
Proactive School Management Strategies for Peace and Security Education: A Holistic View of Its Utility

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Abstract

That, there is security crises in the Nigerian education system are real tangible and manifest. This is obvious to the deaf, blind and unborn. Thus, insecurity in Nigeria has impacted negatively on all the developmental spheres. Security or Insecurity impinges on all spectrums of education and national life. It is worthy of note that societies that placed high premium on security are educationally more advanced and developed. The scientific and technological breakthrough in the western and Asian societies lay credence to this assertion. It's therefore an apt postulation that significant relationship exists between security and development and between insecurity and underdevelopment. This paper examines and x-rays the benefits of peace and secured educational institutions and its environment that is completely free from danger for excellent academic thrive. Proactive and priority of security in our education institutions at all levels will engender equality and purposeful school system in Nigeria. The paper concludes that societies all over the world will be peaceful, free from danger, more democratic and would achieve sustainable progress through prioritization of security.

Keywords: Security crises, Insecurity, Peace, Proactivity, Free from danger.

Security all over the universe is a vital government trajectory responsibility. It is a paramount utility the government will swear to provide. Reasons of insecurity in some climes have been the basis of election outcome, strategies and campaign. It is a truism, that the outcome of the 2015 general elections in Nigeria was predicted on promises of provision of adequate security for life and properties. This was so, owing to the degree of insecurity and volatility that was prevalent at that point in time.

Educational institutions were more vulnerable and mostly considered as soft targets for attacks. This was at the behest of the Boko Haram insurgency with its debilitating ideology that, “Western Education” is “Evil”. With this anachronistic ideology, schools and university campuses were deliberately attacked and innocent students were killed and kidnapped. The attack and kidnapping of over 250 teenagers in Chibok, the attack on Mubi Polytechnics when several students were selected, identified and killed, the Audu Bayaro University attack and kidnapping of school children in Lagos were some of the typical and unsavory incidents of attacks on places of learning in Nigeria. The climax of the attacks on schools culminated in the withdrawal of children and wards from schools. According to Okeke (2017) the lack of safety in schools, created an atmosphere of de-schooling. These unabated attacks on universities and other institutions led to final closure of almost all the schools in the North Eastern Geopolitical Zone of Northern Nigeria.

Amidst this scenario, Otto and Ukpere (2010) observed that the security situation in schools and the country in general was further deteriorated. Thus, considerable efforts put in place to reverse the trend by providing protection and safety for student and staff proved futile with further security dysfunctional consequences. Further dislocation and disorientation of universities and schools, is the vicious attacks and kidnappings of university lecturers and students for ransom which in most cases results to death, accentuated by rampaging Fulani herdsmen, (Benson 2010, Agabi 2014 and Igwe 2015). No doubt, these attacks and carnages have impacted negatively on the sustainability, quality and quantity of the education system in Nigeria. The pertinent questions one may pose are; To what extent has security crises impacted on the development of education in Nigeria? To what extent has the government, society and the school community done to enhance and ensure the safety of schools? These all important questions need to be addressed as the quality and quantity of secondary school enrolment continue to deteriorate in attrition largely due to unsafe and insecure school environment.

It is in view of the above nemesis that this study sought to address the impact of insecurity on secondary schools which has promoted a deepening proportion of frustration, despair and futility amongst parents, students and teachers in the Nigerian Secondary School System. To a large extent, the study produced a stark juxtaposition of insecurity and quality of education. The paper also highlighted laudable and pragmatic paradigms and strategies for school security and sustainable peace in the secondary education system.

Security and School Management: Its Thematic Analysis

The concept “Security” and its application is as old as mankind itself. The phenomenon has been central and primordial even in primitive societies and days of the early man in perspective. For want of security, the early man lived in protective caves and on top of trees to ward off dangerous preys. Security and safety is central and

priceless to humanity, even animals have the instinct of safety. Otto and Ukpere, (2012); averred that the instinct of self preservation is central in all living organisms. Indeed, security measures and strategies evolved over time and space with the impact of modernity and technological innovations. With the evolution of nationhood, the need for security necessitated the social contract theory in which the state and people willingly surrendered their lives to an organ (Government) who will oversee the survival and wellbeing of its citizens. However, recent outburst and contrived impunity of government agencies entrusted with security issue, the monolithic responsibility of security issues in the hands of government shifted. There have been debates and prepositions against the concentration of security issues in the hands of government. The debates and conjecture shifted swiftly from the control of the states to societies and individuals. Benson (2018) argued that the “Straight Jacket” militaristic approach to security that dominated the discourse during the cold war was “Simple Minded” and subsequently led to the underdevelopment of the concept. From then onward, the emphasis is on the development of “Individual” security. He further itemized human security to include political, economic, social, environmental, food, education, industrial job/occupational and individual or personal.

The advancement in human rationality has provided three contenting perceptions of human security. One is “Neo-realist” theoretical framework. This is centred majorly and principally on the state for the responsibility of security. This was also the standpoint of Erase (2015) illustrated a tripartite conceptualization of security based on international system, state level and individual level. This assertion predisposes that the protection of life and property is the primary responsibility of the State. The state is made up of institutions, and Institutions are established directly or indirectly by the constitution, directly if explicitly provided for in the constitution, indirectly if established in a manner that conforms with the constitution. It is through such institutions that government fulfils its primary responsibility of protecting life and property of the citizen.

The second approach to the concept of security is the pluralist school of thought. This view de-emphasizes the state as the major provider of security. Advocates to this viewpoint contend that security goes beyond military and paramilitary determination of threats. Lending credence to this assertion, Booth, (2012) posited that government should no longer possess the monopoly to provide security because government and its agencies rather than providing security for the citizens, become the major source of insecurity for majority of citizens living in their domains. In consonance with this assertion, Nwabueze (1989:2) averred that government should be more preoccupied with the economic security of the citizenry.

The third view point of the concept of security is the populist approach. Many advocates of this approach conceptualize security in a more realistic viewpoint. They see security as the absence of threat and violence to acquire values and tendencies that would undermine national cohesion. Thus a safe society connotes and necessitates the

feeling of safety from harm where citizens go about their business without hindrance and molestation. Woltrs (2012:77) posited security as the absence of fear of crime and opined that;

“Security has to do with freedom from danger or without threat to a nation’s ability to protect and develop itself, provide its cherished values and legitimate interests and enhance the well being of its people. Thus, internal security could be seen as the freedom from or the absence of those tendencies which could undermine internal cohesion and the co-operate existence of the nation and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values, socio-political and economic objectives as well as meet the legitimate aspirations of the peoples internal security. It also implies freedom from danger to life and prosperity”.

Evidently, security of nation, society, community, the school and the individual as a sine-qua-non to peace and educational development and sustainability. The security system is the super-structure on which the other structures depend for their growth, development, sustainability and progress. Any dysfunctional in the security system affects all the other systems. Insecurity and the absence of peace in any school community is tantamount to absence of schooling. Insecurity is the bane of development and the closure of so many secondary schools in this era of Boko Haram and the menace of Fulani herdsmen. For insecurity, Etannel (2012) identified measures of insecurity in the school to include the following:

- ✓ **Physical Insecurity:** Violence against persons and properties.
- ✓ **Public Insecurity:** violent conflicts, insurgency and terrorism.
- ✓ **Economic Insecurity:** poverty, unemployment, deprivation, penury
- ✓ **Social Insecurity:** Illiteracy, ignorance, disease, malnutrition, discrimination.
- ✓ **Human Rights Violation:** Denial of fundamental rights by state, state agencies and other factors.
- ✓ **Political Insecurity:** Denial of good and special democratic governance.

The UN Commission on security 2003, recommended that human security means protection and empowerment of citizens. Issues of human security are all encompassing. It is no longer on physical protection of life and property alone, but also requires the manifest empowerment of students with capabilities, skills and competences to enable them function and be useful to society. The absence of this social security for the students will invariably turn them to be security risk and exacerbate the entire security system of the land.

Effective Security and School Management

There is an altruistic desire for peace and goodwill by all Nations, Communities, Institutions and Individuals. According to the Senate Leader Sen. Victor Ndoma-Egba who asserted that “education is the only solution to the persistent security challenges

facing the country. Today we have the Boko Haram and other forms of security challenges facing the country and also attacking schools. We can only address the problem of insecurity when we educate the people. The only time we can feel safe in our society is when everybody is educated he noted, and this could be achieved through the effective management of school for peace & sanity.

Giving the above prognosis, security, education and development are inextricably interrelated and invariably interdependent on each other. Needless to overburden the goals, aims and objectives of education to national development as this has become a universal phenomenon to all lovers of education. It is therefore expedient to highlight values of education in any society. Okorie (2011) identified variety of security lapses in secondary schools that pose grave consequences to the educational growth of any society. Young (2004:45) succinctly highlighted that;

“In a war, military problems are given priority. When there is an epidemic, medical problems are given priority. There is a wave of crime, the police receive high priority our children are our major investment in the future. We have relatively few years when we can look to the quality of our great investment if the opportunity is lost it will not reoccur again. He therefore conjectured that for effective and efficient learning environment to take place the security of the school environment should be given a priority”.

Attainment of National education goal is dependent, to a large extent on the availability of a secured and conducive school environment without fear or danger. Recently, there has been a plethora of attacks and kidnappings of school staff and students by Boko Haram insurgents, nomadic herdsmen, and upsurge of activities of cultism within and outside schools. This has greatly affected the smooth operations of schools. In the North-Eastern part of Nigeria, it has led to de-schooling and total closure of all educational institutions. This has accentuated ignorance and poverty which has impacted negatively on the educational growth of the country.

Universally, educational growth and development according to Okeke (2015), could be seen dialectical phenomenon in which the individual and the school interacts with their physical, biological and the environment transforming the individual for his own betterment and that of the society and humanity at large. The individual being transformed in the process of educational growth and development is therefore consequent upon the society’s economic, political and infrastructural advancement of the given society. Educational development and attainment could therefore be seen as the process of empowering people to maximize their potentials and ability to exploit nature to meet their daily human needs and the general progress and advancement of society.

Security Challenges in Secondary Schools and Its Impact

Vividly, there are so many security challenges in the schools, both secondary and universities. Research has identified series of causes of insecurity in our schools

and this has resulted to dysfunctional consequences in the secondary school system. In some regions, schools are out rightly closed for fear of the students being kidnapped or gruesomely bombed by terrorist. Research findings show that schools have turned out to be fertile grounds for insecurity to thrive. Okorie (2011), have identified and spotted several courses of security crises in our institutions of learning.

Amongst the causes is “Ethno Religious” differences. This is a situation in which the religious or ethnic affiliations of one ethnic group is treated and threatened with disdain, animosity, mistrust and suspicion. Nigeria being a heterogeneous society with religious, cultural and ideological schisms in religion, culture and ideology could burst into tremendous conflagrations, if peace and security management and education is not put in place.

Similarly, in the Niger Delta Region, the activities of Militancy have also contributed magnificently to the disruption of academic activities. At times the widespread militant activities invariably lead to the occupation of towns and communities by the military in search of militants in such a way that the interplay predisposes a war of attrition that led to disruption of schools. The school premises at times are the habitats of soldiers going after militants. The case of Gbarauatu kingdom is a typical example of such unsafe school environment as soldiers will indiscriminately arrest and shoot at sight. The innocent and vulnerable ones are sometimes the unfortunate victims.

Similarly, students’ unrest, deviancy through the activities of cultism also poses a grave danger in the smooth operations of schools. Nearly, all the universities in Nigeria and other higher institutions with exception of few had one form of crises related to cultism and gangsters of recent. Universities have become fertile and productive environments where students unrest and cultism vis-à-vis primitive display of wealth and power held sway, and this gave rise to individual corruption, proliferation of illegal arms and light weapons. Violent confrontation between different ethnic-religious groups, inter and intra cultist attacks has infiltrated the schools without check. This endemic ethnic and religious polarization in the country is also evident in the political sphere aptly demonstrated by the political elites. Sadly, Political parties in Nigeria are also structured and founded along these cleavages. This has often orchestrated divisions between students and staff in some schools.

In specific, the Boko Haram upsurge and kidnap of over 250 school girls in Chibok in which some of them are still in the custody of the kidnappers was the height of insecurity in our schools. In Nigeria, especially the North Eastern part, most of the schools including universities have been perpetually closed. Similarly, in the North Central part of Nigeria, the activities of herdsmen who go about attacking villagers and schools with sophisticated military rifles have also made schooling almost impossible. Some of these attacks led to the dead of scores of lives. Perpetuity of these attacks by Boko Haram insurgency and the pandemic attacks of herdsmen on towns, villages and schools in the North Central, South Eastern, South Southern, and South Western geopolitical zones has also led to closure of schools. A cursory look and exposition of

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some of the causes of insecurity of schools will give credence to the above viewpoints. Ebong (2015) identified causes of indiscipline and cultism as;

- The systematic decline in the quality of governance at all levels which is tantamount to lack of patriotism.
- Widespread insecurity in the society through political ethnic-religious violence. Some radical teachers provide some ideological justification to this effect.
- Lack of quality boarding facilities, administration and relationship promotes indiscipline.
- Decadence in the cardinal virtues of honesty, trustworthiness, handwork and increasing gospels of prosperity through vices and crime.
- Admission through primordial considerations. This led to the admission of misfits into schools whose preoccupation is the perpetration of crime.
- Excessive admission and overcrowding of lecture halls and hostel accommodations.
- Rising wave of ethnic and religious bigotry in society that undermines fairness, equity accountability, hard work and productivity.
- Inadequate security services on campuses.
- Violent and non-violent disruption of school activities by students and academic staff unions.
- High youth population and concentration on restricted school environments.
- Undue interference in the autonomy and affairs of school.
- High prevalence of ethnic religious and political violence in the country found expression of legitimacy within the school system.
- Intolerance, mistrust and lack of cordial relationship between students, staff and members of the school community.
- Cultism and gangsters which resulted to inter/intra cult groups, that result to reprisal attacks.
- Decline in academic excellence and merit on the part of students and staff always looking for short cuts.
- Inefficient and poor management and administration of secondary schools. Schools are managed by non professional personnels who lack administrative and leadership acumen.

There is no gainsaying that the above factors which gave rise to insecurity have negatively impacted on the smooth harmonious administration of schools. The effects of this could be seen in the light of violent attacks leading to death and injury. A notable example is the Sunday Christian Service attack in Bayero University, Kano which led to killing and maiming of several students and lecturers. There is replete of such attacks on colleges and universities in the North Eastern part of the country.

Equally, more grave and destructive impact of insecurity in our school system is the kidnapping of students and staff. Academic activities and the school calendar is always

disrupted leading to students not graduating on record time. Similarly, insecurity in schools also engendered gender violence issues. Female students and even female teachers are often the victims. In some cases, female students are being gang raped in the school campuses. Insecurity in schools also results to infrastructural damage and decay. Violent demonstrations on schools often time lead to destruction of the school plan planting.

Insecurity in schools also depreciates the quality of education. Incessant closure of schools devalues the management and quality of education. The low quality of education in any particular school will also have a concomitant effect on student enrolment. The poor quality of graduates from these poorly managed schools invariably affect the national development goals. Indeed, insecurity in school will not attract qualified staff from both within and outside.

Promoting Proactive Security in Secondary Schools

Pro-activity in security entails that, crime and social disorder are prevented from happening before actions are taken to discover they would be perpetrators. It is diametrically opposite to reactive security which reacts to crime and incident that have already taken place. Benson (2010) averred that the reactive approach which is the traditional form of security is costly and largely in-effectual because crimes, incidents are often left undetected. Proactive security therefore necessitates that, available data be analyzed in order to identify trends and causes of security crises. According to Igwe (2015) pro-activeness requires the pressure or high visibility of security personnel, accessibility to members of the school or community. This is the demonstration of the ever present availability of the security to wade off who would be criminals that lurk around to commit crime in the schools.

Very similar in operation and practice to proactive security strategy, is the problem-solving security strategy. The problem solving system is about solving underlying problems which give rise to crime and social disorder in the school. Teething problems will surface as issues are brought to the attention of the security outfit. Problems such as ethnic discrimination, religious intolerance, cultism intolerance indiscipline amongst various groups within the school or community that have not degenerated to a full blown crisis could be curtailed or nipped in the bud by the security department or the school's management through interventions, reconciliation, arbitration and dispute resolution mechanisms.

Recommendations

Security and safety issues are germane to the overall development and productivity of a nation state and organizations. Security system of any school is the incorporation of all other systems. If the security system is deficient and defective, all

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other systems within the school organization will be grossly affected. To this end, this paper is concluded with the following viewpoints to improve security in the secondary school system;

- ✓ Young people and students are essentially made partners in any crime prevention and reduction strategy. To prevent them from becoming victims and offenders alike, the strategy will involve building up of partnerships in secondary schools and colleges.
- ✓ Develop crime prevention initiatives through synergy between the school community, host community and stakeholders e.g. community policing initiative/vigilante groups to deal with gang-related problems such as cult activities in schools.
- ✓ Sharing information to identify those young people at risk of becoming victims or offenders those who already are criminal or cult members in schools.
- ✓ Investigating criminal activities around the school property and assuring other officers with outside investigation that have a link to the school or students.
- ✓ Initiate and develop problem solving relationship between the police, student unions and school authorities.
- ✓ Create and promote liaisons with youth organizations, NGOs dealing with youth and gender issues in schools.
- ✓ Prohibition or reducing substance misuse in the school and wider community.
- ✓ Develop and impact strategies that improve the physical security of the school and the personal safety of staff and students using it.
- ✓ Initiate and develop a partnership approach to supporting school staff in managing safe learning environment.
- ✓ Educating students of their rights and responsibilities.
- ✓ Initiate, develop and implant crime prevention programmes in schools.
- ✓ Assisting the school authorities on related, safety and emergency matters.
- ✓ Counseling/advising on community oriented policing issues.
- ✓ Carry out community policing initiatives by maintaining a crime-free learning environment.
- ✓ Initiate a robust leadership style of management and administration of schools through the effective mechanism of conflict management and resolution.

The above suggestions or recommendations are ideal with an altruistic desire for peace and goodwill in schools. However, security issues and challenges in schools are inextricably linked to the national security issues. To this extend, the Nigerian National Security crises affects the schools which are micro societies in the large Nigerian society. In the light of the above, some intrinsic values to promoting security in Nigeria are suggested.

Some Tips for National/School Security

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As earlier stated, National Security and that of the schools are intertwined. There will be no security in the schools when there are national security crises. Causes of insecurity in any nation or society are multi-dimensional. Like in the schools, the followings are recommended for improving security in Nigeria.

- ✓ Massive employment opportunities - unemployment and underdevelopment has been the bane of Nigerian labour market. To address the security crises in Nigeria, the government should create enabling environment for the economy to grow in order to employ the teeming population of unemployed but employable graduates from our schools.
- ✓ Re-evaluation of the value system. For the Nigerian society to be relatively free of insecurity, there is need to overhaul our value system. The cardinal virtues and values of hard work, honesty, accountability, transparency and probity be strengthened and encouraged. The era of praise singing of ill-gotten wealth should be discouraged.
- ✓ Enthronement of good governance: The enthronement of good governance embedded in sound control economic planning to engender free enterprise to ensure citizens personal welfare be imputed.

The government should adopt and implement social and political security to alleviate poverty.

- ✓ Government should articulate, re-invigorate and institutionalize national value of discipline, peace, tolerance, equity, justice, national and social integration.
- ✓ The development of a self reliant, sustainable, productive and diversified economic measure through agriculture, industrialization should be promoted by the government.
- ✓ Reviewing obsolete laws and policies to drive sanctions and effective punitive measures against corruption and impurity.
- ✓ Placement of appropriate laws, rules and policies in a democratic setting in order to streamline and enshrine the fundamental human rights and liberty of citizens.
- ✓ Robust privileged driven national security policies and strategies should be articulated and implemented.
- ✓ The government should institutionalize the public institutions and be placed for well service delivery on non discriminatory basis. Functional and unbiased justice administrative system should be adopted and implemented.

Conclusion

Security is the bedrock of any society. A peaceful and secured society is the hallmark of any developmental possibilities to sprout. Thus, security is analogous to national development. Unarguably, the Nigerian society and schools including

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universities and colleges have experienced an upsurge of security crises through the activities of Boko Haram, insurgency, militant activities in the Niger Delta, Marauding herdsmen, religious intolerance, kidnapping, armed robbery and gender based violence crime against women and children. This has adversely affected the smooth running of academic programmes vis-à-vis the quality and quantity of education. Students should therefore be helped to become risk aware without unnecessarily becoming risk averse. Laws on safety in schools should be reinforced as well as provision of robust insurance schemes for staff and students be implemented. Universally, security is everybody's business, collaborative efforts are required from all and sundry to create a peaceful society and schools free from crime and criminalities. Protection of life and property is an enormous and hazardous task. It takes the average security personnel to be well informed, intelligent, mentally and physically fit and alert, to enable him offer excellent policing of the neighbourhood. Just as physicians now recognize the importance of fostering health, rather than simply treating illness, so the schools and communities ought to recognize the importance of maintaining intact communities and schools without broken windows.

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