Frustration:** A child who is unable to adjust himself to a new situation may try to look for alternative (Oke, 2021). People especially youth feel angered or annoyed doing nothing. Some of them could not have even primary education, no morality, no skill no capital for starting businesses and no hope in life. These are the kind of persons that mostly criminals recruit and use up for their activities such as armed robbery, Bok-haram insurgency, banditry, and kidnapping.
6. **Unemployment:** Unemployment is defined as when people are not engaged in meaningful work and are lacking the basic necessities of life. Many Nigerian youths have become preys to terrorism and are easily radicalized. In the Niger Delta region for instance, unemployed youths were the ones employed in the armed conflicts between Multinational Oil Companies and militants while many of such youths are members of the Boko-Haram sect (Bukar, Peter and Ibrahim, 2020).

### **Forms of Insecurity in Nigerian Educational Institutions**

Manga (2019) noted that the forms of insecurity prevalent in schools include physical attack, abduction and rape among others. Danbazau (2012) States that from the end of

the Nigeria civil war till date, we have experienced all kind of internal insecurity threat beginning with armed robbery in the early 1970s, the period from 1999 to date has also been experiencing various crisis to include ethno-religious conflicts, civil disorders, the Niger-Delta militancy, the Oduduwa People Congress (OPC), militancy, the movement for the actualization of sovereign state of Biafra (MASSOB) rebellion, electoral crises and violence, resource based conflicts over land, water and hydrocarbon resources, citizens' discrimination, indigene- setter dispute, political assassination, ritual murders, kidnapping and Book-Haram insurgency being the front Bonner.

Different forms of insecurity are occurring in education institutions in Nigeria. They include the following:

- ❖ **Cultism:** Cultism is one of the insecurity challenges facing educational institutions in Nigeria. Cultism is a ritual practice by a group of people whose membership, initiation as well as most of their operations are done in secret. Adebiti in Oke (2021) posits that issue of cultism among students has opened a new and very dangerous dimension to the situation of things in our educational institutions. This implies that students begin to organize themselves as a legal group since Nigerian constitution recognizes forming associations in school and later they turned it into cult.
- ❖ **Violence:** Violence in school is a form of insecurity whereby students or people from community use physical force against another group of people, staff/school authority or students which may result to injury, destruction or deaths. Oke (2021) described violence as physical attacks between students or by students on school staff which could occur on the way to or from school/school sponsored events in the school premises or at the school sponsored events outside.
- ❖ **Armed Robbery:** Armed robbery is an act of stealing someone's property using dangerous weapons. Armed robbers attack schools to steal from staff or students.
- ❖ **Sexual Harassments:** Sexual harassments means any uninvited sexual behaviour that is intimidating or humiliating. Female students are mostly harassed sexually by male students or staff. Whenever students are experiencing sexual harassments, they will never have peace of mind and it will affect their learning.
- ❖ **Kidnapping:** Kidnapping is an act of abducting someone and holding him for ransom. Many school children were abducted by bandits in our schools. According to British Broadcasting Cooperation (BBC) reports (2, March 2021): Since December, more than 600 students have been abducted from schools in north-west Nigeria, highlighting a worrying development in the country's kidnap-for-ransom crisis. Emmanuel (2021) noted that the bandit attacks on schools have significantly kept most of our children out of school, considering that most schools are now closed down and the desire for parents to equip their children with formal education will be on the low scale because the fears are still there, the kidnappers are on rampages.

### **Consequences of Insecurity on the Education System in Nigeria**

The security challenges in Nigeria have a worrisome consequences on the education system in Nigeria. The challenges include the following:

- 1. School Drop-Out:** School drop-out refers to students who are unable to complete their school programme. Dropping out of school denied many children their right to education. Premium time 29/6/2021 reports that Nigeria has the highest number of Out-of-School Children in sub-Sahara Africa. Therefore, the higher the number of school drop-out children, the higher the illiteracy level in society and the higher the level of insecurity in that society.
- 2. Loss of School Resources:** Both human and materials resources are lost in schools due to security challenges in Nigeria. Many Teachers and students lost their lives, School Buildings and other facilities were destroyed. United Nations Children's Fund, (UNICEF) and European Union, reported that "no fewer than 2,295 teachers have lost their lives while 1,400 schools were destroyed in North-East Nigeria since 2009 and as a result of insurgences". (Vanguard, Newspaper, June 4, 2021).
- 3. Poor Students' Performance:** The academic performance of students reduces to some extent due to the mode of operation of schools during crisis in the community where school are located. Sometimes, students stay from school for two or three weeks for security purposes. This unstable calendar lead to the poor performance of students in school. Many schools in Nigeria were closed and the students of those schools remained at home.
- 4. Crippled Supervision of Academic Activities in Schools:** To ensure the effectiveness of any educational organization, there is need for supervision and inspection. Unfortunately the present security situation made the supervision and inspections of schools inadequate and inaccurate. In other words supervisors and inspectors are scared to go out for supervision as expected and if they are able to make it, it goes haphazardly.
- 5. Fear in Students and Teachers:** Due to the fear and uncertainty of security in the school environment, teachers cannot impart knowledge to the learners and learners do not acquire what needs to be acquired with full concentration. Also there is no effective teaching and learning in unconducive environment.

### **Implication of Insecurity in Nigerian Educational Institutions for School Managers**

Security is the fundamental factor that determines the effectiveness of educational organizations in any nation. There is need for peace and security in schools for smooth running of their activities towards getting quality education. Educational manager is someone who is in charge of the Management of human and material resources in any educational institution with the aim of achieving educational objectives. The activities

of educational manager is not just coordinating and controlling the human and material resources in the school but also to ensure peace and security are maintained in the school environment. Educational managers are in the fore front of the battle to create peaceful environment where teaching and learning can take place efficiently and effectively. Managing education under difficult condition of security challenges is not an easy task. Addressing the situation requires the attention of many other stakeholders ranging from the educational administrators, parents and to community. They should work hand in hand to stop the menace in schools so as to have quality education. Quality education is key to restoring normalcy in the society. That is when a child receives quality education he will be in a better position to decide what to do with his life instead of carrying deadly weapon and killing innocent civilians (Oke, 2021). School managers need to ascertain the causes and forms of insecurity in their respective schools so as to quickly call the attention of security experts for immediate action and ensure that peace and security are maintained in their respective schools.

### **Conclusion**

Certainly, security challenges manifest in many of educational institutions in Nigeria. Without peace and security in the learning environment teaching and learning cannot take place effectively. This paper examines the causes, forms and consequences of insecurity in educational system in Nigeria. It classifies the causes and various forms of insecurity in educational institutions in Nigeria. The paper also identifies the consequences of insecurity on education in Nigeria. The problem of insecurity in educational institutions in Nigeria should be regarded as first priority of the government by providing more security personnel with electronic based security gadgets for easy access to and detection of criminals in Nigerian society.

### **Suggestions**

Based on the security challenges in the education system in Nigeria, the following suggestions are made:

- i. Government should create more employment opportunities for youths which will engage them in productive activities.
- ii. Parents should strive firmly by giving their children moral upbringing so that they should be good members of the society. They should also try to know the daily activities of their children, friends, where they sleep and their sleeping time.
- iii. Education managers should adopt comprehensive strategies to deal with the state of crisis in educational institutions by training Security guards and make them brave to face any security challenges in schools.
- iv. School and Community security forum should be created so as to have free flow of security information between schools and communities for easy identification and apprehension of criminals.

- v. Government should recruit sufficient security personnel in the country with electronic based security gadgets for easy access to and detection of criminals.

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