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EFFECT OF INSECURITY ON GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION IN TARABA STATE, NORTH- EAST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined 'Insecurity: The effect of Girl-Child Education in Taraba State, Nigeria. In specific terms, this paper seeks to identify the effect of insecurity on girl-child education in taraba state. Secondary data was adopted. Qualitative analysis shows that sources of insecurity are sexual harassment, cultism, culture, religion, rape, bullying, kidnapping, and insurgency by bokoharam. The effect insecurity has on girl-child education ranges from high rate of drop out from schools, loss of lives, dearth of teachers, overcrowding of urban schools where there is relative peace, insufficient class rooms because of mass exodus of students from rural to urban areas, denial of education opportunities etc. In view of the above, the paper recommends that the government needs to change its approach to tackling insecurity by embracing modern strategy of intelligence gathering through effective synergy amongst security agencies; adoption of hugely subsidized mass education for the girl-child; adequate funding for educational activities such as research and training for the teachers; high remuneration for the teachers in order to attract and retain top notch teachers in the state. It is gainful to mention that educating the girl-child has far reaching positive effect on both the family and the society at large, as the girl-child education results to sustainable development, progress, peace and harmony.

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INTRODUCTION

No doubt, insecurity is the major challenge facing the girl child education in the northern part of Nigeria (Crane 2007). A lot of concerns have been shown on the effect insecurity has on the girl child education in particular and the society at large.. Nigeria is not alone on insecurity issues. There are wars and threat of wars all over the world, including the western countries (Eme and Onyi 2011). According to Fintel (2015), insecurity is not new in Nigeria. Right from the colonial era, when there was civil war, between 1967 and 1970, there had been insecurity. Historically speaking, insecurity worsened in Nigeria since 1999 and has continued to take different forms and shapes (Itano 2012; Unachukwu & Unachukwu, 2018; Unachukwu, 2022). For example, there was high rate of armed robbery, kidnapping for rituals, squabbles between the national union of road transport workers and government agencies. In the South-South and South East Region, there was the issue of oil bunkering, vandalization of pipelines, and struggle for actualization of sovereign state of Biafra. Down to the northern part of the country, insecurity was in the form of ethno-religious clashes (Katsina 2011).

The Boko Haram activities crowned in all he northern part of the country. It is obvious that insecurity is not a new thing in Nigeria. It started a very long time ago , regulation has been put in place for the menace of insecurity in the northern Nigeria, sadly not much success has been recorded (Nwosu-izuwa 2009; Unachukwu, 2019; Unachukwu, 2018). According to Okoh (2014), insecurity is a sing-song on the lips of every Nigerian. Lives are being wasted on daily basis. Properties are being burnt with impunity. The Nigeria population is in a helpless situation. There has been a lot of discourse bothering on insecurity but very little has bothered on its effect on the girl-child education (Oluwa 2014; Unachukwu, 2019; Unachukwu, 2012). Insecurity poses a lot of challenges to the girl-child education in the northern part of Nigeria with particular reference to Taraba State (Smith 2009). It is a gap this study will attempt to fill. It is important to identify the effect insecurity has had on the girl-child education. Girls have dropped out schools in their numbers, teachers abandoned their employment, girls willing to be educated have been denied of the opportunity (Ubong 2009).

Statement of Problem

It is common knowledge that all over the world, there is gender disparity in education (Ubong 2012). There has always been the issue of trying to close the wide gap in education with respect to gender disparity. Efforts are being intensified both locally and internationally to ensure a balance but this has not yielded the desired result. The girl-child enrolment into schools are bedeviled with a lot of impediments. Factors such as bullying, kidnapping, ethno-religious crises, culture, sexual harassment etc affect the girl child education (United Nation 2015). Generally speaking, insecurity affects the education of the girl-child. Parents of the girl-child are reluctant to send their children to the school because of the increasing rate of insecurity in the north and particularly Taraba State. This paper will investigate the effect of insecurity on the girl-child education in Taraba State with a view to proffering solution.

Objective of the Study

The general objective of this paper is to examine ‘Insecurity: effect on Girl-Child Education. Specifically, this paper will analyze the effect of insecurity on Girl-Child Education in Taraba State, Nigeria

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Girl-child

Abdullahi and Terhemba (2014) stated that the girl-child can be defined as someone that is between the ages of 6 and 12 years. It is unfortunate that many girls who are in this age bracket cannot afford to go to school due to insecurity. They have been clearly denied the opportunity to go to a formal school. Parents are helpless in this circumstance and the government is not doing enough to curb the menace of insecurity. According to Okiaka (2013), the girl-child is a biological female offspring from birth to eighteen years of

age. At this age range, the girl-child is under the care of the parents. In the African context, the girl-child is guided by the counsel of the parents. She has her will but must be subjected to the view of the parents. Under normal circumstances, the girl child is pampered more than the boys. Abdulrashed and Obioma (2015) noted that Girl-child education is a system and process through which the girl-child is made to enroll into a school for the purpose of acquiring knowledge and skill that will help her develop meaningfully all through her life. It is an experience worth having. Nevertheless, the prevailing insecurity in Northern Nigeria has significantly impeded the realization of this objective. The education of the girl-child is a long-term developmental process that necessitates sustained training and retraining.

There is an assumption in some quarters that the western education does not respect the cultural principles of the northern region (Abubakar 2015). This has caused much confusion such that some northern parents do not believe in sending their girls to the school (Asaolu 2012). This is however not true but this assumption has affected many girls in the region. It is also believed that educating the girl child will distract her from managing the home, which is seen as her major function as long as the northern culture is concerned (Bwala 2012). Boys, therefore, are sent to school in preference to the girls. These are some of the issues that have made it difficult to educate the girl child in the northern part of the country. There is need to change this negative assumptions. The fact remains that if they are not changed or erased from the minds of the parents, the girl-child will continue to suffer in the area of education (Ezeoha 2011; Unachukwu, 2015; Obi & Unachukwu, 2014). They will continue to be denied of education until the issue of insecurity is solved.

Insecurity and Effect on the Girl Child Education

The effect of insecurity on Girl-child education has assumed an alarming proportion, especially in the northern part of the country (Garba 2015). There are cases of girl-child drop out from schools on account of insecurity. The government, through the instrumentality of security agencies are working tirelessly to curb the menace of insecurity. Unfortunately, the desired result has not been achieved as hoodlums are still having their ways in all the nooks and crannies of the State. The following are the effects of insecurity on girl-child education:

1. High Rate of Drop-Out from School

Following the increasing cases of insecurity, ranging from kidnapping, sexual assault, killings etc, many girl-child have abandoned their education for fear of either being killed or kidnapped (Joda and Abdulrasheed (2015). Cases of kidnapping abounds in Taraba State. No parents or guardian would want to lose their children to the hands of murderers or abductors. This has made parents to restrict their children from going to school. Those that have reached the age of being enrolled in school are still staying at home because school environments are not seen as dead zones.

2. Loss of Lives

According to Bruce (2013) insecurity in schools, at the northern part of Nigeria, knows no bounds. Schools have become the target of kidnappers. When they raid schools, it is always deadly. Lives are lost and some are taken away to unknown destination. It is a sorry state of affair which no one would like to experience. It is disheartening that a child will leave their parents' home in the morning to go to school only for the parents to hear few hours later that their girl has been kidnapped (Dodge 2013). Many do not return even after ransom has been paid. Some die in the bush and others are married to the hoodlums. It is a common knowledge that even when the kidnapped girls are released later on, they would come back with babies they never planned to have at the early stage of their lives. Most times the dreams of the girls are shattered (Edukugho 2012).

3. Dearth of Teachers

Many teachers have deserted the northern part of the country, particularly Taraba State in run for their lives (Egbewole 2013). They relocate to states or locations where there is relative peace. The implication

is that there will be shortage of teachers from the state and schools that are being deserted. The remaining students do not have sufficient teachers to teach them in school. No one would boldly blame the teachers for absconding from such states/schools in a bid to protect and save their lives. There is high shortage of manpower (teaching profession) in Taraba State on account of insecurity (El-Rufai 2012).

4. *Overcrowding of Urban Schools*

Insecurity is more at the rural areas of Taraba State (Farrell 2012). This has prompted migration from rural to urban in search of education for the girl-child. This, for long, has become the order of the day. No one wants to die in the hands of the hoodlums or kidnappers. Urban schools are now overcrowded because of influx of students who want to stay in the urban area for safety. The challenge with overcrowding of schools and classrooms is that it brings about learning ineffectiveness and inefficiency. It affects students academic performance.

5. *Denial of Education Opportunity*

The girl-child in the northern parts of the country has been denied the opportunity of going to school, for the mere fact that it is risk to attend school (Ghobarah, Huth and Russet 2004). No one knows when the kidnappers or bandits will strike. And if they do, it usually will result to loss of lives. For this reason, parents believe that the right thing to do is to avoid sending their children/wards to school for fear of being kidnapped. Where this is the case, the girl-child is denied education.

6. *Shortage of women in the Academic World*

The girl-child who will tomorrow grow into a woman is denied education today, there will soon not be too many women in the academic world to teach or lecture in schools (Ibidapo 2008). Lack of adequate measure of the girl-child in the education industry will largely affect the State and Nigeria in the long run. For there not to be shortage of women in the academic world of tomorrow, there is need for the girl-child to be educated today.

7. *Girl-Child Education in Northern Nigeria*

The girl-child education is facing a lot of problems in the northern part of the country (National Population Commission 2014). The government at all levels are making frantic efforts to ensure that education of the girl-child is not truncated. Parents feel safe to send the boys to the school than the girls. They believe that the boys can run and escape if there is attack on the school (Medding 2001). This approach to education has led to disparity in school enrolment with regard to access to education. The girl-child is turned to a hawker in the street, selling one thing or the other. Some do go on apprentice that last for years. It is really heartbreaking to see girls parading the street, selling items like oranges, cashew nut, and bread, garret during school hours (Mori, Medding and Bettcher 2004). Not because they are not willing to go to school but because of insecurity. They are afraid of losing their lives to bandits or kidnappers.

According to Nwagboso (2012), the girl-child non-attendance to school or denial of education contributes to youth unemployment. There is high level of unemployment in the northern parts of the country compared to other parts of the country. It is not surprising because of the insecurity that has destabilized the education of the youths. The girl-child education in the northern part of Nigeria and in Taraba State needs special attention, otherwise, there will continue to high level of illiteracy in the north (Commission on Human Rights 2003). This will not do any good to the generality of Nigeria and her economy. It is the absence of education that causes youth restiveness. The northern youths are easily lured into terrorism. It is easy for them to be lured into terrorism because they are not massively educated (Bruce 2013). Educated youths are hardly used for terrorism activities in the north.

Some eminent northerners have strived to bring back the lost education of the girl-child. In 1929, the then Emir of Katsina established the first girl's school. The struggle to liberate the girl-child from illiteracy has been a long fight (Igbuzor (2011). Similarly, the northern regional government of Sir, Ahmadu Belo also

contributed to ensuring that the girl-child in the northern Nigeria is educated (Meddings 2011). In a book written by Sir, Ahmadu Belo, various educational programmes and policies were proposed such as UPE, UBE, Education for All and Girl Education Project were carefully described and their achievement and challenges documented with facts and figures (Nwagboso2012). Not to forget the efforts of the development partners like UKAID, DIFD, UNICEF, UNESCO etc. All these efforts were in a bid to ensure education for the girl-child.

It is important to mention that the education of the girl-child is paramount to the development of the northern region. No wonder efforts were intensively made by public officer holders to ensure education in the north, though with little progress. The girl-child has a right to go to education just like any other person but insecurity and cultural factors have continued to pose problems and challenges (Ogunleye, Adewale, Alese, and Ogunde 2011).

Education-Related Violations and Attacks

According to Omoyibo, Akpomera (2012), in recent times, schools are targets for all manner of insecurity. Attacks of different dimension and proportion are targeted to the schools. Cases of kidnapping, banditry, killings etc are common occurrence in schools in the North. This can best be described as education related violations. Attack against education is seen as attack against the student, teachers, and facilities of the school (Orji 2012).

The Northern Nigeria is not alone in the fight against insecurity in schools. Countries like Iran, Palestine, Sub-Saharan Africa, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, etc are facing attacks on educators and educational institutions (Otto, Ukpere 2012). Insecurity against education has assumed alarming proportion. Access to quality education has become difficult. In most cases, when the hoodlums attack schools, they destroy facilities, loot properties, and sometimes assassinate students and teachers.

World Bank (2011) stated that children in the north have consistently being deprived of education and that the worst of it all is that end to it is not in sight. Education would have ordinary paved way for total human development. It would have served as a panacea to terrorism but the terrorist are bent on making life miserable to the society, hence ensuring that education is not attained in theNorthern part of the country so that their nefarious activities will continued unhindered.

Ndoma-Egba (2014) stated that the major causes of illiteracy in the north is high level of illiteracy. Suggesting that education is the way forward to eradicating banditry, kidnapping and terrorism in the north. Asaolu (2012) stated that about 10 million children are out of school in Nigeria and 90% of them are from the North. Terrorism has really affected education in the north.

One wonders why the hoodlums and terrorists are specifically targeting schools. School have become sources of their recruiting terrorists (Moris, Meddings and Bettcher 2004). This is because when they kidnap students, they initiate and indoctrinate them. They end up brainwashing them to join in the terrorists act. This is why terrorism is on the increase in the northern part of Nigeria. The terrorists target education because they know that if the children are educate, they will not like to join them in the nefarious act of banditry, kidnapping or terrorism.

Insecurity and the Female Gender

In Pakistan, late Miss Malala, who was an ardent advocator for the girl-child education was shot to dead by Taliban gunmen (Eme 2011). This was a consequence of Miss Malala's advocacy in Pakistan for girl-child education. Girl-child education suffers terrible attacks in many part of the world. The case above, is another strong proof of the attempt to denigrate the girl-child education in certain quarters of the world. In the northern part of the country and some other parts of the world, it is said that western education is wrong and misleading (Fintel 2015). Therefore, every effort is made to stop the girl-child from acquiring education because it is believed that if education is acquired, the girl-child will not be submissive to her future husband and elders of the land.

Itano (2003) stated that in South Africa, girl-child rape in school is no longer news. It is said that rape in schools occur in every 36 seconds. In similar vain, it is said that one in every four males has had a rape case (Katsina 2011). The female education has suffered serious setback. The female folk are traumatized consequent upon series of insecurity in schools. In Nigeria, the case of the Chibok girls remain unresolved (Nwosu-Izuwah 2009). Not all the Chibok girls have been released from the hands of the abductors. The female folks are at the ugly end, receiving punishment and denial of education they never caused.

There are some cultural practices that are against the female both in Taraba State and others parts of Nigeria (Okoh 2014). Some cultures are against the education of the female folks. In such places, females do not go to school. If a family were to choose between sending a female child or a male child to school, the family will choose the male child. It is believed that the male child will grow up and make money for the family while the girl child will grow up and be married out to another family, hence the saying that a woman's education ends in kitchen (Oluwa 2014). Therefore money that would have been spent on the girl is seen as waste. This is an ugly mentality and thought pattern that has adversely affect the female education both in Taraba State and other parts of the country.

Theoretical framework

The relational/vengeance theory of *Simeon Alozieuwa (2016)*, underpins this paper. This theory states that difference in culture, value and group interest influence relationship amongst individuals and groups in a varying manner (Smith 2009). Insecurity arises from the history of the past events and activities between individuals or groups. The resultant effect is that it develops in people a negative stereotype, intolerance and discrimination (Faleti 2006). The perceptions that some are superior and others inferior distorts the flow of communication about one another and hence leads to conflict and insecurity. The relational/vengeance theory is relevant to this work in that its postulations shall form basis of this piece of work.

Empirical Review

Ubong (1999) analyzed the factors that hinder girl-child education. Ubong observed that early marriage, insecurity, pregnancy and preference for boy children hinder girl-child education. A sample of 150 students showed that 60% concurred with above view while 40% of the sample thought otherwise.

Abubakar(2004) carried out a study in Bengal, India, to examine the deficits in girl-child education, noted that factors such as child labour, insecurity, ignorance, poor attitude of the parents, large families and ignorance are the major factors that enthrone deficit of the girl-child education.

Bwala (2012), evaluate the disparities between boys and girls as it related to school enrolment showed that the Kenya educational system does not pay attention to girl-child education. The report tagged Kenyan's approach as wasteful, adding that there has continued to be a squandering of resources for the boys alone which can be spread for both the boys and the girls (Asaolu 2012). The report blamed it on insecurity.

Otto and Ukpere (2012), conducted a study that bothered on curtailing girl-child violence in school, carried out in Namibia and South Africa noted that rape, insecurity, sexual harassment affect girl child education. The findings further shows that patriarchal ideology makes girls vulnerable to abuse through their inability to refuse sexual advances.

An analysis of above studies shows a clear fact. The girl-child education is suffering a serious setback. Serious attention needs to be paid to the girl-child education. Studies show that insecurity has continued to reoccur as the major factor that hinders or affects the girl-child education. If this is allowed to continue, there will come a time where there will be high shortage of the female folk in the academic world in particular and the labour market in general (Nwagboso 2012).

Research Method

This paper is qualitative in nature and made use of secondary sources of data such as text books, journals, websites and newspapers. A thorough review of literature relating to the subject matter was carried out to help come to a reliable conclusion.

Analysis of Reviewed Works

No doubt, the girl-child education is in a deplorable state in the Northern part of Nigeria as such requires urgent government attention. From the reviewed works, it can be deduced that family preference to the boy education and insecurity largely hinder girl child education. In some families, in the location studied, educating the girl-child is seen as waste of resources. This is because it is believed the girl-child will soon get married to a man and hence ends up in the kitchen (Bwala 2012). This is a sorry state of affair that doesn't need to continue. The girl child has equal right just like the boy-child. Child labour hinders the girl-child education (Dodge 2013). This situation is prevalent among poor families, where the girl-child, because of her vulnerable position, is often subjected to child labour. In many cases, she is compelled to work to the extent that her education is sacrificed, thereby jeopardizing her future. Some parents are more concerned about making money for the family than sending their girl-child to school. Often times, the girl-child is seen hawking along street from morning till evening. This is the time the girl-child is supposed to be in school. It is a common practice in the north. The future of the girl-child is bleak. The girls are used as instrument for making money for the family while the boys are allowed to go to school (Crane 2007). This is because of the cultural belief that the boy will grow and become head of the family, therefore he needs to work hard to become wealthy in order to be able to represent his family. Similarly, sexual abuse contributes to hindrance to the girl-child education. Sometimes the abuse is from classmates and some other times it is from the male teachers. Once this happens, the girl-child is withdrawn from school and that means end of education for the girl-child. Most worrisome is that the culprit, sometimes go free for lack of evidence. The girl-child bears the brunt.

Conclusion and Recommendations

To educate the girl-child is to educate the women and to educate the women is to educate the entire world (Smith 2009). The reason is that the women are the first to teach the girl-child in her early stage of life. If the woman or the mother is not literate, the girl child will suffer set-back in early child learning and teaching (education). It will be an atrocity not to encourage or allow the girl-child to be educated because of the associated attendant adverse effect in Nigeria at large.

It is worrisome that the girl-child in the Tarabadoes not only going to school but also does not have the possibility of going to school (Igbuzor (2011). This is human degradation of the highest level. The insurgency in the north; banditry, terrorism, kidnapping have led to many schools being shut down. Education that is supposed to be accessible to all is no longer an option. The need for the government to restore peace in the land and create an enabling environment for education cannot be over emphasized.

Boko Haram is seen as the major cause of insurgence in the north eastern part of Nigeria (Orji 2012). Past and present government of Nigeria have made efforts to tackle the challenges inflicted on the people of Nigeria but to no avail. The government will always announce that Boko Haram has been technically defeated (Okoh 2014). No sooner than this announcement is made than another bomb attack is carried out in the north. One can say that the government is running short of ideas and do not know how to tackle insurgence anymore. Countless lives and properties have been wasted and more are still being wasted. The Nigeria public, at one time or the other, have started calling on the international community to help Nigeria in the fight against insurgency.

In view of the findings emanating from literature reviewed, the following recommendations are made:

1. The government, both state and federal, needs to change its approach to tackling insecurity by embracing modern strategy of intelligence gathering through effective synergy amongst security

agencies. High power network and intelligence gathering are super tools known all over the world for fighting insecurity relating to insecurity (Eme 2011). By this approach, the Taraba State and the Northern part of Nigeria will heave a sigh of relief.

2. There is need for subsidized education for the girl-child. This a sure way to attracting the girl-child to enroll in school. The parents of the girl-child will be attracted to register their children or ward in school. It is obvious that the girl-child is willing to go to school, but insecurity possess great danger and hindrance to her educational pursuit (Bwala 2012).
3. There is need for enhanced funding of educational activities such as research and training for the teachers. This will ensure competence on the part of the teachers and a professional top notch for educational activities of the school. Teachers will gain thorough insight to systematic approach to teaching and learning that can facilitate girl-child admiration of school programmes and activities.
4. Teachers remuneration need to be competitive. Comparatively speaking, teachers in Taraba State do not receive the best of remunerations (Fintel 2015). Their counterparts like Lagos State, Rivers State etc receive better remuneration. In order to attract competent teachers across the country to Taraba, the government needs to enhance the teachers pay package.

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