EDUCATION AND NIGERIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

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Abstract

Of recent, especially in the Fourth Republic, Nigeria has been a victim of communal, ethnic and religious violence. The situation has assumed a dangerous scenario with the emergence of Boko Haram terrorist group. In all the violent conflicts, youth has been the cannon fodder in the hand of politicians or religious zealots in fomenting trouble in the land. The reason is premised on the high rate of unemployment among the youth which is a fallout of faulty educational system that renders Nigerian youth unemployable in the labour market. The economic predicament of the Nigerian youth has made them ruthless in crimes. Using system theory, the paper examines Nigeria's education vis-a-vis national security. The paper maintains that unless Nigeria's education is reformed in such a manner that will make youth self-reliance, then the end of insecurity perpetrated by youth is not yet in sight. The paper also advocates mass employment provision by government for unemployed youth as a measure to address Nigeria's problem of insecurity.

Keyword: Education, National Security, Youth, Unemployment, Insecurity.

1 INTRODUCTION

Education is designed purposely to assist individuals to develop their skills and abilities so as to fulfil their potential and to lead productive satisfying lives [1]. In the preliterate societies, education focused on hunting, cooking, following stars, and obeying the gods. The power to teach then rested with parents, elders or priests. Illiterate adults had learnt from folklore, ballads, and sermons. Education at that time focuses on the transmission of essential skills and the orally preserved traditions of the tribe or community. Teaching was not a specialist function until the early civilizations in which teaching was accompanied with more complex and regulated social organization [1]

The purpose of education in modern times is wider in scope than in preliterate societies. Education now shapes politics, culture, family, economy among others. As the society is dynamic, and constantly changing and growing, education must follow suit. In fact, changes most often are effected through the educational system of a country [2]. Educational system must change to meet the aspirations of individuals and those of their countries otherwise it becomes irrelevant. In the Nigerian context, experts at home and abroad have expressed grave concern about the incoherence or inadequacy of Nigeria's education system especially at the university level [3]. Ezekwesili (cited in Azikiwe [2] presented the graphic state of the Nigerian education system and advocated for reform. In fact, she warned that if the rot in the system was not aggressively addressed, that the country was at the risk of creating a republic of "Italy girls" (Nigerian girls going to Italy for prostitution because of unemployment), yahoo boys (youth involvement in internet fraud), miscreants and hardened criminals, and that by 2020, the country would have created highly skilled and motivated criminals.

One of the key issues accentuating or aggravating unemployment in Nigeria is premised on the fact that, there seems to be a mismatched between the school curricula and job requirements in both private and public sector. This position is in line with the trend of thought of Daramola [3] who called for a review of curricula and pedagogy owing to the limited successes associated with them. He contended that Nigerian universities curricula are inadequate, lacks quality, and as such limited the chances of graduates in getting employment with public and private employers. Similarly, Akwara, Akwara, Echola, Adekunle and Udaw [4] pointed out that unemployment of trained people including university graduates in Nigeria is growing. It is important to note that, unemployment, especially among youth has implications on Nigeria's national security. Youth within the age bracket of 18-45 quiet frequently get involved in various crimes constituting insecurity. For instance, Akwara et al. [4] note that most of the people paraded by law enforcement agencies belonging to criminal groups are within the age bracket as mentioned before. The most disturbing aspect is the fact that, some of those involved in the various crimes are educated. They are involved in urban conflicts, militancy, sectarian violence, crimes, terrorism brought about by joblessness. This scenario necessitates the urgent need

for education reform to enhance employability of Nigerian school leavers and graduates. Unemployment leading to insecurity has two major dimensions, the uneducated youths who are jobless and educated youths who are also jobless; the two categories constitute threat to national security.

The study examines the role of education in national security. For analytical purposes, the work is segmented in the following order, following the above introduction is the literature review; then history of education in Nigeria, education and national security, recommendations and conclusion.

2   LITERATURE REVIEW

There are varied definitions of the concept of education. It is seen as a race course, the transmission of what is worthwhile from generation to generation, and "the various ways in which a society transmits knowledge, including factual information and occupational skills, as well as cultural norms and values, to its members. Education also involves formal instruction under the direction of specially trained teachers Macionnis cited in Azikiwe [2]. Education is also seen as a process by which individuals are assisted formally through proper direction and guidance to develop their capacities not only for their own benefit but for the society at large [5]. Suffice to say that the essence of education is to develop individuals so that they can become effective and efficient in what they do and also contribute to the advancement of the society where they live. Orikpe [6] avers that education plays a critical role in changing the behavioural patterns of citizens to the desired direction. The next concept for clarification is national security.

The issue of security is not alien as it has been the central focus of primitive society [7]. In the same vein,Audu, Lukeman and Mohammed [8] argued that since the end of the cold war, there appears to be shift from viewing security from state-centric perspective to a broader view that places emphasis on individuals, in which national security also encapsulates human security, human right and national development. National security according to Iredia [9] simply mean, the capacity of a state to overcome challenges confronting her. He added that national security is not limited to military might, defence or law enforcement; it covers basic dimensions like job, water and food security. National security is also seen as a state or condition in which most cherished values of a country and the people are permanently protected and continuously enhanced [10]. The concept of security also denotes the condition or feeling of safety from harm or danger. It also means the defence and protection of values acquired [11]. To Oche (cited Nwaneggo and Odigbo [12] security has to do with freedom from danger or threat to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values, legitimate interests and enhance the well being of its people. Internal security implies freedom from danger to life and prosperity. Audu, Lukeman and Mohammed [8] explained security as any mechanism devised to alleviate the most serious threats that prevent people from pursuing their cherished values. From the various explanations of security above it can be deduced that insecurity implies a state of vulnerability to attacks, danger or threats to a people, their properties, cherished values and the inability of the nation to protect its citizenry.

Alemika [14] postulated that insecurity can be classified into several dimensions. The most significant dimensions are:

a)   Physical insecurity- violent personal and property crimes,

b)   Public security- violent conflicts, insurgency and terrorism,

c)   Economic insecurity- poverty, unemployment,

d)   Social insecurity- illiteracy, ignorance, diseases or illness, malnutrition; water borne disease, discrimination and exclusion,

e)   Human right violations- denial of fundamental rights by state and non-state actors in different states,

f)   Political insecurity- denial of good and social democratic governance.

The dimensions of security as highlighted above are interwoven and cannot be treated in strict isolation as explicated by Anan [15] that:

Today we know that "security" means far more than absence of conflict. We know that lasting peace requires a broader vision encompassing areas such as education, health, democracy and human rights, protection against environmental degradation and the proliferation of deadly weapons. We know that we cannot be secure amidst starvation, that we cannot build peace

without alleviating poverty, and that we cannot build freedom on the foundations of injustice. These pillars of what we now understand as the people-cantered concept of human security are interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

Condoleezza Rice, former Secretary of State of the United States of America posited that quality education of a nation is a direct function of a country's national security [16]. This relationship springs from the role education plays in providing the knowledge base for technological training. In the main, education is as important as national security. The Boko Haram insurgency has become a festering sour because the Nigerian military are fighting 21st century Islamic military insurgency with nineteen century military education [16].

In the Nigerian context, internal security particularly from 2007 till date seems to be elusive. Some of the indicators of insecurity in Nigeria include; ethno-religious conflicts, violence, kidnapping, terrorism among others. Insecurity has taken different dimensions in the various regions in Nigeria. For instance in the Niger Delta region (South-South), the militants slugged it out with oil companies in the area, killing and destroying oil companies properties as well as Federal Government properties especially from 1999-2007. In Jos, Plateau State (North Central), the Hausa and the indigenes have been at war from around 2002 till date. In South-East, kidnapping, ritual killing and armed robbery has been the nature of insecurity in the region same with the South-West region of the country. Boko Haram insurgency has been the greatest challenge to internal security in the North-East, North-West and North Central from 2009 till date.

In all these cases of insecurity, youths are the prominent figure in the crusade of crime. Such youths either lack requisite education that render them jobless, unemployable, poor and disenchanted; or are educated and are still jobless. Poor youth finds it difficult to resist temptation to commit crime, provided such will open way to meet their immediate needs. In other word, education and national security are inexorably linked together. Little wonder that Abugu (cited in Abayomi, Youdeowei and Uwandu [17] contends that strength, security and wellbeing of Nigeria rest squarely on the quality of education

Having seen the correlation between education and national security, it is necessary to state that the work is anchored on system theory. A system could be described as a complex interaction of various components. From the work of Bertalanffy [18], a system is a conglomeration of parts into a whole. And what affects the pats affects the whole. The history of system theory is traceable to some scholars like Ludwig Von Bertalanffy, Kenneth Boulding, Anatol Rapoport among others [19]. Nigeria as a country is a system, youth is a part of the system and the inability of a good number of youth to live a decent life as a result of either lack of education or quality education is responsible for their joblessness and poverty, making crime attractive to them, and as such becoming agents of insecurity to the system. The next section examined history of education in Nigeria.

3 HISTORY OF WESTERN EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Before the advent of Western education in Nigeria, traditional system of education was in vogue. According to Fafunwa [20], the latent aims of the traditional system of education which provided the bases and process of training in the traditional education system are: to develop the child's latent physical skills, character; inculcate respect for elders and those in position of authority; to develop intellectual skills; acquire specific vocational training and to develop a healthy attitude towards honest labour; to develop a sense of belonging and to participate actively in family and community affairs and lastly to understand, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large.

The methods employed to attain the goals stated above according to him is through a combination of theory and practice. Good virtues such as valour, honesty, wisdom, respect for elders and oratory are either directly or indirectly taught or imparted through folklores and stories narrated by elderly members of the society. The vocational training starts right from when children begins to follow their parents to the farms, forests, blacksmithing, rivers, waving shops to learn crafts and occupations of their parents or guardians.

Fafunwa [20], Taiwo [21] Ozigi [22], Adesina [23] had given detailed history of Western education in Nigeria. The history of Western education in Nigeria can be traced to the Portuguese traders who came to Benin as far back as 15th century. They only concentrated their teachings on the sons of the Oba of Benin and his chiefs. However, meaningful Western education in Nigeria actually started in 1842 through the activities of Christian missionaries under the Wesleyan Methodist Society that opened Christian Mission in Badagry near Lagos and later moved to Abeokuta. They built a mission house, a church and a school. The Catholic Mission Society, the Presbyterian Mission among others

also joined and made their marks on the education landscape of Nigeria. Later, government intervention led to the taken over of some of the missions' schools. Today there are primary and secondary schools and tertiary institutions owned by the Federal Government, State Government, Local Governments, religious bodies and private individuals. The next section focuses on education and national security in Nigeria.

4   EDUCATION AND NIGERIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

Education and security can influence each other positively or negatively depending on the context. This is necessarily so because it enables individuals, groups, countries and human race to explore, appreciate, understand and develop their physical and social environments for the satisfaction of their needs. An educated person has broad view of issues as against narrow and parochial outlook. Education makes people to be tolerant of other people's religion, belief, culture, limitations and promote social harmony and security. It is ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence. A good number of conflicts often arise from ignorance and manipulation of ethnic and religious identity. In fact, education (not just passing through the four walls of the school) system produces tolerant and civil citizens who are able to understand and live with people from different ethnic, economic, religious and cultural backgrounds and other forms of identities [14]. A country that bequeaths the right type of education to its citizens makes it difficult for such citizens to turn against their father land [6]. In fact, it is meaningless to talk of security in the absence of the right type of education. It is therefore, not a surprise that Radda [10] opines that education, when well imparted and utilised, has the potency of promoting national security. This is because it is mostly uneducated jobless and educated jobless youths that are easily attracted to crimes, thereby, constituting insecurity in a country. While Western education that is not geared towards self-reliance (education that makes youth job seeker) may be dangerous as far as developing countries are concerned, lack of Western education or low education is even more dangerous. Low education often translates to absence of competitive skill, adequate income, exclusion from participating in vital political and economic and social organizations and relations; lack of access to adequate food and nutrition, housing, health care and efficient public emergency and safety services-all which are element on human security. Youths who are educated have hope of better future than youths who are not educated and failed to learn any craft. Children or youths with low education are easily recruited as thugs, insurgents and terrorists through indoctrination. Suffice to say that lack of education itself is insecurity [14]. Inadequate education also constitutes a problem to national security.

The former Minister of Education, Professor Ragayyatu Rufai (cited in Orikpe, [6] advocated for reform of the education system as a means of curbing security challenges confronting Nigeria. The Minister canvassed for total overhaul of the curriculum at all levels of education with the aim of providing recipients a kind of education that focuses on the development of the mind, soul and body, taking into cognisance the need of the country. In a nutshell, the Minister called for a synergy between the liberal education, vocational and entrepreneurship education. In the same vein, Yakubu [24] submitted that, religious crisis, drug addiction, secret cults, armed robbery in higher institutions are either instigated or practiced and aided by the products of the system of education.

The high rate of unemployment among youth attests to the faulty premise of the Nigerian educational system. For instance, [4] observed that in 2008, 15% of the Nigerian workforce was unemployed and in 2011, the figure rose to 20% and the victims of this phenomenon are the youth who till date, still have the highest percentage of unemployment in the country. The authors added that there is a synergy between unemployment and poverty. Jega [25] also argued that the mass of unemployed youth in both rural and urban areas of Nigeria need little motivation or mobilization to take part in riots and reprisal attacks given the inducement or opportunity for looting that often accompanied these. It appears poverty and joblessness especially amongst the youth is important casual and facilitating factors in violent conflict in Nigeria. Akinwumi [26] also established a nexus between education and national security stating that, Nigeria's education system had increased rural-urban migration, and that many of the young people had migrated to different urban centres in the country to look for jobs that do not exist. This resulted into disappointment and frustration. Many of them take to crime to survive. Thus, unemployment has been the cannon fodder in the orgy of violence and violent disorder in the country. This is because unemployment exposes people to poverty and the twin problems combined to provide a fertile ground for activities that constitute a threat to national security. The rise in crime rate is a direct consequence of unemployment and poverty. As stated before, most of the people paraded as criminals by the law enforcement agencies before the mass media in the country are mostly unemployed youths. They are also use as suicide bombers by terrorist groups in the country.

Although it is disturbing for educated youth to get involved in crime as a result of unemployment brought about by inadequate educational curriculum that would have made them job creators instead of job seekers, it is even worse for uneducated youths who refuse to learn any trade and as such, lack means of livelihood. In most part of the Northern Nigeria, Quranic education is placed in high premium at the expense of Western education. The mind is not free to think wide, coupled with high rate of poverty. The aforementioned prepares the ground for insurgency that has been the greatest threat to Nigeria's security. Awake in Akwara et al [4] pointed out that poverty and inequality trigger violence and that 90% of all violence-related deaths are traceable to world's less prosperous nations: and the poorer neighbourhoods of cities are often high crime areas. Similarly, Akande and Okuwa [27] averred that, youth unemployment is a major factor in African conflict experiences including Nigeria. The prevailing socio-economic environment entices youths to turn to war, crime and violence as a means of livelihood. As bad as the situation appears, education can be used to curb the ugly trend. The next section detailed the way out.

5   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the analysis above, it can be concluded that, the unrest of various shades, working against the internal security of Nigeria as a result of faulty educational curriculum which galvanised unemployment will be put to rest if urgent actions are taken to address the situation. The following suggestions are hereby by made:

There is need to review the curriculum of Nigerian education at all levels in line with the prevailing situations. Education system should be reviewed in such a way that it will make beneficiaries job creators rather than job seekers. In other words, there is need for proper synergy between education, vocational studies and entrepreneurship skills.

The government should embark on mass employment of the youths.

The governors of states in the north should work towards sensitizing their people towards placing high premium on Western education that will liberate the mind so as to douse radical religious ideology that constitute insecurity in the country.

The government should review policy on retirement age so as to create vacancies for the unemployed youth. This can be done without creating another problem provided government put up a workable pension scheme in which retirees are paid their gratuities and pension promptly. If the pension scheme is good, people won't be requesting for an upward review of retirement age, thereby, closing the door of employment opportunities for younger generations.

There is the need to diversify the economy. In other words, government should focus on agriculture and also give soft loan to unemployed youth, assist with the necessary farm input, monitor the use and ask them to pay half of the loan instalmentally after establishing them.

There is also the need to strengthen university-industry collaboration. This can be done by bringing in experts from the industrial sector to make input in the curricular in such a way that will reflect the needs of the industry. Such experts should also be involved in teaching on part time bases at higher levels of education.

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