EDUCATION, RELIGION AND VALUE SYSTEM: IMPLICATION FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

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Abstract
The general insecurity in Nigeria has reached a dimension that everybody must be involved in proffering solution to it using various means including educational sectors. If it is a truism that education is a solution provider to various challenges, proffering solution to the problem of security in Nigeria should not be a mirage. The level at which people now live in fear of their neighbours and expressing violence with little provocation is a pointer to the rejuvenation of values within the context of religion and education. It is in the light of this that this paper examines education, religion, values system and their implications for national security. Going by this, the paper discusses conceptually the major terms in this paper looking at educational and national security; religion and national security and lastly value systems and national security, causes of insecurity such as, erosion of values, high rate of unemployment, religious fanaticism, quest for sudden wealth, and mistrust among others. The paper further emphasized the consequences of insecurity in Nigeria as loss of lives and properties, loss of investment, dearth of scholars, fear and threat to lives. It was concluded that education, religion and value system intersect in complex ways that impact national security. Promoting education, fostering religious tolerance, and reinforcing shared values are essential components of safeguarding against internal threats and promoting stability and security within the country. The ways forward to solving the problem of insecurity in Nigeria were given as recommendations.

Keywords: Value system, Education, Religion, Security, Violence.

Introduction

Insecurity remains a major impediment that shakes Nigeria into her foundation in recent years and this is greatly threatening the unity and stability of the country. The persistent occurrence of this menace made most state Governors, Kings, Religious Leaders and other stakeholders in the country call for assistance from the government to assist in tackling the menace of insecurity in the land. Insecurity has been on the increase and it has far reaching implications on the lives and properties of the citizens. Many lives and properties have been destroyed and the same slogan has always been coming from the government quarters that 'the government is always at the top of the situation'. This has become a deceptive political statement to change the focus of the populace. Instead of it to be checkmated, the reverse has always been the case. On daily basis, Nigeria as a country is becoming more insecure and many people are getting involved with various criminal activities with high expectations and in so doing, they become more ruthless and more sophisticated in their criminal activities.

The ongoing insecurity palaver in Nigeria has brought other challenges to the fore such as kidnapping, herdsmen attack, cattle rusting, among others. There is a pervasive erosion of values across various sectors of the society. This has become more evident in the citizens' participation in various insecurity tendencies that threaten the unity and stability of the nation. Many youths who are expected to be the future leaders of the country are now engaging in various activities that threaten the future aspirations of the country, destroying lives and properties. Most youths interviewed gave some reasons for their involvement in insecurity activities ranging from unemployment, the activities of scrupulous politicians, and greediness on the part of the religious leaders among others as some of the reasons why they took to crime. Whatever might be the driven

force, the desire to make money and live affluence life pushed many of the youths to take part in criminal activities. This further propels insecurity to the land at the expense of cherished societal values. Many youths seem to have sold out their souls to the devil in replacement for money. Religious leaders are not left out of this ordeal, since the love of money is the reigning phenomenon among humanity in this generation. Is it not too ridiculous to be reported that a reverend at Methodist Church, Ado-Ekiti was arrested by the police for allegedly organizing his own kidnap and asking a group to demand #3million from his congregation (Vanguard news, 2019). This high incident calls for reflection and the rejuvenation of the societal values system as one of the possible measures to combat insecurity and unsavory quest for money among the populace in the country.

Education, religion, and value systems are influential pillars shaping the societies worldwide. This paper explores the interconnectedness of these elements and their significant implications for national security in Nigeria. As education molds individuals' minds, religious beliefs guide their moral compass, and value systems dictate societal norms, understanding their intersection is crucial for fostering stability and security. In Nigeria, the intersection of education, religion, and value systems holds significant implications for national security due to the country's diverse socio-cultural landscape and historical dynamics.

In light of the interconnectedness between education, religion, and value systems, there exists a pressing need to understand the specific dynamics and their combined implications for national security. However, despite recognition of their importance, comprehensive analyses addressing the nuanced interactions and their direct impacts on security outcomes, particularly within Nigerian context remain limited. Consequently, there is a gap in scholarly understanding regarding how educational, religious, and value based influences intersect to shape societal attitudes, behaviours, and vulnerabilities, ultimately impacting the security landscape. Here is how these factors relate to Nigeria's case:

Education and National Security:

Education is defined as the totality of preparing individuals to function effectively in the society. It is through education that the society values are preserved, maintained and transmitted from generation to generation. According to Nelson Mandela, education remains the most important and powerful weapon which can be used to change the world. Durkhelm (1956) posited that Education is the systematic socialization of the younger generation by which they later learn religious and moral beliefs/values, feelings of nationalism and collective opinion of all kinds.

Education in itself without value is worthless. Education is therefore considered as testing laboratory of human values. In this case, education is said to have both intrinsic and extrinsic values. Any form of education that is devoid of right or correct values, right morals and sound religious teaching in some to produce 'education sinners' that are suitably recruited as miscreants, ethnic militias, kidnappers among others (Omode & Omode, 2014).

The term security is defined as the protection against a future risk of severe deprivation, injury or death and it requires rules, order and impartial adjudication and application of certain measure to guide against unforeseen impediment. It is the protection against all forms of harms whether physical, environmental or psychological. It is however argued that security may not be absence of threat or security but the ability to rise to the challenges posed by threats with expediency and expertise. Sani (2007) viewed that there is a threat to security when there is a direct violence (physical and psychological violence), structural violence (deliberate policies and structures) that cause human suffering, harm and death, or cultural violence (practicing of cultural norms that create discrimination, injustice and human suffering). Omode (2013) said that security is a dynamic condition which involves the relative ability of a state to counter threats to her core values and interests. The Yugoslavian delegate to the United Nation Symposium of 1986 opined that a national security is the absence of danger to the fundamental values of any nation; the absence of

fear and uncertainty in individuals and in nation; the absence of danger of aggression or domination and the absence of the threats to sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and self-determination. While contributing to the issue of security in a nation, Achumba, Ighomleraho and Akpo-Robero (2013) looked at security as a situation that exist from the result of the establishment of various measures aimed at protecting people, information and property against hostile persons, influences and actions. They further stated that, it is the existence of condition within which people in a society can go about their normal daily activities without the threat to their lives or properties. It embraces all measure designed to protect and safeguard the citizens and the resources of individuals, groups, businesses and the nation against sabotage and violent occurrence.

The concept of insecurity connotes different meanings to different people; such as absence of safety, danger, hazard; uncertainty; lack of protection and lack of safety (Ewetan and Urhie, 2014). Achumba et al (2013) viewed insecurity from two different perspectives; that the term insecurity is considered as a state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly, insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. The above definition of insecurity according to Ewetan (2014) underscores a major point that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but they are also vulnerable to the threat and danger where they occur. Therefore, Ewetan (2014) posited that insecurity is a breach of peace and security whether historical, religious, ethno-regional, civil, social, economic and political that contributes to recurring conflicts and leads to nation destruction of lives and property.

All the above definitions of insecurity signaled to what is presently facing Nigeria. The level of insecurity in the country could be attributed to the failure of various governments at various levels to tackle the problem of insecurity headlong which has culminated to the worst state we all found ourselves (Jonathan, 2019). That, the insecurity situation in the country has gotten out of hands as it is getting worse on daily basis under the government of the former President, Buhari (Obasanjo, 2019). Observation revealed that the body language of the last administration promoted insecurity against other ethnic groups in the country that make some to believe that the issue was more like ethnic cleansing of other ethics as against his Fulani kinsmen.

Educational institutions in Nigeria play a pivotal role in shaping citizens' perspectives and ideologies. Investment in curriculum contents and teaching methodologies can either promote tolerance, critical thinking, and civic responsibility or foster extremist, bigotry, and radicalization (Oyeweso, 2009). It is further discovered that youth empowerment and resilience building through quality education will equips youths with skills, knowledge, and opportunities essential for socio-economic advancement of the country. Oyeweso (2009) stated further that a well-educated populace is more likely to engage positively in society, contributing to national development and resilience against security threats as we have in the Northern part of Nigeria. Nigeria's education system faces challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, curriculum gaps, and disparities in access to education, particularly in conflict=affected regions like the Northeast and generally in the Northern part of the country which is also considered as the educational disadvantage region. It has been observed and also discovered that inadequate education can leave youths vulnerable to recruitment by extremist groups like Boko Haram, who exploit grievances and offer ideological indoctrination as an alternative to sound education.

Religion and National Security

Religion refers to the belief in the existence of a god or gods and the activities that are connected with the worship of the god or gods (Hornby, 2010). Religion is supposed to be a source of unity between man and God, and between man and his fellow man, but regrettably, it is the contrary we are witnessing today. Religion in a nation like Nigeria plays a major role in molding the lives of the people (Egbefo, 2016). To some people, it is their candle light that gives them insight, wisdom,

knowledge and faith is increase through the study of the scripture, books and prayers. Nigeria being a secular state by constitutional provision, citizens are free to practice their religion as long as that does not infringe the rights of other citizens. The three dominant religions in the country today are Christianity, Islamic and Traditional.

From time immemorial, Nigerians have been happily living together without any iota of fear of being dominated by another ethnic group until recently when the issue of Islamizing the country at large became very rampart and very disturbing. This became more serious when the activities of the Fulani herdsmen became unpredictable as they went about killing, maiming and destroying lives and properties especially people of other ethnic/religious groups different from that of the former President, Mohammadu Buhari.

Religion often serves as a significant aspect of individual and community identity. While religion diversity enriches societies, it can also be a source of tension and conflict, especially when exploited by extremist groups to justify violence and incite hatred. Nigeria is ethnically and religiously diverse, with a significant Muslim population in the North and a Christian majority in the South, leading to occasional religious tension and conflicts.

This is not to say that religious crisis has been alien to the country, dating back shortly after independence, it has always been a matter of concern to all and sundry (Falola, 2008; Mohammed, 2016). Before now especially during the regime of former President Buhari, the body language of the former President as observed then depicted that he seems to support the idea of islamization of the country going by the vigour at which the RUGA Settlement was pursued by the Federal Government of Nigeria then and with RUGA settlement programme, it seems to become very obvious that the plan seems to be very sacrosanct to the government in power then. With RUGA dilemma and unwarranted killings that look like ethnic cleansing especially in Benue and Jos, it seems that it has brought a sort of mistrust and disunity between the two major religious groups in the country, where people now live in fear and suspicion of one another. Today in the country, the extremist groups like Boko Haram exploits religious differences to justify violence, exacerbating interfaith tension and posing security threats (Adesoji, 2010, Nwolise, 2014 & Mohammed, 2016).

Value System and National Security

Value can be defined as what is regarded as important or unimportant. They are things that guide people preference and also to inform their life choices (Ogunyemi, 2014). Values are set of benefits held by a people about what is good and desirable in the society. Value reflects the complexity of knowledge, attitude and abilities which contributes to the development of moral life and community identity. Value determines life behavioural or patterns and attitudes. In the Nigeria society, values are being threatened by the existence of the borrowed values and imported values.

Nigeria's value systems are shaped by cultural, religious, and socio-economic factors, influencing attitudes towards governance, justice, and community cohesion. Alemika & Chukwuma, (2016) posited that corruption, inequality, and impunity undermine trust in institutions and contribute to grievances, fostering conditions conducive to insecurity and conflict in the country. It is only in Nigeria leaders will be encouraging the citizens to exercise patience and be ready to make sacrifices for the good of the country while the leaders are not ready to make any sacrifice but continue to live in affluence, this further undermine trust and likely contribute to grievances that could give birth to unrest and insecurity in the country.

The rate of insecurity in Nigeria today has greatly affected value systems that are related to social relationships. An average Nigerian cherishes the value of living in togetherness/communal lives, where people act as their brother's keeper especially among the southwest people. What do we now have in Nigeria of today? People live in the fear of their neighbours; the value of communal living has been eroded.

Furthermore, the value of hard work has been replaced with laziness. People do not cherish the value of hard work to earn money, they are now well-disposed to the Yoruba

parlance that says; 'Ise kekere, owo nla'. People are no longer interested in hard work and so they engage in activities that will bring money quickly by involving in dangerous activities like ritual killings, yahoo plus, kidnapping for ransoms among others. All these have increased the rate of insecurity in the land with no one to trust.

It may sound ridiculous and untrue to state that husband kills wife to make money, parents sell their children/wards to make money, boyfriend kills girlfriend for ritual and there are incidences of unthinkable events taking place on the holy altar- '*there is blood on the altar'*. The sanctity of life is no more in vogue, people just kill fellow human beings without remorse and the resultant effect of such is insecurity in the land and the fear of the unknown.

Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

A good number of factors have been viewed as factors responsible for the high rate of insecurity in Nigeria, although, individuals, government and security experts have been shifting blames on the youth government and parents. In this paper, the writer looked at the causes of insecurity in Nigeria. The level of unemployment situation in Nigeria is really appalling and this is caused by leaders who lack moral values in that money that is meant for general well-being of the populace to create job and other social amenities are siphoned or misappropriated. They lack the value of honesty and accountability.

Religious fanatics/fundamentalists and total lack of trust are other factors responsible for insecurity in Nigeria. The value of tolerance and respect for other people's religion has been eroded leaving the religious fanatics/fundamentalists and extremists with the mission of non-tolerance of other religion by engaging in destruction of life and property in the name of religion adherence (Mohammed, 2016).

Flamboyant lifestyle of some people especially the politicians has culminated into an unsavory quest for money among the youths. The value of prudence has been replaced with extravagant living and styles (Akinola, 2012). The unsavory quest and love for money has made many youths to engaged in ritual killings, yahoo plus and kidnapping among others. The value of sanctity of life has been eroded; killing and maiming have almost become the other of the day. People kill at will without any remorse or sense of feeling for the victims. Government on his own part and political leaders' unguided utterances has in one way or the other caused or being responsible for insecurity breach or insecurity in the country. The failure of the Federal Government to obey court orders especially as concerning the release of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) popularly called 'Shiites' leader has caused more harm than good at the nation's capital and in Kaduna State, the events of July 22, 2019 where an Assistant Commissioner of Police and a Channel TV Journalist lost their lives coupled with property worth millions of naira that was destroyed.

Consequences of Insecurity in Nigeria

The complacency of the Nigeria government as regards insecurity issues in the country has caused more harm than good. Hundreds of thousands of lives have been lost coupled with properties worth millions of naira destroyed and many people are living in Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps in the country.

Loss of investments and capital flight represent major consequences of insecurity in Nigeria when it comes to economic growth and development of the country, no investor, whether local or foreign will be motivated to invest and increase investment in unsafe and insecure environment. The high level of insecurity in the country has made the economic unattractive to investors both local and foreign and this further encouraged capital flights which could be possibly be part of the yardsticks that threw the nation into economic recession few years ago (Omonobi & Erunke, 2019).

Another major consequence of insecurity in Nigeria is the problem of the fear of the unknown. Road transportation has now become a nightmare in the country, in fact, anyone who needs to embark on any journey will need to fast and pray for a safe trip not because of accident but more of not becoming a victim of kidnappers or terrorists. Travelling on Nigeria roads especially the flash points noted for herdsmen attack/kidnapping areas like Iwaraja/Efon road in Osun/Ekiti States, Ikere/Akure road,

Benin/Ore road, Abuja/Kaduna highways has become a great challenge. Many travelled with their heart in their mouths. In fact, of great significance is the death of Afenifere leader's daughter (Pa Ruben Fashoroti's) Mrs. Olakunri who was reportedly killed on Friday 12th July, 2019 by suspected herdsmen in Kajola, Ore road in Ondo State. This significant incident further heightens the level of insecurity in the land especially in southwest, Nigeria. More recently on January 29, 2024, two Ekiti Monarchs- the Onimojo of Imojo, Oba Olatunde Olusola, and the Elesun of Esun Ekiti, Oba Babatunde Ogunsakin were killed by Herdsmen on their way from the local government security meeting. The same very day, the pupils of Apostolic Faith School in Emure Ekiti, the driver and a teacher were abducted from their school bus. Though they later regained freedom after ransom was paid but the bus driver had been killed before the release of other captives by the captors (Akpan, 2024).

The way forward

The following suggestions are made as light to pave way for the way forward:

1. Rejuvenation of value system through conscious development of human resources, planning, training, ideological appeals and instilling values into the younger individuals from cradle and encourage the young ones by setting ourselves as examples that is worthy of emulation to the younger generation. Embracing cultural diversity while promoting core national values strengthens societal cohesion and resilience against external threats. Furthermore, policies that encourage social integration and inclusivity can help to prevent marginalization and alienation, reducing vulnerability to radicalization and extremism. A new Nigeria should be embraced where one from the North shall be at home in the East; where one from the East shall break bread with one in the North; one where the one in the West shall eat from the same plate with one in the North and wash hands in the same basin as one in the East (Adesina, 2021).
2. Improving access to quality education, especially in marginalized communities, is crucial likewise religious education in our churches and mosques will solve the problem of insecurity to a reasonable extent. Pastor and Imams must take it up as a point of duty to educate their members on the sanction of God or Allah's discretion towards killings of innocent lives and sanctity of lives. The promotion of interfaith dialogue and understanding can mitigate religious motivated violence. Government and civil societies play crucial roles in facilitating such dialogue and promoting religious freedom. This will in no way assist in countering radicalization and promoting social cohesion
3. The creation of massive employment opportunities by government and non-governmental agencies through provision of refundable loans for the educated and uneducated youths will enable them to be occupied with their individual businesses thereby, not allowing them to be idle or desperate in seeking for money to meet their needs.
4. Quality education will equip youths with skills, knowledge, and opportunities essential for socio-economic advancement. A well-educated populace is more likely to engage positively in society, contributing to national development and resilience against security threats such as extremism and radicalization. There should be more enlightenment on management of security challenges in our educational institutions right from the primary level to the tertiary level.
5. Government should endeavour to resuscitate forest guards, empower the local vigilante groups, and reconsider the issue of state police by employing more capable youths and training them intermittently on forest management, forest security management, and familiarity with the locality so that these evil perpetrators will not have any hiding place.
6. On the international scene, international cooperation and diplomacy can be facilitated by the country. Given the global nature of security challenges, fostering international cooperation and diplomacy in promoting education, religious tolerance,

and ethical governance is essential for addressing transnational security threat effectively. There should be close monitoring of our country's boundaries (both land and water), security agencies should be beefed-up in these areas so that stranded neighbouring immigrants will not have easy access into the country.

Conclusion

In conclusion, addressing the nexus of education, religion, and value systems which are intertwined elements shaping societal dynamics and enhancing national security in Nigeria by recognizing their interconnectedness and promoting inclusive, values-based approaches is imperative for fostering resilience, mitigating conflict, and safeguarding the security and stability of the country in an increasingly complex world. A comprehensive strategy that prioritizes inclusive development, social cohesion, and good governance will go a long way to curtail the issue of insecurity in Nigeria. All hands must be on deck to build a new Nigeria by breaking the barriers of suspension, pulling down the walls of division that make us to war against each other. Nigerians should pull down walls of fear and instead embrace and accept one another. We should strive to build a new Nigeria where one will be respected and accepted, not according to the village of one's birth, the state of one's nativity or one's religion, but by the dignity within or the simple dignity of being a Nigerian.

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