

Insecurity In Nigeria: A Threat to Girl-Child Education in North-Eastern Nigeria

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Abstract

The North eastern states of Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Gombe and Bauchi had witnessed brutal confrontation and massive assault from the terrorist group called Boko Haram. This had resulted in blood shed, and destruction of lives and property leading to burning of school, kidnapping of students, abduction of Chibok girls on closure of schools with many lives lost. This paper examined the issue of insecurity in Nigeria, as a threat to girl-child education in North eastern Nigeria. The causes of insecurity were ethnic religious factor, political violence, lack of cultural and value system and religion crises of Boko Haram among others. The impact of insecurity in Nigeria was high-lighted. The effects of insecurity on girl child education were incessant attack on schools this led to closure of schools, low attendance, abduction of chikboks girl and many were displaced and the whole education process disrupted. Recommendations proffered include safely and security in school, girl child education must be under compulsory and free education to university level and the federal, state and local government should improve security for school in areas vulnerable to attacks by insurgents.

Keywords: Education, Girl-child, Insecurity, North Eastern Nigeria, Threat

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Introduction

Nigeria, the most populous African country with more than three hundred ethnics groups has been described as one of the greatest Islam -Christian nation of the world. What this implies is the fact that Nigeria is about the only country, where one finds a very large population of Muslims living side by side with a very large population of Christians. This country could be zoned into three in terms of religious affiliation of the people-the south east populated mainly by Christians, the south-west with Muslim and Christian population and the north with a large Muslim majority. The indigenenous Africa traditional religion constitute a negligible minority of the population of the country in the recent past. Nigeria has witnessed brutal confrontation and massive assault from terrorist Muslim group. The group called Boko Haram is blood thirsty and destructive, both in term of demonic brutality, mindless savagery and flagrant disobedience to the principles of peace and stability of the country.

Nigeria started experiencing the strange and global trend of terrorism insurgency which has led to gruesome killings of innocent citizens by the Boko Haram insurgent group since 2009 and they have disrupted educational system in the north eastern Nigeria with huge negative effects on girl-child education North eastern Nigeria comprises of six states namely; Adamawa state, Bauchi state, Burno state, Gdx ombe state, Taraba state and Yobe state. The Boko Haram group dislike girls education and seeing girls attending school to them is an abomination. They resorted to kidnapping school girls, killing school girls and teachers and burning schools. There has been massive destruction and disruption of school activities in north eastern Nigeria. Their styles of operation include massive killing of people in market, police station, burning of villages in the nights. The girls are used to carry out bombing of major central market, shopping hall, cinema hall, bus stations, churches and mosques. Eventually, every place where people gather is their target. The implication of the activities of this group educationally are many, schools are burnt down, parents are rejecting their children schooling in volatile north. Many schools have been closed down due to Boko Haram activities, talented lecturers, and teachers have abandoned their schools for other schools in peaceful States. More than 800 school buildings were affected (Babatunde and Uyang 2014). This state of insecurity, crisis or threats tends to affect the educational activities in these states. The Boko Haram activities has limited attendance to school and girls-child education is disrupted.

Nigeria has 10.5 million children out of school, the highest number in the world (UNICEF report 2007). About 60 percent of these children are girls and most of them live in the north of the country. According to the report, one out every three primary age child is out of School and roughly one out of every four secondary school age children are out of school. Due to the security challenges numerous children currently have no access to Schools in part of the north and particularly the north east of Nigeria.

Schools have been closed for security reasons and where school in the affected areas still function, children and teachers are often afraid to attend. Because of the violence and insecurity, many parents are unwilling to enroll their daughters or are withdrawing those in school.

WOTCLEF (Women Trafficking and child Labour Eradication Foundation) believes that every child has a right to life, to education, to leisure, to recreational activities and to develop mentally and emotionally, and to protection from any form of harm. No greater harm can be done to the girl child than denying her education. Educating girls is vital because girls who acquire education tend to become better mothers, have healthier children. A 2012 gender report in placed Nigeria at 118 out of 134 countries in gender equality index, a very poor embarrassing records indeed. It means we are not treating our girls and women well.

The Concept of Insecurity

Insecurity is a state of not being safe and protected. The Oxford Dictionary of Current English, (2009). Insecurity is a situation where there is no freedom from danger and anxiety. It is the inability and incapability of the society or indeed a particular nation or community to live together without rahcour or acrimony. According Ezenwa (2012) other aspects of insecurity include armed robbery, theft, rape, kidnapping, ritual-killings which are rampart thus endangering the general security of lives and properties.

Insecurity can be precipitated by three types of violence as described by Eme & Ibietan [2012]. Direct violence manifested by physical, emotional and psychological violence. Structural violence which is carried out in form of deliberate policies and structures that cause human suffering, death and harm. Cultural violence which involves norms and practices that creates discrimination injustice and suffering. Insecurity is a state of threat to life and property which include lack of rest of mind, physical assault and loss of properties to fraudsters.

Insecurity entails the absence of security and its consequences on any nation appear disastrous because it disrupts political stability and social order of the country. Infact it bring about a failed state and collapsing structure with global bad image. The nation Nigeria is not far from this predicament with its attendant state of insecurity in some states in the North Eastern part of the country.

Concept of the Girl Child

The girl-child according to Atama [2012] is a female from birth to 18years. It is the age before the girl child becomes an adult. The period covers the stages of nursery to early childhood [0-5 years], primary [6-12 years] and secondary school [12-18 years]. During these stages, the young girl child is completely under the care of an adult who may be her parents or guardians and older one around. During this period the girl child's character and personality is built and developed she is influenced by those around her as she is much dependent on others, those she models her behaviour through observation, repetition and imitation. Her physical, social, mental, spiritual and emotional develops until she gets to the peak at the young adult stage (Afforma 2009).

Concept of Girl-child Education

Girl child education is the type or aspect of education given to the female child with the purpose of developing her skills and helping her to acquire knowledge irrespective of back-ground, culture and social status. Education is a process through which the young (grils child inclusive) acquires knowledge, realizes her potentials and uses them for self-actualization (Ocho. 2005). Girl-child education has become an important and issue of concern in Nigeria nowadays. This is due to the large number of girls who are not attending school. According to UNICEF (2007) cited by Grace (2010) the number of young children out of school globally is estimated to be 121 million, out of which 65 million, approximately 53.8% were girls and over 80% percent of these girls live in Africa. Also Offorma (2011) states that Nigeria has 9 million 37% school out of school children, which is more than one third of its primary age children and this is the highest in Africa. Though there have been challenges to girl-child education which are deeply rooted in traditional and cultural background but there have been efforts to improve the education of the girl child.

It pertinent to state that a country cannot acquire meaningful development and security if most of the female child from considering the roles of a woman as a mother. The National policy on Education (2013) emphasized the importance of women education in the development of a nation.

The benefits of the girl-child education was also highlighted in the study of Eneigbe and Imonirwerha (2009) to include:

- i. “Women education will pave way for added knowledge to the women
- ii. Education provides girls with self-confidence and dignity that will help them to challenge the discriminating and biased gender roles.
- iii. Achievement in education will empower women (girl-child) to take their rightful place in Nigeria development. The uneducated women are withdrawn and lacks confidence as such, she cannot contribute meaningfully to the issues affecting her and society.
- iv. The education of women (girl-child) will generally raise their self-esteem, giving them, sound character and confidence, ensure gainful employment and increase the income and living conditions of their families. It will make them possess the skills and abilities of logical and creative reasoning which will form the base of sound development of their families and society.
- v. Education will make women combat ignorance, poverty, disease, superstition and under subjection”.

Causes of Insecurity

In Nigeria insecurity is growing fast on daily bases. The insecurity challenge has assumed formidable dimensions, forcing the people out of their homes, causing political and economic problems. The number of violent crises such as kidnapping, ritual, killings, carjacking, political motivated killings, and violence, ethnic clashes, armed banditry and others has increasingly become the regular signature that characterizes life in Nigeria since 2009 (Imhonopi and Urui 2012). This studies identified some factors breeding in society to include

1. **Ethnic-Religious Factor:** The ethnic and religious composition of Nigeria and its manipulations has posed a lot of challenges to the security in Nigeria. These challenges has caused insecurity in Nigeria. (Ibrahim and Igbuzor (2002); Hazen and Igbozor 2011). Ethno-religious conflicts exist when the social relation between members of one ethnic or religious group and another of such group in a multi ethnic and multi-religious society is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear and tendency towards violent confrontations to settle grievances (Imhnopi and Urim 2010). These ethno-religious conflict has occurred in many areas in Nigeria, some notable among them are Jos crisis, Tafawa Balawa crisis in Bauchi and Southern Kaduna crisis. Igbuzor (2012) pointed out that ethnic and religious composition of Nigeria and its manipulation by the people has posed a lot of challenges to governance and security in Nigeria. According to Igbuzor the failure of the government gave rise to ethnic militia-group in different part of the country such as Odua's people congress (OPC), Arewa people congress (APC), the movement for the a actualization of the sovereign State of Bialra (MOSSOB) the Bakasi Boys people (MOSOP) Eabesu boys and may other minority groups that are not prominent but are building up forces internally. Ethno-religious conflicts have resulted in many large-scale killings and violence among groups in the country.
2. **Political Violence:** This refers to politically induced violence of the country. The Nigeria as 1959, electoral violence led to massive violence in the civil war of 1967-1970 was a result of inter-ethnic conflicts between Northern and Southern part ac of the country. Though the civil war ended but the country tension has never been free of violence from local to national elections, there are violence and killing. the last election in Nigeria witnessed, many violence and killings especially in Rivers and Lagos states of the country. Denga (2012) pointed out that severe political in security debacle precipitates or unleashes economics security challenges that can naturally lead to a mosaic of social difficulties providing a fertile ground for criminalities, military and religious extremism to thrive among citizens.
3. **Inequality and injustice:** in Nigeria, there is a state of in equality, injustice and unifies and this has led to the cry of marginalization by many Nigerians. According to Ogbeno (2014) the security of the Nigerian nation-state has been reduced to that or the ruler and his immediate supporters, thus the

security calculus of the Nigeria state has failed because it does not include vital aspects of social and national development supported by the of basic social, economic and even military conditions necessary for effective national society.

4. **Lack of Co-ordination Between Enforcement Agencies:** The security agencies lack co-ordination. As observed by Onifade Igbuzor (2013). The failure of security agencies such as the police, the military, state security services and paramilitary units to share intelligence information has identified as one of the factors negating the security of the country. The failure of these agencies has produced in-security platform for all violence and killings. There is failure of intelligence gathering by the security agencies and element of passivity of security operative in the duty in policing the country.
5. **Lack of Commitment to Funding military Establishments:** In yearly budget, fund is aside for security in the country. High security vote is also given to state government on monthly basis. But the corrupt nature of our system make individuals imposition of authority or leaderships to divert such fund to individual or personal use and leaving the security of the country at the mercies of thugs and criminals. Therefore the security of the country is Compromised.
6. **Lack of cultural and value system:** The value system in society has collapsed to a near zero state. The corrupt state of the nation, negate the security of the country. As observed by Igbuzor (2012) the disintegration of communal value system which placed high premium on human life and despised greed, oppression and exploitation of the week among others has also contributed to the unpleasant security environment in the country. The collapse moral values within Nigeria is one critical factor to the persistent factor breeding insecurity in the country.
7. **Religious crisis- Boko Haram sect:** The Boko Haram Islamic Religions sect has been and still the cause of insecurity in Nigeria today. In Nigeria, Boko Haram was responsible for more than ninety percent of the terrorist attacks between 1970 to 2015, for which a perpetrator group was identified despite their relatively onset of violence since 2009. Likewise deaths from Boko Haram attacks represented nearly seventy percent of all fatalities from terrorist attacks in Nigeria. The group has been the most source of insecurity in the country spreading its activities over six states in Northeastern part of the country.

Impact of Insecurity in Nigeria

The impact of insecurity in Nigeria is glaring and can be seen in the following under listed

- 1) Social dislocation and population displacement
- 2) Social tension and new pattern of settlement which encourages Muslims/Christians or members of an ethnic group moving to Christians/Muslims dominated
- 3) Heightens citizenship question and encourages hostility between indigenes and settlers.
- 4) Dislocation and disruption of family and communal life.
- 5) General atmosphere of mistrust, fear, anxiety and frenzy.
- 6) Dehumanization of women, children and men especially in areas where rape, child abuse and neglect are used as instruments of war.
- 7) Dispensing of hunger and poverty in the polity.
- 8) Atmosphere of political insecurity and instability including decline confidence in political leadership and apprehension about the system (Ibrahim and Igbuzor 2002).
- 9) Governance deficit as a result of security agencies inefficiency and corruption (Eme and Onyishi 2011)

Insecurity/Activities of Boko Haram and the Girl-Child Education in North Eastern Nigeria

Fundamentally, it is the responsibilities of the state to protect lives and property of its citizens and the entire nation which includes the protection of entire territory and guarantee of the country's socio-economic and political stability. Nigeria defaulted hence the emergency of Boko Haram insurgent.

Boko Haram Insurgent Group in Northeastern Nigeria

This insurgent group today known as Boko Haram was founded in the Muslim dominated Northern Nigeria in 2001 by Mohammed Yusuf. Boko Haram was originally labeled as the Nigeria Taliba because of its ideology and methods. Boko Haram which translates to Western Education is forbidden is also known as Jana'atu Ali as-Sunnah Li-Da-awati-wal-Jihad, people committed to the propagation of the prophets teachings and Jihad. This group is opposed to everything that have link to western education, the ideologies and systems.

In 2004, it moved to Yobe state where it set up a base. This base was used to attack nearby police out post, burning schools with a vow that the war will continue as long as the political and educational system was not changed. The Boko Haram group want Sharia law to be applied all over the country and this will be difficult for the government of Nigeria to cope with. They vowed that they would rather have a separate Islamic state carved out of Nigeria where they can practice their religion unhindered.

The Federal Government of Nigeria saw these demands as unacceptable, senseless and as a threat of national instability, peace and harmony in the country. The government sensing the determination of the insurgents deployed the Nigeria police to the troubled area in an attempt to dislodge the group of the remote settlement, Mohammed Yusuf, the leader of the group was arrested and later passed away in the custody in (Adeyemi, 2014).

Adeyemi (2014) stated that from 2009 and following the assumption of a new leadership headed by Abubakar Shekau, the insurgent group has continue to unleash violence and capturing border towns close to the Northeastern states of Nigeria and forcefully abduction of girls in school age kidnapping of women, frequent suicide bombing and sporadic shooting in public places.

Attacks on Educational Institutions

Boko Haram's name and ideology indicate with pathy towards western education norms. On the attack on educational institutions. Boko Haram did not initially target school

Only three attacks were recorded on school before 2012. But in 2012, Boko Haram started attacking schools on regular basis, about 47 schools were recorded in 2012 with 77 fatalities (Start 2013). property education, Business, military, religious and institutions, government, police. This is represented as below The Boko Haram target groups sweep across all to include private and property education, business, military, religious and institutions, government, police. This is represented as below,

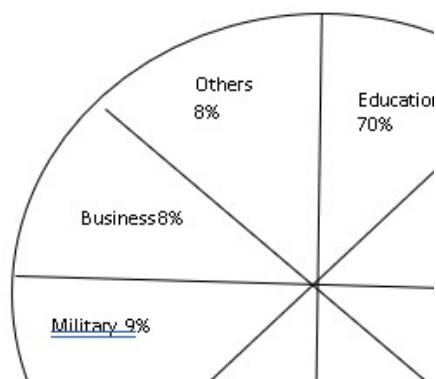


Figure 1. Source (start 2013)

While attacks on schools decreased in 2013, perhaps due to school closures in its areas of operations Boko Haram carried out 14 attacks on school which 119 people died. In February 2014 Boko Haram attacked a boarding school in Yobe State killing 29 male students butnding the female students away with admonitions to get married.

The Islamist group Boko Haram wants to institute an Islamic caliphate in Nigeria and is in particular opposing western style modern education which they say lures people away from following Islamic teaching as a way of life. With the killing of thousands of people by the group, the Nigerian Federal Government declared a state of emergency in May 2013 in Borno State in its fight against the insurgency. But since 2010, Boko Haram has targeted school killing hundreds of students. The group also has been known to kidnap girls whom it believes should not be educated, and use them as cooks or sex slaves.

Boko Haram attack was intensified in 2014. In Feb 59, students were killed in Federal Cord College in North eastern Nigeria and carrying out others attacks. But on the night of 14-15 April, 2014, a group of militants attacked the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok, Borno State. They broke into the school, pretending to be guards telling the girls to get out and come with them. As reported a large number of the students were taken away in trucks into the Sambirsa Forest where Boko Haram were known to have fortified camps. The news on April 15h, 2015 spread like a wide fire of the kidnap of about 276 female students of Chibok Government, Girl Secondary School. The school had since been closed in May 2015, it was reported that Nigeria military had reclaimed most of the areas previously controlled and girls had been freed none of the Chibok girls had been found. (Fix New June 26, 2014) The Guardian 25 Feb. 2014 Perkins Anne 23rd April 2014 and Abubakar Aminu Levs Josh 5 May 2014).

Kwaghe (2024) presented a picture with the girl-child lacking in education. The insecurity in the region has made it difficult for them to be in school. Instance of girls abduction from school prevent parents from sending their daughters to school. This resulted to resorting to marry off their daughters or engaging them in street hawking. She further stated that the primary causes of school dropout among girls are insurgency, insecurity and terrorism, all of which negatively affect girls education in the north east region of Nigeria.

Although there has been kidnapping and killings continuously in the North-East of Nigerian but the incident of Dapdri was a herald. On February 19, 2018, the world was greeted with the news of the kidnapping of 110 school girls from government girls' science and Technical College (GGSTC) Dapchi in Bulabulin, Yanusuri Local Government Area of Yobe state. This was another attack by Boko Haram terrorists on the girl-child education who are bent on the closing schools and putting on and to the girl-child education especially the western education (Puldu, & Rwang, 2022).

Effects of Insecurity on Girl Child Education in Northeastern Nigeria

The Northeastern states of Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Gombe and Bauchi had witnessed brutal confrontation and massive assault from the terrorist group resulting in bloodshed and destruction of lives and properties. The activities had led to burning of school, kidnapping of students, abduction of Chibok girls and closure of schools with many lives lost.

- “The effect of insecurity in Northeastern Nigeria had affected both the Urban and Rural schools in attendance. In a research carried out. Ogbeno, (2014) on the effect of Boko haram on school attendance in Northern Nigeria, it was reported that school attendance was affected with the primary school recording very low school attendance as parents disallow their children from attending school as soon as there is an attack or rumors of attack.
- The insecurity in the affected states have affected the girl's education through the incessant attack in their schools
- Frequent attack on the schools and abduction of girls in their dormitory, reduced attendance to school.
- Occasional kidnapping of school girls on their way to school reduced schooling drastically.
- Educational activities on girls' education in mostly affected states has been suspended.
- Most teachers and school heads in these regions are among the internally displaced persons.
- Female teachers and school girls were traumatized and afraid of going back fear of attacks from insurgents” (Joda and Abdurasheed, 2015).

The insecurity situation had adverse effect on the girl education in Nigeria. Since the abduction of the Chibok girls in April 14, 2014. The female students were afraid of being kidnapped which prompted many to stay away from the mostly affected states of the region. Majority of the schools here been closed indefinitely and many of the teachers has escaped during the series of attack on their communities and could be in the internally displaced persons camp resulting in lack of teachers which could affect the girl child education.

This time state of the North-East has been unfortunate to the under the attack of Boko Haram terrorists. The sect has killed over 2,295 teaches and our 19000 teachers have been displaced. Over 1,400 schools here been destroyed and over 600,000 children are act of school in this already education disadvantaged areas of Nigeria (UNICEF, 2018).

Another noticeable effect of Boko Haram on abducted girls is that this sect used then in the suicide bomber was reported on June 8th 2014 in Gomba State. From January to July 2017 over 145 girls have been used for the suicide bombs operations. Most of the girls in the attack area are now leaving school and going into early marriages thereby reducing their chances of getting education.

On March, 2018, the Guardian reported on increasing in security in North East as a threat to girl-child education. Girls has been kept out schools due to the massive violence. This was confirmed by the UNICEF reports that one of every primary school child out of school and one of every four junior secondary school children out of school, are from the North East of Nigeria.

The frequent kidnapping, abduction killings and enlisting girls of school age into bombing operations is unbearable in that region. As observed by the president of the senate, Lawan (2021) when he raised alarm on the disturbing insecurity in the Northern part of Nigeria stating that this is already affecting the disposition of young people especially girls towards education. The attacks on school hostels, by bandits and insurgents who usually kidnap the students and teachers is affecting the attitude of girls in the north. Education is becoming a problem and it is getting worse with the abduction of school children. The whole region is still under attack and it looks unsafe for the girl-child education.

Conclusion

Boko Haram has brought a state of insecurity to Northeastern Nigeria and the entire nation. This senseless insurgent group has brought negative impact on the education of the girl-child. In the words of Malala Yousaf who survived an assassination attempt by the Taliban, the vision of the young girl-child campaigners remain unambiguous-her-words "On my 17th birthday, my wish is to see that every child go to school and I want to see my Nigerian sisters being released from their abduction and want them to be free to go to school and continue their education". The growing insecurity in Nigeria is no excuse to neglect girls and women education rights. It is the reason to do more to protect and promote these rights.

Suggestions

This study suggests as follows that:

- For the girl child to thrive well at school, safety and security must be assured.
- Education for the girl-child should be aggressively pursued and made compulsory
- Free education should be provided for all girls in Northeastern Nigeria to the University level
- There should be police personnel posted to guide all school and the police personnel should be well motivated.
- Armed forces should be mobilized to northeastern states and security provided in all schools
- On the part of the religious leaders the need to protect lives should be preached and preaching against killing of fellow human should be intensified.
- The Government should increase the size of Nigeria's security agencies empower aid motivate them very well.

- There is also the need for the government to strengthen neighbourhood watch.
- There should be re-organization of security agencies to take them through a new orientation via re-training of security agents.
- There should be public enlightenment through mass media and community visitation volunteer on the benefits of girl-child education.
- The Federal, state and local government should improve security for schools in areas vulnerable to frequent attacks by insurgents.
- Promotion of human rights education as part of civic classes in schools now in citizenship and moral values education.

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