



Human Security and Girl Child Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper examined the nexus between Human Security and Girl Child Education in Nigeria. Education is relevant in improving the quality of life, accelerating economic growth, developing intellectual ability and dexterity realization of political unity. With these benefits, it is pertinent to say a country's advancement technologically and otherwise depend majorly on the educational development of its citizens both male and female. The paper contends that the long standing Boko Haram Insurgency is detrimental to the girl child education as well as the long awaited gender equality. The paper adopted secondary methods to gather data to analyse the issue at hand. Against the above backdrops, the frustration-aggression theory is utilized as the theoretical framework of analysis in the study. The paper concludes that the current impasse in the insurgency crisis in Nigeria especially in the northern part of the country possess as a hindrance to a viable educational development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Insecurity, Learning, Insurgency, frustration and girl child.

Introduction

For many people, today's world is an insecure place, full of threats on many fronts. Protracted crises, violent conflicts, natural disasters, persistent poverty, epidemics and economic downturns impose hardships and undercut prospects for peace, stability, and sustainable development. Such crises are complex, entailing multiple forms of human insecurity. When the crises overlap, it can grow exponentially, spilling into all aspects of people's lives, destroying entire communities and crossing national borders. Nigeria is not left out of this world experience. It has and is still having its share of crises, violent conflicts and fears. The Boko Haram insurgency, kidnapping for ransom among other vices bedevils Nigeria today. Boko Haram insurgents kidnap people and in particular have been kidnapping young girls from their school hostels. The incident of the Chibok school girls still remains fresh especially in the mind of parents as some are yet to get their children that were kidnapped from school since 2012. While



this incident still lingers in the minds of Nigerians the insurgents struck again by kidnapping the Dapchi school girls most of whom have been rescued except for Liyah Sharibu who still remains in captivity. Kidnapping is on the high as most of the states in Nigeria have recorded such kidnappings from the north east to the south east, back to the north west, down to the middle belt and the south south regions have become fear zones for commuters, lest they are kidnapped by armed bandits. These bandits ask for huge amount of money ransom that the ordinary citizen does not have the wherewithal to pay and rescue loved one. Katsina (2012) reviewed the state of insecurity in Nigeria and submitted that it is a deep and structurally entrenched crisis of development that creates conditions for inequality, poverty, and unemployment. This line of reasoning was trumpeted for some time during the tenure of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan as Nigerian President as the Boko Haram group kept creating tension and insecurity across Nigeria. Katsina (2012) suggests national cum international effort to stem the drift noting that the trend is reversible, meaning that if inequalities, poverty, and unemployment are tackled, insecurity will be eliminated.

Crane (2007) submits that the inability of the Federal Government of Nigeria to deliver basic services to citizens is a prime cause of insecurity alongside religious fighting and violent attacks in the Niger Delta. The writer notes that 57% of Nigerians lived below the poverty line of \$1 a day by 2007. Eme and Onyishi (2011) tag the economic aspect 'wobble theme' in their exposition on the issue of insecurity in Nigeria. Education is the process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge and generally preparing oneself intellectually for future and mature life. These skills are mainly acquired away from home at schools or centres of various skill acquisitions that are meant to impart on one's life. Girl child education is concerned with ensuring that girls feel safe while in school, complete all levels of education in schools to be able to excel in their different ventures. Schools are mostly located away from homes where the pupils and/or students leave their homes to attend schools. They go to schools either by themselves, in the company of others, or are accompanied by their parents or guardians and may on some occasions attend boarding schools where they have to leave home and attend school at least for a period of a term or semester ranging from six to twelve or eighteen weeks as the set school calendar may state from time to time thereby progressing through years until one level of school is finished and a new one is started. If a school is a boarding school, students report and remain in school for the duration of the term. The school and authorities concerned are saddled with the responsibility of providing all their needs as though they are in the confines of their homes. This include food, shelter, medicine and security from all forms of threats and attacks especially in the school premises. This practice prevailed for a long time after the coming of formal education in Nigeria. In the past, parents allow their children travel long distance within the country to attend boarding schools, even girls from Northern Nigeria were allowed to attend Queens College in Lagos and all other Unity Colleges around the country. This contributed a lot to girl child education in Nigeria, this cherished privilege is not only risky but gradually becoming unacceptable by many.

However, the current insecurity in the nation has severed this milestone as girls today are kidnapped from hostels in schools or the way to school and to date some have remained in captivity and the end of which is not in view. Hence a number of parents are no longer



comfortable to send their children away to school for the fear of insecurity and uncertainty. This is an adverse set back on girl child education caused by lack of human security.

Human Security

Human security views protection of people, individuals from traditional (i.e., military) and non-traditional threats such as poverty and disease. This includes complementing state security and building on it as human security deprivations could undermine peace and stability within and between states, whereas an overemphasis on state security can be detrimental to human welfare. The state remains a central provider of security, but state security is not a sufficient condition for human welfare. As noted in General Assembly resolution 66/290, “human security is an approach to assist Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of their people.” It calls for “people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all people.” Human security fully entered the policy and academic debates in the early 1990s. Nevertheless, despite its widespread usage within national and international policy circles, its definition remains highly contested. The holistic vision of protecting the security of people lends itself to a variety of interpretations shaped by relative understandings of what constitutes a threat to the security of individuals, how the intensity and repercussion of any given threat can be measured (i.e., historical data or forward-looking forecasts), and by what possible means the threat can be prevented or removed. The coalition of states and international organizations that have supported the approach can count numerous accomplishments, such as the Ottawa Convention (i.e., Mine Ban Treaty), the establishment of the International Criminal Court, the Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Sustainable Development Goals Ejukonemu (2016). These and so many other conventions and policies are expected to safeguard the education of the girl child. The absence of security whether by action or even fear results in insecurity. Nigeria is in a state of insecurity. Oluwa (2014) presents a fairly long list of types, causes, and effects of insecurity in Nigeria. For the types, he lists the following:

- i. Militancy in the Niger Delta Region
- ii. Clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers
- iii. Ethnic conflicts
- iv. Religious conflicts
- v. Cold war among ethnic nationalities
- vi. Area boys’ syndrome
- vii. Gang conflicts and cult wars
- viii. Kidnapping
- ix. Robbery
- x. Mob attacks and lynching of suspected criminals
- xi. Ritual killings involving innocent people
- xii. Police brutality
- xiii. Extra judicial killings



Above issues raise conditions of insecurity because they could affect anybody. Suffice it to say, they are affecting everybody today because even travelling by road that in the past used to be a source of relaxation and education have now become very hazardous because of mob attacks, robbery, kidnapping, police brutality, and the precarious nature of roads.

The listing of causes of insecurity by Oluwa (2014) is also fairly exhaustive and instructive considering it as follows:

- a) Hunger/poverty (a hungry man, as an adage holds, is an angry man)
- b) Illiteracy and ignorance
- c) Unemployment
- d) Systemic corruption
- e) Income inequality

The Learning Environment

The acquisition of education to an individual, bring about refinements, sobriety, dynamism, faith, acquaintanceship, technological researches, self-reliance, empowerment, political self-regards while to a nation it expends economic, social, political and technological activities or frontiers. (Omede 2010 & Okwuolise, 2005)

The need to create a conducive environment for the education of the girl child cannot be overemphasized. Aside from the cultural segregation of grooming the boy child for a world outside and the girl child for an indoor life, the aggressive activities of the insurgents in Nigeria is a big hit on the education of the girl child.

We love to analyse this quote from Sarah Grimke thus:

“I ask no favours for my sex.
I surrender not our claim to equality.
All I ask of our brethren is that they
will take their feet from off our necks,
and permit us to stand upright on the
ground which God has designed us to occupy”. (Warner 1992pp99)

Meaning, the girl child is not ready to compete with her boy counterpart but only ask to be allowed to be herself and enjoy all the excitement and benefit that life has to offer her without the system or someone posing any hindrance on her way to fulfilment. Anthony re-echoes the above by stating that, “Men, their right and nothing more; women their Right and nothing less” (Warner, 1992pp97)

The learning environment can refer to an educational approach, cultural context, or physical setting in which teaching and learning occur. The term is commonly used as a more definitive alternative to classroom, but it typically refers to the context of educational philosophy or knowledge experienced by the student and may also include a variety of learning cultures—its presiding ethos and characteristics, how individuals interact, governing structures, and



philosophy. In a societal sense, learning environment may refer to the culture of the population it serves and of their location. In Nigeria, the learning environment is mainly concentrated on schools away from the home regardless of whether the school is boarding or day. The pupils in the lower basic education classes, those in the higher basic up to those at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, the girl child inclusive is required to go to the school environment to acquire education. Now the big question and concern of this paper is what the deteriorating human security in the nation is doing to affect the girl child? The level of enrolment is becoming lower for the fear of what may befall the child while away in school. Learning environments are highly diverse in use, learning styles, organization, and educational institution. The culture and context of a place or organization includes such factors as a way of thinking, behaving, or working, also known as organizational culture. For a learning environment such as an educational institution, it also includes such factors as operational characteristics of the instructors, instructional group, or institution; the philosophy or knowledge experienced by the student and may also encompass a variety of learning cultures—its presiding ethos and characteristics, how individuals interact, governing structures, and philosophy. In some learning styles and pedagogies used; and the societal culture of where the learning is occurring.

Theoretical Framework: Frustration Aggression Theory

The relative frustration aggression theory pioneered by Dollard (1939) and Gurr (1985) is suitably explains the reasons for insecurity in the Nigeria. The thesis is centered on the postulation that, frustration does led to aggression. This is also linked to the frustration – aggression model. Frustration is the feeling while aggression is the violent result, in other words, aggression is as a result of frustration (Oluwatusin, (2007); Anifowose, (2011); Ejukonemu and Akintola, (2015). The persistent acts of insurgency in the Northern region is as a result of the aggression being expressed by the insurgents. For analytical purposes, the point of departure of this theory is that the aggressive reaction of the insurgents is going to further frustrate the efforts being put to balance the disparities between the girl child and boy child education in the northern region as well as the real of the girl child to pursue education.

Education is the process of moving – via facts, information, and perception—from ignorance to knowledge and, hopefully, to wisdom. Also educating an audience is much like educating an individual, in that no one can be given an education. All that one can be given is the opportunity to learn Ejukonemu, (2010). This opportunity to learn is what the girl child based in the northern part of Nigeria is being deprived of. The excessive insurgency attacks on secondary schools in most parts of Nigeria is not only alarming bur frustrating, little wonder some girls are out of school today.

Nexus between Human Security and Girl Child Education in Nigeria

Insecurity has affected girl child education in Nigeria in diverse ways. Culturally the girl child has always been behind in going to school as parents held the beliefs that she will always end up married to someone else, cooking and rearing children. As the fight for emancipation of the girl child is gaining momentum in Nigeria and the girl child is gaining opportunity to go to school insecurity has come in in various perspectives to dissuade parents from sending the girl child to school. Which parent is happy to let a child leave the safety and comfort of home to face



dangers on the way to school or while in school? Certainly none. In Nigeria, insecurity as it affects girl children can be put into two broad groups:

I) **Institution-Based Insecurity**

In educational institutions and in particular at post-secondary levels, the following are observable:

- i) Sexual harassment – female students suffer sexual harassment more than their male counterparts. Fear of not meeting sexual advances from teachers, administrators and school mates could have psychological impact on girls and their academic performance.
- ii) Cultism – although there are several female cult groups (Okoh, 2014) male cult groups are far more virulent and constitute threats to female students.
- iii) Economic constraints – the needs of girls are more than those of boys. Girls from poor homes could find themselves constrained in meeting financial needs. This could pose psychological insecurity and force them to withdraw or take up street life even when they did not plan to. Meanwhile the financial demands of the courses are indeed sources of insecurity.
- iv) Choice latitude - whether as a result of societal expectation or a result of upbringing, girls sometimes find themselves constrained in career choice. This is described as limited feminine fields by Nwosu Izunwah (1999); Ejukonemu,(2009a) and Ejukonemu, (2017b). These include teaching, home economics, home making, and small scale business development for the few that are prepared to dare the tumultuous and unpredictable world of business. Ubong (2001) carried out a study on female students and determined that many of them have aversion for business as a vocation because of the stresses and strains associated with the world of private business.

II) **Community-Based Insecurity**

Every school is sited in a community and in any case, every child originates and grows up in a community. Insecurity arising from communities includes but is not limited to:

- a) Culture is regarded as the number one enemy of girls and women in Nigeria (Wokocho, 1999). A lot is demanded of the girl child to do at not to do in the name of culture.
- b) Kidnapping, insurgency and rape make parents afraid of letting the girls out and also makes the girl child to be afraid of leaving their homes.
- c) Family economics, which could force parents to keep their female children away from school or give them out as house helps or even marry them out at an early age. Also as already mentioned, for those of them that make the attempt, financial demands from lecturers and administrators could force them into hazardous activities that could be a menace to them physically and psychologically.
- d) The impact of electronic communications as well as social media on the rising tide of insecurity in Nigeria appears not to have received much attention to date. In advanced countries, children, and in particular girls sometimes take their lives when they can no longer stand the taunts and other forms of attack from their peers. Activities in the



social media (bullying) could make children dread to attend school and is thus an aspect of insecurity.

Considering the area of education, thought girls may not have achieved much but much as compare to boy in most states of the federation, but the consistent increase recorded in some states are commendable. States like Anambra and Abia are said to track records of girls' enrolments being more than that of boys (Chukwuemeka 2009).

Human are created with obvious difference. Some of these differences are biological in nature while others are social. These remind us of the twin concepts of sex and gender. "sex refers to the biological anatomical and identity variation between male and female as well as the act of mating. While Gender is said to be socially learned behaviour and expectations ascribed to the two sexes as well as the psychological and cultural differences between male and females (Anderson 1997 & Chukwuemeka 2009).

The effects of insecurity, Oluwa (2014) notes, include increase in the quantum of internally displaced persons; political, social, and economic disruptions; and slow economic growth. All of above impact on the humans occupy locations experiencing insecurity. Unfortunately, the most vulnerable are children and in particular, the girl child and her educational pursuits. It is said that, any efforts to liberate women from the shackles of customary practices and empowerment them fail woefully without the full encouragement and motivation from men. This greatly describes the consistent adoption of girls from schools. (Chukwuemeka 2009) .

Policy Recommendations

As long as you keep a person down, some part of you has to be down there to hold him down, so it means you cannot soar as you otherwise might (Anderson 1997). This explains the inestimable effects of human insecurity being experienced in Nigeria. Development is thwarted and citizenry frustrated and traumatized.

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The first duty of any government or administration in institutions/organizations is to protect lives and property proactively, Ubong (2016) . All other activities of governance must be seen as coming after, for economic growth and strides in socio-political developments are for the living. No one builds schools, develops transport systems and infrastructural facilities, provides entertainment and health centres, and plants food for the dead. It is therefore an imperative that all administrations (school heads, village heads, local government administrators, state governors, President of Nigeria and others) must see citizens as first priority by way of keeping them alive, safe, and comfortable.

Suggestions



For the girl child, there is the need for sustained emphasis on their education and general welfare. Girls are the mothers and society builders of the next generation. The following need be pursued:

1. Sustained advocacy on girl-child education. The government, parent, traditional leaders, civil society members and other females should advocate for girl child education.
2. Sustained education on reproductive health focused on girls. School curriculum should be made to elaborate on reproductive health with special emphasis on the girl.
3. Where finance is a constraint, there is need for special scholarships for girls . Private individuals, cooperate organisations and government establishment should make it a point of duty to increase the number of girls being awarded scholarship.
4. Parents should sustain orientation directed at boys and men to make them see girls as the gender that must be protected rather than intimated and violated. This should be done by socializing institutions – families, religious organizations, schools, social organizations, and communities.
5. Although there is a law on cultism, the destructive activities of cultists are actually on the increase. There is no doubt that robbers, rapists, and kidnappers are members of cult groups. There is the tendency that once a particular State clamps down on these people, they migrate to safe havens, that is, States where there is tacit tolerance for crime. The government will need to work together to prevent cross unacceptable border activities.
6. In schools, from primary to tertiary, there must be very firm stance of administrations on anti-social elements. Firm action on students confirmed as constituting a nuisance will act as deterrent to newer members of the school communities. For instance, such students can be expelled from the school and also prevented from being enrolled in neighbouring schools.
7. Child labour must be discouraged as it is a source of danger to children particularly girls (Ubong, 1999).
8. This is the right time for official action to design ways and means of handling and or managing insecurity posed by social media or other forms of electronic communication such as text messages and threatening phone calls.
9. Parents and guardians need to monitor the way their children use the social media and how they react to them. Sustained mood and general behavior changes could be the proverbial stich in time.
10. On general security issues, the effort at keeping girls safe physically and otherwise must be seen by every citizen as community wide, not just that of government. Every person in a community or nation deserves to live a life without being tormented by the spectre of insecurity. Security must be everybody's business.

Conclusion

Insecurity is a plague that is international in nature. The persons/groups that make nations insecure continue to migrate and spread hate and destruction across national boundaries. There is



therefore the need for international action on as sustained basis to combat the rising tide. In Nigeria, nay developing countries, there is need for official action to manage the menace particularly as they affect the children and specially, the girl-child.

There can be no growth and development in an atmosphere of insecurity. Not even the most advanced societies can claim to be enjoying high standards of living when citizens cannot enjoy the goodness of effort in peace. The National Policy on Education 2008 made it mandatory for every woman to obtain proper education in order that the Nigerian woman would be able to enjoy her full benefit of contemporary living. This therefore emphasises the right of women to be rightly educated and have equal opportunities with their male counterparts.

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