

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE EDUCATION, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND CHALLENGES OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*Early Childhood Care Education comprises of essential programmes and activities which are critical to holistic development, academic success and future achievements of children, Early Childhood Care Education is recognized by the federal government of Nigeria as a foundational and essential programme that Nigerian children must experience. The negligence of the security sector is responsible for the non performance of democratic governance and its attendant violent crime such as, abduction of school children, ethnic crisis, corruption among others. This paper examines good governance and security challenges in Nigeria and identified the causes of insecurity in Nigeria as double standard in the application of the Nigeria legal system, the 1999 constitution, lopsided appointment and unemployment among others. These have increased the level of insecurity in Nigeria and have caused low enrollment in the school system, loss of lives of children who are supposed to be in school and most cases closure of schools. This paper discussed the need to check lack of good governance and security challenges insecurity through investing on peace, economic empowerment of the citizenry, employment equity in distribution of resources and increase in security agents among others. The following recommendations were suggested, some of which are provision of appropriate infrastructure for good governance, rule of law, creation of employment opportunities among others*

Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) as defined by UNESCO (2012), as the “holistic development of a child’s social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs in order to build a solid and broad foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing. Early years in life are the most important to the formation of intelligence, personality and social behaviour of a child. The year before a child reaches Kindergarten is among the most critical in his or her life to influence learning. That is why modern societies show serious concern for the education of their young ones by providing needed support to prepare them to succeed later in life (Ejeh, 2006). It is common practice in most societies to make provision for early childhood education programmes of various sorts for children below the official school-going

age (usually 6 years) mainly to prepare them for education in primary schools (Obidike, 2012). The Federal Government of Nigeria recognizes the importance of early childhood education in Nigeria and as a result it was given prominence in the National Policy of Education (FRN, 2004) as one of the programmes in the Nigerian educational system. The foundation of education of the child according to Nakpodia, (2011) is the pre-schools education which forms an integral part of his or her early education which maybe formal or informal, which is given in an educational institution to children aged 1 to 5 plus prior to their entering the primary school . This educational level of the child provides for the physical, psycho-motor, health, nutritional, intellectual, aesthetic, emotional and social development of the pre-school child. If childhood care education can provide these vital necessities which are fundamental in human life, it is not therefore unlikely to have an important and strong relationship with the pupils' performance at the primary school level and perhaps at the secondary and tertiary levels (Nakpodia, 2011).

Maduwesi (2001) refers to early childhood care education as the education offered to children who have not yet reached the statutory age of beginning primary school. He further maintained that it is a semi-formal education arrangement, usually outside home whereby young children from about the age of 3 years are exposed through play like activities in a group setting through mental, social and physical learning suited to their developmental stages, until the mandatory age of government approved formal schooling.

FRN (2004) refers to early childhood care education (pre-primary education) as an education given in an educational institution to children aged 3-5 plus prior to their enrollment in the primary school.

### **Objectives of Early Childhood Education**

The objectives of early childhood education according to FRN (2004) are to;

1. Effect a smooth transition from home to school
2. Prepare the child for the primary level of education
3. Provide adequate care and supervision for the children while their parents are at work (on the farm, in the market or offices)
4. Inculcate social norms
5. Inculcate in the child the spirit of inquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, the environment, art, music and playing with toys and so on.
6. Develop a sense of cooperation and team spirit
7. Learn good habits, especially good health habits and.
8. Teach the rudiments of numbers, letters, colours, shapes,' and forms and so on through play.

### **Ways of Achieving the Objectives of Early Childhood Care Education in Nigeria.**

The achievement of the stated objectives of early childhood care education in Nigeria is brought about via the following means:

- Establishing pre-primary sections in existing public schools and encouraging both community and private efforts in the provision of early childhood education.
- Making provision in teacher education programmes for specialization in early childhood education.
- Ensuring that the medium of instruction will principally be the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community; and to this end: (i) developing the orthography for many more Nigerian languages; and (ii) producing textbooks in Nigerian languages.
- Ensuring that the main method of teaching in the childhood education centers will be through play, and that the curriculum of teacher education is appropriately oriented to achieve this.
- Regulating and controlling the operation of early childhood education - to this end, the teacher pupil ratio is set at 1:25.
- Setting and monitoring a minimum standard for early childcare centers in the country.
- Ensuring full participation of government, communities and teachers' associations in the running and maintenance of early childhood care education facilities.

### **Reasons for Early Childhood Education**

Underpinning the importance attached to early childhood care education which pre-primary education is an integral part, the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in 1990 undertook a joint commitment to make an urgent universal appeal to give every child a better future. In addition, the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasized urgent priority to ensure access to and improve the quality of education for all children (Maduewesi, 2001). On the bases of the above stipulations, the following reasons for Early Childhood Care Education are captured.

#### **These Reasons Include:**

1. From conception of six years of age, children, according to research findings, undergo rapid mental, social and physical development to the extent that by the age of six, their brains would have developed to almost the size of an adult;
2. The convention on the rights of the child stipulates that children have a right to live and develop to their full capacity;
3. Moral and social values postulate that through children, societies pass on values and culture from generation to generation.
4. Supporting the development of the child physically and mentally leads to increased enrolment, improves performance and the society generally.
5. Provision of early childcare facilities and other equal opportunities to children from both the privileged and disadvantaged homes.
5. A programme in early childhood development should be used as an entry point for other developmental activities which will benefit the entire community;

6. ECC (Early Child Care) projects should be linked with other developmental activities for women, nutrition, health, water and sanitation,
7. There is a growing demand for better ways of caring for children through an Early Childhood Care Education project given the advancement in science and technology which now ensures the survival of many more children, thereby increasing population growth.

The National Policy on Education for Nigeria became necessary to avoid the previous half-measured educational policies, administration and control which was a hallmark of the missionary and regional eras of education in the country. The policy is meant to put in clear perspective the educational jurisdiction of the Federal Government, including that of the State and Local Governments.

Therefore, security should be given utmost attention and priority above all other interest in the state, because it determines the unity, integration and peaceful co-existence that ensure the corporate existence of the country as an entity that will devise a viable and efficient alternative for social, political and economic growth and development within the limited resource at its disposal.

### **Conceptualization of Concepts**

It is important to conceptualize the key words in the discourse, that is, Education, Insecurity good governance, challenges of insecurity, and early childhood care education

#### **Insecurity:**

Insecurity is a feeling of uncertainty, a lack of confidence or anxiety about yourself. It can also be described as a state of being often exposed to danger or threat, the concept of safety for the territory and population of a state and by extension the policies adopted for its preservation. Security is sometimes defined as the assurance of future welfare. In this broad sense national security might be regarded as the whole range of measures affecting the economic and social welfare of a population, as well as provision against aggression from abroad or subversion from within.

According to vocabulary.com insecurity is the anxiety you experience when you feel vulnerable and insecure. It is the state of being subjected to danger or injury. challenges of security for the purpose of this paper, refers to the breach of peace and security whether religious, ethno-regional, civil, social, economic and political that has contributed to reoccurring conflicts which Nigeria has witnessed over the years. This situation has resulted in wanton destruction of lives and property (Achineku, Ackanyon and Twar, 2013).

### **Causes of Insecurity**

The causes of insecurity in Nigeria can be attributed to the following:

**i) Porous Borders:** the porosity of Nigeria borders has serious implications for the countries security. The porous borders cum weak security system provide criminal persons easy access into the country. Akinyemi (2013) noted that border security has come to assume heightened importance in the world today as the rate of criminal activities has increased in scale. He stated that Nigeria has been battling with transnational crimes with pose serious threat to national security. Umeifekwen (2018) lamented that small arms and light weapons proliferation and the availability of these weapons have enabled militant groups and criminal groups to have easy access to arms.

**ii) Youth Unemployment;** Nigeria ranks amongst Nations with the highest level of unemployment, the bulk of these unemployed are youths. This creates restiveness and tension which in some cases lead to some forms of criminality, drug addiction, kidnapping for ransom and banditry and armed robber}' now rampant in the Nation. Insecurity rises with unemployment and poverty because unemployment leads to loss of income which affects the people ability to provide basic necessities for their households and dependent relatives. Advanced countries make social security payment to the unemployed to keep them off the streets until; they get jobs (Kirby, 2011). Akande and Okuwa (2009) emphasized that youth unemployment and poverty are playing a major role in African conflict experiences, including Nigeria. In similar view, Umeifekwen (2018) observed that many unemployed have resorted to activities that constitute security challenges to Nigeria. Nwafor (2018) stated that political violence, ethno-religious conflicts and terrorism rife in Nigeria are no doubt consequences of unemployment and poverty. In his view, if most of our youths are employed, there will be drastic reduction in the level of crime and insecurity in the country.

**iii Corruption:** It is an undisputable fact that corruption as an act of dishonesty among government officials and even ordinary individuals in the State destroys a nation. There is strong relationship although asymmetric rather than symbiotic in nature, between corruption and insecurity. Cohen, (1014) affirmed that corruption poses a significant risk for both national and international security. His agreement points to the fact that corruption fans the embers of insecurity at national and international levels. According to Akinniraye, (2015) corruption is responsible for the current national insecurity situation. He stressed that Mohammed Yusuf the founder of Boko Haram and his successor Abubakar Shekau have railed against corruption in Nigeria. They use corruption among public officials to justify their violent struggle. Transparency International (2014) cited by Alumona, Onwuanabile and Okonkwo (2018) emphasized that corrupt practices feed insecurity. It leads to social and political grievances by reinforcing a sense of inequality and injustice. More so, it reduces State legitimacy because when government immersed in corruption fails to fulfill masses expectations, some aggrieved victims will likely resort to violent challenge the status quo government.

## **Good Governance**

According to the United Nations commission on human rights, governance is the process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resource and guarantee the realization of human rights. Good governance accomplishes this in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption, and with due respect and regards for the rule of law. The true test of good governance is the degree to which it delivers on the promise of human rights. The key question is, are the institutions of governance effectively guaranteeing the right to health, adequate housing, sufficient food, quality education, fair justice and personal security?

Good governance according to Belfut, Juril and Olusegun (2014) is all about effective and transparent leadership that produces results which together transform the socio-economic conditions of a nation. The objective of good governance is human development with equity and social justice. The goal of governance should be to develop capacities that are needed to realize development that gives priority to early childhood care education advances women, sustains the environment and creates needed opportunities for employment and other livelihoods. Oshionebo (2004) cited by Okolie and Agbo (2019) satiated that good governance equalizes; accountable and responsible government recognized by freedom of speech, separation of powers, lower level of corruption and nepotism, competent officials and realistic policies, respect for fundamental human rights and accessible criminal justice system etc. Alozie (2017) noted that good governance entails that political, social and economic priorities of a nation are based on broad consensus and that the voices of the poorest and most vulnerable are heard in decision making over the allocation of developmental resources.

## **A Brief History of Early Childhood Education in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, organized education of the child below primary school age did not receive official recognition until very recently, receive the attention it deserved. The concept of infant schools was introduced in Nigeria by the missionaries in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when such schools were set up in the Western and Eastern regions of Nigeria. Early Childhood education in the form of nursery school or pre-primary education as we know it today in Nigeria is largely a post-colonial development. The semblances of it during the colonial era were the Kindergarten and Infant classes, which consisted of groups of children considered not yet ready for primary education. As grouping for instruction in schools was not age-based during that period, some children aged six or even more, could be found in some of the infant classes with the phasing out of infant classes, some parents began to feel the need for nursery schools.

During that period, (pre-independence) all efforts for provision of early childhood education were confined to the voluntary sector and received little or no support from the government. It was for the first time in 1977 with the introduction of National Policy on Education by the then military government of Nigeria that the importance and need for early childhood education was given official recognition and linked with the child's educational performance in primary school. Gradually, early childhood institution stayed, and by 1985,

Nigeria had about 4200 early childhood educational institutions. While by 1992 the number increased to about 8,300 (Federal Government of Nigeria/UNICEF 1993).

Nowadays, early childhood educational institutions are located in various places and buildings campuses of universities and Colleges, premises of some industries and business organizations, church premises, residential buildings with unprecedented expansion owing to the high demand for early childhood care and education by parents.

### **Early Childhood Care and Education**

Early childhood care Education is the education offered to children who have not yet reached the statutory age of beginning primary school. It is a semi-formal education arrangement, usually outside home where by young children from about the age of 3 years are exposed through play-like activities in a group setting through mental, social and physical learning suited to their developmental stages, until the mandatory age of government approved formal schooling. FRN (2004) refers to Early Childhood Care Education (pre-primary education) as an education given in an educational Institution to children aged 3-5 plus prior to their enrollment in the primary school. NCCE (2007) opined that Early childhood care education is a facility out small outside home set up to provide care and support for the development and education of every young children from birth to the age of five years.

### **Objectives of Early Childhood**

The objectives of early childhood education according to FRN (2004) are:

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### **The Impact of Governance on Early Childhood Care Education in Nigeria**

There is a linear relationship between good governance and a functional early childhood care education. There cannot be a functional early childhood care education where country's resources and power are not well utilized for the citizen of the nation. Good Governance is the use of State resources and power in an accountable way to achieve and promote the well-being of the citizenry. It therefore, implies that when the power and

resources are not well managed for the welfare of the citizen, there is bound to be a problem. The power and resources in Nigeria are not well utilized by the people.

There has not been good governance in Nigeria in the past 61 years. The worst has been from 1999 when the country changed from the military dictatorship to the democratic rule. However, there is that belief that good governance thrives in a democratic government. According to Odo (2015), good governance thrives in a democratic setting. The author averred where there is no democratic government there can be no good governance

These leaders as political and public office holders see their positions as a means for illegal wealth accumulation to the detriment of the common Nigerian. The leaders give privileges and undue advantage to their family members, friends, and associates, in the distribution of public resources (Adeosun, 2012). Nigeria state is corrupt, managed by corrupt leaders who have made the state an instrument of capital accumulation, rather than using it to project the interest of the citizenry these leaders make democracy a curse for the nation because of the abuse of it when democracy is abused, good governance becomes an illusion.

Adeosun (2012) posits that the Nigeria legislators have failed to utilize its enormous power to ease the economic and social hardship confronting the people of the nation. Corruption is the abuse of public office for private gain, and it is an aspect of bad governance (Ogundiya, 2014). corruption is rampant at all levels of government, crippling basic health and education services and other social infrastructures Good governance cannot be possible in a state where corruption is gaining a foothold.

Corruption is evil, and it affects all areas of human lives, corruption increases poverty and disproportionately affects those in the low-income group because it pulls resources from the national treasury into the hands of few individuals who are politically powerful. The problem of Nigeria is not lack of resources, but of prevalence of corruption hence the high cost of governance. Lack of good governance is impacting on Early Childhood Care Education in Nigeria in various ways. However, there are specific areas it seriously affects. This paper considers three critical areas. These are; Research, Teacher Education, and Infrastructure.

#### **Research:**

Research in the Nigerian universities has been rendered useless because of the paucity of fund. The government has money to build personal houses for the government officials but no money for research. They also have money to sponsor political party campaign and rally. Many of them are so naive to have gone as far as buying properties in the developed countries and had bank accounts in foreign countries but no money for educational research. Most educational research institutes are mere names but can do nothing.

Corruption of our government officials had killed and buried research in Early Childhood Care education for decades. Because of corruption resources from the national treasury meant for research are in the hands of a few individuals who are politically powerful.

#### **Teachers education and training**

Teachers Education and Training in Nigeria is very poor when compared with other developing countries in Africa. Due to the lack of sound teacher education and training in

Nigeria, the teaching and learning of Early Childhood Care education are perceived difficult by both the teachers and the students.

In the present Nigeria, students who, are supposed to be "idle mind" are on the increase because students do not want to do Early Childhood Care believing it is hard due to bad teacher education. Consequent upon this, political thugs, hoodlum, kidnappers, arm robbers, and other criminals are on the increase in the nation. Therefore, the truism in the credo that "an idle hand is the workshop of the Devil".

Given the havoc the insurgency had caused to the Nigerian socio-economic development in the recent time by our youth, lack of good governance is a menace in the nation.

#### **Infrastructure**

Infrastructure in the Nigerian educational institutions is in a terrible condition. It is worrisome and nasty for students to learn early childhood care education under the tree in some part of the nation today. This is a reflection of the poor budgetary allocation to education by the government. Good governance requires that enough funds be made available for all educational programmes. The Nigeria experience shows that poor budgetary allocation to education is meager, and this against the UNESCO recommendations of 26% of the total allocation to the education sector (Akindutire and Ekundayo, 2010)

A visit to some of the Nigerian universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education reveals that the Nigerian government is not serious about education. There are poor office accommodations for lecturers and working conditions. early childhood care education is a course that requires a conducive environment for its teaching and learning. Many lecturers cannot spend thirty minutes in his or her offices for reading and preparation for students teaching because of the hostile nature of the offices. Most offices do not have good furniture, lighting system, and air conditional conversely, the offices of the Vice-Chancellors, the Rectors and the Provost

### **The Challenges of Insecurity in Nigeria**

King (2016) cited by Umeifekwem (2018) stated that insecurity is the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection. It is lack or inadequate freedom from danger. Viewed differently, insecurity implies lack of adequate measure designed to protect and safeguard the citizenry and the resources of individuals, groups, business and the nation against sabotage or violent occurrence (Ogunleye, Adewale, Alaese and Ogunde, 2011). According to Umeifekwem (2012) insecurity thrives more in corrupt and poorly governed environment with weak institutions.

From the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914, through its independence to the present, several efforts have been made and are still being made to manage and secure Nigeria and to make it a Nation of shared prosperity and development. Such purposive attempt to achieve this remains the conveying of different Constitutional Conferences and Reviews to look into issues challenging Nigeria. However, the critical challenge has been on how to turn our diversity into an asset instead of a problem.

"Nigeria is blessed with incredible rich diversity of people, of culture, of religions, of mineral resources, oil, gas, an amazingly rich bio-diversity that should make us the envy of the world. We are blessed with abundantly diverse agro-ecologies, which should also make us a land of bountiful harvest with capacity to feed ourselves and Africa. Our diversity cannot be our problem but rather our strength.

But when mismanaged, diversity becomes divergence. Rather than unite. We become splintered, with each entity believing that somehow, it is better without the other. Our failure to manage this diversity on the basis of justice, equity, fair play tolerance and fear of God and our short sightedness, greed and tendency to primitive accumulation, the effort to enthrone aristocracy, ethnocracy, religiocracy and mediocracy have given rise to agitations and the current insecure condition of our country. In the last two decades, but worse in the past eight years, it has been difficult for government of Nigeria to fulfill its obligation of securing the lives and property of citizens as contained in our Constitution.

The Nigerian Security forces have engaged in battling the Boko Haram insurgents in the North East who had invaded the area and have as of recent announced their occupation and installation of Boko Haram Islamic Government in some parts of Borno State. Also, armed Fulani herdsmen/terrorist have wrecked havoc in the Middle Belt/ North Central, killing and maiming people, destroying houses and occupying the ancestral lands of the Tivs and others.

The Fulani Herdsmen have also invaded the forest in the South West and South East destroying people's agricultural farms, houses and property. The existence of separatist entities like the Indigenous People of Biafra, the Oduduwa Nation Movement and the Niger Delta Militants, is prevalent in the country. The activities of Fulani Herdsmen have lead to displacement of people from their abode, who now live on IDP camps and depend for survival only on donations and food and shelter from charitable organizations and Government. Unfortunately, our Government seems to place more premium on the life of cattle/cows than on that of its citizens and indeed trading cattle's in exchange for human lives. Hence, the education of our children is in jeopardy. Abduction of school children from their schools has become the order of the day. Some states have closed boarding facilities in their schools. Our children are traumatized by these experiences and we wonder what future holds for the Nation in the hands of these children who passed through this harrowing experience when they become adults.

## **Conclusion**

The importance of solid foundation in education is obvious. Early childhood education is where the foundation is laid. Poor performance in the other levels of academics programs can be traced to this foundation level. All Nigerian children deserve the best, and education is the only legacy that can be given to set them on the road to optimal development. More importantly, there is need for the institutionalization of good governance and effective

security operatives through training and retraining and provision of modern equipment to improve their welfare.

### **Recommendations**

- The government should empower our youths who are innovative and willing to establish ventures. Through this, most youth will prefer starting private business without depending on government for job. This will reduce high crime rate wave insecurity.
- Government should regulate salary of all teachers in early childhood education as well as school fees. The poor salary solely determined by respective exploiters of Early Child Childhood schools owners scare away many parents in sending their children. Poor salary denies such schools of professional of qualified and dedicated teachers hence children are denied quality education.
- Legislative and constitutional review to assess the country's constitution and amend or expunge where necessary especially sections that are not largely acceptable by the citizens is not negotiable..
- Political actors and institutions should embrace the principles of true democracy and allow open, free and fair competition that are essential in the process of aggregation of National Union and development choices.
- Government should improve on its infrastructure, educational system, power and communication sectors.
- We most all fight corruption until it is completely obliterated in all sphere of our nation. The law must take its course on any corrupt citizen not minding his or status in the society. The rule of law must be repeated by all and sundry.

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