

ROLE OF HEALTH EDUCATION IN REDUCING THE EFFECTS OF INSECURITY IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper reviewed the role of Health Education in combating insecurity in educational settings in Nigeria. School system has come under violent attacks that range from kidnapping of both the teachers and students to absolute suicide bombing which usually claim lives and destroy properties. The effect of these attacks has aggravated the fragile school system which is opposed to sustainable and national development. Insecurity is a state of being exposed to fear, distress, threat, danger, harassment among others in all aspect of human life. Insecurity resulted to serious threat to physical, emotional and psychological health of school community. It is recommended that the victims of banditry and insurgency should be enlightened by health educators on how to cope with posttraumatic stress disorder so as to avoid emotional health problems and government should rise to its expectations and control all acts of insurgency, and employment opportunities should be created that will engage productive youths of the North Eastern states.

Keywords: Insurgency, Education, Economy and Effects.

Introduction

The current issue in Nigerian society of which school belongs is insecurity. This is not peculiar to Nigerian alone, other civilized countries such as UK and USA equally face the same challenges of insecurity in their societies and schools on daily basis, the deteriorating security situation in Nigeria is worrisome and north-eastern Nigeria has witnessed unprecedented level of insecurity ranging from intra-communal, inter-communal and interethnic clashes; religious violence; armed robbery; assassination, kidnapping and “boko haram” insurgency (Abubakar, 2011). Insecurity in Nigeria is causing developmental challenges such as endemic penury, high rate of unemployment, inured corruption, low industrial output, unstable and deteriorating exchange rate, high inflation rate, inadequate physical and social infrastructure, large domestic debt, and rising external debt profile (Ewetan, 2013). These problems have posed severe threats to socio-economic development in the country in that it stifles business and economic activities and discourages local and foreign investors (Ewetan & Urhie, 2014).

Education is built around the goal line of improving the social life and other institutions that make up the society, Uba and Ngozi (2017) opined that education of today must have the effect of making it possible for a country a steady supply of highly creative citizens who help to improve the living conditions of the general citizenry and to solve the current problems that are thrown from time to time. Notwithstanding, it also serves the interests of other sectors of the economy and as such an instrument for change and development and a potent tool for addressing social problems such as the present state of insecurity in Nigeria. This is because education in all its ramifications aims at creating consciousness in the minds of the recipients and also equips them with skills for solving lifelong problems. It is in this regards that Adegbesan (2011) affirmed that people and nations are what they are because of the nature and types of education they have been exposed to. Terrorism is globally becoming a household word as there is no nation that is completely absolved from its effect. Globalization has significantly

influenced the spate of terrorism as the event in one part of the globe has direct or an indirect effect on others.

The Federal Government has embarked on fundamental surveillance, investigation of criminal related offences, heightening of physical security measures around the country aimed at deterring or disrupting potential attacks, strengthening of security agencies through the provision of security facilities and the development and broadcast of security tips in mass media (King, 2016).

Insecurity in Educational Settings in Nigeria

Education is designed purposely to assist individuals to develop their skills and abilities so as to fulfil their potential and to lead productive satisfying lives. No nation can improve educationally and economically in the face of widespread insecurity of lives and properties (Azikiwe, 2018). There were cases of killing of students and their teachers. Bombs have been brazenly detonated in school assemblies leaving dozens dead while school buildings are burnt down which grounds teaching and learning (Nwosu, Ukwunna, Ebokaiwe & Ukwunna, 2019). Iheamnachor (2015) had also reported that five secondary school teachers were abducted at gunpoint from a school in Rivers State which left the people in the area in total fear and tension. There were also recorded cases of religious induced crisis which affected schools. Cases of dormitory raping were also reported while many of these school attacks are not reported. Recent statistics showed that about 2,295 teachers have been killed and 19,000 others displaced in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States between 2009 to 2018, while an estimated 1,500 schools had been destroyed since 2014, with over 1,280 casualties among teachers and students, many of these incidents were never reported by the national media which affected the true situation. These attacks impinge on effective teaching and learning which serve as a drag to our national development (Adesulu, 2019).

According to Akintunde and Musa (2016), insecure school environment affects

the learning of children. Situations of insecurity triggers traumatic disorder and toxic stress that affect learning negatively. General school attendance and enrolment are equally affected as parents pull their children out of schools while in some extreme cases, insecurity has led to closure of schools. For instance, Borno State schools were shut-down in major towns as a result of insurgency (Ameh, 2015). These attacks on schools usually lead to sabotage and outright destruction of school facilities which discourage the establishment of new schools. Consequently, government resources are exhausted as funds meant for other developmental projects are channeled to tackling the aftermath of attacks. In the end, educational attainment in terms of quality of graduates and manpower suffers which impinge on overall national development aspirations.

According to Todaro and Smith (2012), sustainability refers to meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations. However, the prevalence of school attacks in Nigeria reveals the dwindling capabilities of state actors to achieve sustainable development and national security (Okoli & Iortyer, 2014). Given the importance of education and human capital towards a sustainable socioeconomic development, there is the need to deploy extraordinary measures to tackle the spate of attacks on school facilities in Nigeria. Thus, extreme measures have subsequently been applied through tight border controls as well as the classification of migrants from certain countries of origin, diaspora, emigration and citizenship as potential securitization issues (Naujoks, 2015).

Insecurity, in a general term, refers to a state of being subjected to fear, threat, danger, molestation, intimidation, harassment etc in all aspect. For example, insecurity can be conceived as threats to the state which often accounted for the race for arms and nuclear weapons to defend the state (Ajodo-Adebanjoko & Ugwuoke, 2014).

However, Agomuo (2013) commented on the nature of insecurity in Nigeria that at different times in the past that, insecurity has held the Nigerian nation to ransom. For example, Boko-Haram held the region into ransom and reined the nation's security agencies unusable at one point or the other and the nation lamenting the level of security deterioration in the North, if today it is news of a bomb blast, yesterday, it was a suicide bombing, tomorrow; it may be an assassination and the day after, mass murder (Nadabo, 2013).

Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

The fear of insecurity in Nigeria is on the increase and this has been compounded by the rising waves of terrorism since the country returned to democratic rule in 1999 (Ali, 2013). Violent crime has a root and history in Nigeria, and could be traced back to the period from 1960 to 1970. At independence in 1960 a federal structure was imposed on Nigeria by the British. Unfortunately, the federal structure bequeathed to Nigeria at independence did not conform to tenets of federalism as a system of government where two levels of government exist each sovereign in its spits, whims and caprices (Ewetan, 2011). Since independence, the demand for true federalism, fiscal and political restructuring by different ethnic nationalities in Nigeria has not abated. These agitations have contributed to violent rebellious reactions by aggrieved ethnic groups in the country, endangering the security, unity, and corporate existence of Nigeria as one country. Causes of terrorism, militancy, kidnapping, cattle rustle etc. in developing nation like Nigeria is enormous. Poverty and ignorance are fertilizers for insurgency when they combine and cloak themselves in religious, ethnic or other partisan robes; they become ready incendiary for the most brutal and reckless of violence. Nweze (2004) identified some factors enhancing insecurity in Nigeria to include among: poor leadership, ethno-religious crises, socio-economic inequalities, small arms and ammunition

trafficking, rural-urban migration and external influence among others.

Security System

This is a major contributory factor to the level of insecurity in Nigeria, and this can be attributed to a number of factors which include inadequate funding of the police and other security agencies, lack of modern equipment both in weaponry and training, poor welfare of security personnel, and inadequate personnel (Achumba et al. 2013). According to Olonisakin (2008) and Falana (2013) the police-population ratio in Nigeria is 1:450 which falls below the standard set by the United Nations. The implication of this is that Nigeria is grossly under policed and this partly explains the inability of the Nigerian Police Force to effectively combat crimes and criminality in the country.

Effects of Insecurity on Education

In any education system, peace and tranquility is an antidote for a successful teaching and learning. In recent times, however, millions of school children in Nigeria are caught up in conflicts that result to insecurity not only of their school attendance but to their lives and property (Abdullahi & Terhemba, 2014). Borno State in particular started experiencing the global trend of insurgency from 2009. Boko Haram has destroyed so many talented youths who would have been future leaders of this nation tomorrow, who would have contributed meaningfully to the growth of education in Nigeria and the world at large.

Many students and teachers lose their life on different occasions within the nation. or instance, On 17th September, 2014 Boko Haram equally attacked Federal College of Education Kano killing several students when two Boko Haram suicide bomber entered into the lecture hall and bombed himself and the students and the lecturer in the hall (Ruqayyatu, 2013). Attacks by Boko Haram and other similar groups in Nigeria is a threat to education. It is in light of the above that Okpaga, Chijioke and Innocent (2012) observe that Nigeria as a nation must make

concerted efforts to raise the educational attainment of all its youths who are the leaders of tomorrow especially those that are deprived of regular school attendance because of insecurity and conflicts. The hope for the country seems to be grim if children cannot go to school.

Roles of Health Education in Combating Insecurity

Health education is a process with intellectual, psychological and social dimensions relating to activities which increase the abilities of people to make informed decisions affecting their personal, family and community well-being. Health education encompasses the whole person throughout the entire life, regardless of how ill or well that person may be at any time either in peace or complicit. Therefore, health education helps people by using a wide range of teaching techniques to achieve goals which often involve changing behaviors, attitudes and social circumstances (Royle & Walsh 2012). The effect of violent attacks has intensified risky life span which is conflicting and breakdowns the healthy lifestyle and general development of the human life. Such condition may even lead to Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a mental disorder that one can develop after exposure to a traumatic event, such as sexual assault, warfare, traffic collisions, child abuse, or other threats on a person's life (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2020).

Integrative Health Education and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Integrative Health Education, is an approach that uses multiple types of care, including “mental, emotional, functional, spiritual, social, community aspects and treating the whole person rather than organ system,” (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, 2020). Moreover, integrative health approaches can be used to address and alleviate the symptoms for individuals who have been diagnosed with PTSD. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of

America (2016), these symptoms can include re-experiencing the trauma through bad memories on people or situations that triggers difficulty with sleeping and concentration. The remedy for these health problems include Counseling, Medications, Yoga exercise, Meditation, Deep Breathing and Physical Exercise among others.

Conclusion

The unabated attacks by the bandits and insurgents had occasioned untold hardship on Nigerian people especially in educational settings. It has also succeeded in destabilizing economic, social, political, religious and cultural lives of the people. In short the intractable problem has led to the categorization of Nigeria as a failing state. Government effort so far to solve the problem through military containment has proved unproductive. The nation waits in delight to the peace that goes along with victory of security personnel over the bandits, kidnappers, Boko Haram etc. Although the cost of the prevalent insecurity in Nigeria is difficult to measure in financial or real terms, however it is clear to observers that it has cost Nigerians enormous human, educational and material resources. Security plays a crucial role in the existence and sustenance of human being. Without security, there can be no stable society rather there will be prevalent fear and danger from violent death.

The perception of insecurity in educational settings may more often than not influence how people act and behave regardless of whether the perceived threat is real or not. Although perceptions of insecurity are not always borne out by statistical evidence, they fundamentally affect well-being (Netsayi, Eliya & Chimaraoke. 2008). Therefore, health education programmes seek to make neighborhoods safe, as well as informing students on how to deal with sexual and other forms of harassment within their schools, also make those children who would have otherwise thinking such as dropped out because of fear stays in school. In general, health education programmes make schools

and communities safe for students and residence that will be able to address some of the security related fears that make students drop out of school.

Recommendations

1. Victims of banditry and insurgency should be enlightened by health educators on how to cope with posttraumatic stress disorder so as to avoid emotional health problems.
2. The religious leaders should be properly enlightened by health educators on how to

avoid being kidnapped or attacked by bandits and insurgents.

3. Education should be given priority in the nation's budget and schools should be equipped with adequate teaching and learning facilities to enhance transmission of adequate knowledge of health education in the nation.
4. Wealthy Nigerians should invest their resources in Nigeria to curb the menace of unemployment that may lead youth to join the bandit or insurgent groups.

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