

THE QUEST FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION AND THE CHALLENGES OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Auwalu Saminu

Abstract

The basis of this paper lies on the simple fact that nothing meaningful can be achieved without a peaceful and secured environment. The quest for science education cannot be well studied without a secured environment. The paper examined the failure of successive administration in Nigeria to address challenges such as poverty, unemployment, distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities, ultimately resulting to anger, agitation, frustration, alienation, cries and insecurity of lives and properties of the citizens. It also looks into the root causes, challenges and way forward to insecurity situations in Nigeria. Science education can be used to restore peace and security in Nigerian society through provision of jobs and wealth, as the key to any economic development of a nation. The abundant human and natural resources in Nigeria are underutilized mainly because of lack of political will, poor educational systems etc. education in science provides knowledge, skills and attitudes that prepare an individual to be productive thereby securing the future.

According to Farlex (2013) insecurity is the ability of not been sure, certain or doubtful of a situation. It can also be when one is inadequately guarded or protected or unsafe. Insecurity is also a state of being subject to danger or injury. In recent times this country, has suffered plaques of crisis, each leading to scores of lives lost and destruction of properties. For a nation to build a solid prosperous economy, and begin the ultimate march towards social and political growth, security is a minimum requirement. One of the distinguishing characteristics of nationhood is a state's ability to provide security for her citizens, defend her sovereignty and territorial integrity (Udah, 2012). Nigeria is a developing country with myriads of problems such as Boko Haram menace, poverty, insecurity, unemployment, child labour/abuse etc. All these resulting in this present state of insecurity in the society.

Science and technology have been defined as the instrument upon which nation building relied on and every country today craved for their advancement (Ajewole, 2007). Science and technology education has become an integral part of the worlds' culture and any country that overlooks this importance truism does so at its own peril (Eze 2007). Modern gadgets in all aspects of human comfort are inventions of science and technology. Electricity, aircraft, telephone, television, computers and other forms of machinery could not have been invented without science and technology. Science and technology is also very essential in the production of medicine and treatment of diseases. A nation without science and technology cannot feed its people because agriculture requires the application of science and technology which in turn eradicate poverty, unemployment and other vices of insecurity.

Science involves research and dissemination of new knowledge. The study of science is concerned with mental processes in reasoning, problem solving, remembering and evaluation. It also involves ability to perceive value issues and feelings and skills acquisition. Knowledge of science

fosters in students a wide range of skills and thinking capabilities that are essential to curb unemployment.

Problems and Challenges of Insecurity in Nigeria

Eme, (2011) described insecurity as a breach of peace and security whether historical, religious, ethno regional, civil, social, economic and political that have contributed to recurring conflicts, which Nigeria has witnessed over the years resulting in war and destruction and loss of lives and properties.

Insecurity of lives and property has become a big menace in the country in recent times. Before now, as Nwadiakor (2012) pointed out lack of security is among the least problems of the country. He explained 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, Nigeria Police Force, the Immigration services and the Customs. The normal annual budget for security was among the least in the exclusive list. (Nwadiakor, 2012). This of course is no longer, the case in recent times. Government spends fantastic amounts of money on security, both at the federal, state and local government level all to no avail.

The challenges of insecurity particularly tourism is a worldwide phenomenon not only peculiar to Nigeria. It is on record that Nigeria had witnessed a drastic and frantic insecurity challenges in the last few years. These are in various forms; communal, religious, political and socioeconomic with varying degree of casualty, mostly affecting innocent citizens of this country. According to Dembo and Mustapha (2012), the most worrisome fact is that this incessant violence apart from million and maiming innocent souls has imprinted agony, tension and aggression in the minds of Nigerians. They further stated that we live in absolute suspicious and constant presentiment of an impending disaster. Most economic activities have come to a halt and private businesses are crippling with the result of the inability of employers to pay their employees. Therefore government function rarely take place in public compare to the previous years, these are direct aftermath of insecurity in the country (Dembo and Mustapha, 2012).

According to Albert, (2004), security problems includes; communal violence, political assassination, electoral violence, youth militancy in the Niger Delta, Oil theft, illegal oil bunkering and sea piracy. Insecurity challenges according to Eme (2011) are:-

- i. Urbanization process
- ii. Poverty
- iii. Electoral frauds
- iv. Poor management of the national economy
- v. Bad roads and high ways (pot holes)
- vi. The Boko Haram and Jos crises
- vii. Insecurity induced by those targeted with the responsibility of securing lives.

Other insecurity challenges include:

- i. The judiciary
- ii. State of our health institutions
- iii. Maritime security (piracy, illegal, fishing and oil theft)
- iv. Niger Delta Militancy
- v. Armed robbery

- vi. Kidnapping
- vii. Porous borders
- viii. Youth unemployment and climate change

Impact of Insecurity in Nigeria

State of insecurity undermined internal cohesion, corporate existence of state and its abilities (Okehe, 2011). According to Eme (2012), the followings are some of the impact of insecurity:-

- i. Social dislocation and population displacement
- ii. Social tensions and new pattern of settlement which encourages Muslims/Christians or members of an ethnic group moving to a particular area.
- iii. Heightens citizenship question and encourages hostility between “indigene” and “settlers”.
- iv. Dislocation and disruption of family and communal life general atmosphere of mistrust, fear, anxiety and frenzy
- v. Dehumanization of women children and men (rape and child abuse)
- vi. Deepening of hunger and poverty
- vii. Atmosphere of political insecurity and instability
- viii. Governance deficit as a result of security agencies inefficiency and corruption.

Some Root Causes of Insecurity Challenges

Insecurity takes various forms in different parts of the country. In the south west, armed robbers have taken over, while in the north, cross – border bandits operate with ease. In the south – south the fear of kidnapping is beginning of wisdom. As observed by Eme (2011), the aged, titled men, clerics, government officials, academics, professionals, women and children are not spared.

One of the major causes of insecurity is the establishment of more educational institution, resulting in mass grandaunts all over the country. Most of who are unemployed. Nwadiolor (2010) observed that about 40 percent of Nigerians, who are mostly youths are not gainfully, employed. This could be the root cause of youth militant in Nigeria.

According to Dembo and Mustapha (2011), insecurity is caused by three (among others) major factors. Namely illiteracy, unemployment and disregard of traditional security measures. Inadequacies in the security agencies, modern communication equipment, sophisticated arms and ammunition. Allowances and salaries of these security agencies are hardly paid on time; their welfare is nothing to write home about. Other causes of insecurity are the monetization of the labour market, gross party indiscipline and infighting among political gladiators.

How Science Education Can Help to Improve Security in The Country

- a. Revisiting science curriculum: there is need to revisit the examination oriented curriculum presently operating in Nigeria. Curriculum planners and developers should team up with experts in various entrepreneurial ventures whose skills are needed for acquisition by learners. The skills should be building for self-reliance which will reduce unemployment.
- b. Availability of space and relevant materials are pre-requisite for success of any enterprise including science education. To buttress this UNESCO (2000) stated that instructional materials are very important in the actualization of the curriculum.

- c. Science education equips learners with skills for effective management and communication. When a person learns early enough to use good skills, it will be hard for that person to allow himself to be used as a tool for destruction.

Insecurity Challenges: The Way Forward

According to Eme (2012), Nigeria needs a policy that is stable, peaceful and safe enough from criminal assaults, murder, chaos, tyranny and breakdown of authority, so that the populace can face issues of development with vigor and courage. The following recommendations are suggested:

1. Both government and the citizenry have a role to play: partnership is indispensable in curbing security challenges. While citizens are expected to be patriotic, vigilant and proactive, the government needs to provide an enabling free environment for the peaceful co-existence of all. As a complement to the services of the conventional security agencies, states should sponsor community based vigilantes.
2. Economic Employment – government at all levels should ensure that rising poverty indices be reversed. Various micro credit schemes should be put in place. Local contractors should be used to execute government projects, this will create jobs, boost local economy and social harmony.
3. Re-organization of the security agencies should be carried out through a new orientation via retraining of security agents. As Eme (2012) puts it, everybody should be more security conscious, share information with the police and other security agencies. Moreover, efforts should be put in crime prevention than control.
4. The size of Nigeria's security agencies should be increased, motivate them and strengthen neighborhood watch.
5. Social infrastructures like good roads, streetlights, schools skill acquisition centers should be well fixed.
6. Creation of programmes that would empower our youths technically. This will enable them to be self – reliant and take their minds away from crimes.
7. Avoidance of undue retrenchment of workers, payment of compensation for property destroyed are ways of avoiding insecurity.
8. Science education must be encouraged this is because the knowledge, skills, and rational thinking it offers can go a long way to produce better individuals with better understanding and ideology. Education in general should be made free and compulsory for all, so that everyone will know the importance of ensuring security.
9. There is the need to re-examine the science curriculum at all levels, to emphasize the appropriate knowledge and skills that have direct bearing. On everyday life activities.
10. Government should demonstrate adequate political will to tackle the problem of transparency and accountability in the country.

11. A strong desire for a sovereign national conference. Adejumo (2011) suggested that the federation should stay but let every region grow at its own pace.
12. Legislative and constitutional review should be initiated to assess the country's constitution and amend or expunge necessary areas that have been found to give rise to conflicts and security problems.

Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion we should not fold our hands leave the affairs of the nation to continue moving in the negative direction. Resigning to fate has never been a solution to any form of mayhem world over. While appreciating the effort of the government in the area of security, all hands must be on deck to solve the immense security challenges so that we will have a better country to live, a country where peace and tranquility will reign. A secured environment will give rise to human development especially in science and technology and a habitable environment for all. To ensure national security and provision of employment to its citizens, Nigeria must improve its quality of indigenous education in particular and its educational system in general. The country should sincerely re-orientate the citizens for a desired attitudinal change and entrench the philosophy of unity in diversity. The fight against corruption should be the concern and responsibility of all. Special attention should be paid to higher education; given the role that knowledge plays in development and its ability to influence the whole system.

References

- Adejumo, A. (2011). *The problems and challenges of insecurity in Nigeria*. Paper presented to CAN UK General Meeting 10th Sept. <http://www.chatafrick.com/articles/nigerianaffaris.htm/retrieved1/4/2013>.
- Adewumi, T. (2012). *Repositioning chemistry education for unemployment challenges*. A paper presented at 2nd Annual Conference Organized by COAESU FCE Katsina Chapter.
- Ajewole, G. A. & Akpan, B. (2007). *STM and biodiversity conversation for sustainable development in Africa*. STAN proceeding of 50th Anniversary Conference.
- Akpor, A. (2011). *Security report on security challenges in Nigeria*. Nigerian Master web Daily December, 31.
- Albert, I. O. (2004): *Explaining the security challenges in contemporary Nigeria*. [http://www.fellow%zo,investiture\[1\]pdf.retrieved1/4/2013](http://www.fellow%zo,investiture[1]pdf.retrieved1/4/2013).
- Dembo, N.B., and Mustapha, A. (2012). Nigerian security challenge facing Nigeria a solution. *Daily Trust Newspapers*. Abuja 15th Sept. 2012.
- Eme, O. I. (2009). *Ethno-religious identities in Nigeria; implications for good governance in Nigeria*. A paper submitted to the editor in chief of a book project on Islam and governance in Nigeria.

- Eze, C. (2007). Achieving gender equity in science, technology and mathematics (STM) education through corporative learning: Implication for sustainable development *STAN proceeding of 50th Anniversary Conference*.
- Farlex, (2013). <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/insecurity>.retrieved1/4/2013.
- Ibrahim, J. & Igbuzor, O. (2002). *Memorandum submitted to the presidential committee on national security in Nigeria*.
- Nwadiolor, E. (2011): Security report on security challenges Dec. 30, view-point.
- Okehe, A. A. (2011). National Security and integration in Nigeria: An appraisal, *Badala Journal of Arts and Social Sciences* 7:7:1-14.
- Uda, A. J. (2012). *Security: Is Nigeria safe? A lecture delivered by the inspector general of police, represented by the AIG Zone 2 Headquarters, Lagos at the Nigeria – Swedish Chamber of Commerce*.