

# **INSURGENCY AND INSECURITY: BANE OF GLOBAL LITERACY DEVELOPMENT**

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**Abstract.** Year-in, year-out, decades after decades and centuries upon centuries, there has continued to be recurrent calls for eradication of illiteracy globally. The experience over the years has, however, shown that no target fixed for eradication of illiteracy has ever been met. There have always been renewed calls for eradication of illiteracy at the expiration of countless number of failed decades set as targets for ‘Education for All’ without meeting the target. Parts of the major causes of unrealized and unfulfilled dreams of education for all have been challenges posed by insurgency and insecurity bedeviling the entire world. The outbreak of insurgencies culminating in high level of insecurity has hampered children’s and adults’ access to all forms of education be it formal, non-formal, or adult education. Due to insurgencies, schools have been physically touched, destroyed, burnt and broken down. The systems of education in many countries globally have been adversely affected. Communities scattered and destabilized, people displaced and killed. This paper therefore premised on the existing literature on insurgency and insecurity issues considers them as bane of global literacy development. The paper explores debilitating effects of insurgency and insecurity on literacy development in Africa in particular and the entire world in general. It highlights instances of insurgency in various dimensions world over, the toll it has on se-

curity and education and consequently offers suggestions on the way forward with a view to advancing the course of development that the world so much desires especially in terms of education.

*Keywords:* education, literacy, eradication of illiteracy, insurgency, insecurity, educational development

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### **Introduction**

The continuous growing of cases of insurgencies and insecurity world-over is a great threat to global literacy in particular and educational development in general. No meaningful development can occur when there is no peace and security of lives and properties. Development cannot be achieved in any nation where there are conflicts, crisis and wars (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013 & Chandler, 2007). There is no doubt that any form of sustainable development in every sphere of human endeavours is hinged on the level of development that education at all levels enjoys. The development in education directly dictates the rate of development in other aspects of a nation's life be it social, economic, health, science and technology and information and communication technology among others. At various points in time, there have been series of conventions, conferences, and workshops all over the world (i.e., Education For All – EFA - Millennium Development Goals – MDGs, etc.) to institute, chart and formulate various educational or literacy development policies. The challenge over the years, however, has been the inability of the various stakeholders to meet the targets set to achieve the desired development in literacy and education.

In the time past, challenges such as administration laxity, poor funding, and poor implementation of policies among others have been factors responsible for the failure to meet the targets set for educational development. However, in recent times, the situation has assumed new and tragic dimensions. There are issues of insecurity caused majorly by uprising of insurgen-

cies and terrorisms across the globe. The activities of perpetrators of insurgencies and terrorisms culminate in attacks on school pupils and students, teachers, other education personnel and education as a phenomenon (O'Malley, 2010). For example, in Libya, Syria, Palestine, Mali, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Sierra-Leon, Liberia, and Nigeria among other nations, the debilitating effects of insurgency on literacy development in these nations cannot be accurately estimated for the degree of its enormity.

This unpalatable situation is mind-burging and needs globally concerted efforts and attention to nip it in the bud. The wanton destruction of lives and properties being experienced or reported in these unfortunate nations is capable of plunging the world back into the dark ages if adequate and urgent action is not taken. This article reviewed relevant existing literature with a view to establishing debilitating effects that insurgencies and insecurity have on education especially as it relates to literacy development in the affected countries in particular and the entire world in general. This paper also highlights remedial steps that can be taken to salvage literacy and education from the deadly attacks.

### **Conceptual clarifications of development, security, and insecurity**

Adequate security is a factor of peaceful and harmonious living, which consequently allows educational development. It is commonly said that the most permanent thing in the world is change. Change in form of improvement, progress, and growth is what brings development. Nwanegbo & Odigbo (2013) were of the view that development is multifaceted and centred on humans. Thus, development in its multifaceted form must have humans as its focal point. This presupposes that educational development means opportunity for the people to go to school, to have access to further and continuing education, to have opportunity to acquire skills and be trained and retrained for

skills improvement. With this, the people will have chance to interact with their environment to obtain the desired growth and development. Nwanegbo & Odigbo (2013) noted that development is a dialectical phenomenon in which the individual and the society interact with their physical, biological and inter-human environments transforming them for their own betterment and that of humanity at large and being transformed in the process.

Access to education is access to empowerment. 'Knowledge is power' says an adage. Education remains a major medium through which knowledge is transmitted and imparted into some individuals who are hitherto ignorant. Development is the process of empowering people to maximize their potentials and the ability to exploit nature to meet daily human needs (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013). Insecurity is counter-development. No meaningful and sustainable development takes place where insecurity thrives. Security is as important as life itself. As a matter of fact, the unfortunate consequence of insecurity is extermination of victim's life! Security goes beyond an individual but can be guaranteed by concerted efforts and group responsibilities. Nwanegbo & Odigbo (2013) and Ewetan & Urhie (2014) said that security of lives and property of citizens is a primary responsibility of the state. They categorically stated that security can be guaranteed by international, national and individual commitments respectively. In a situation where state fails to ensure security, the same becomes the responsibility of the individuals. There is however a limit to security that the individuals could provide for themselves. This explains what the situation in Nigeria has been in recent times where the state has failed to guarantee security of lives and properties of the people. The individuals (in form of vigilante groups) organize security for themselves. This individual's security arrangement however could not withstand the sophistication of the 'weapons of war' used by the terrorists, hence, the inevitability of the international intervention to provide security for the people.

In the same vein, Booth (1994) contended that government alone should no longer be primary provider of security. This, Booth (1994) said is because, governments which are supposed to be the ‘guardians of their peoples’ security’ have instead become the primary source of insecurity for the people who live under their sovereignty. This stance of Booth is corroborated by activities of many governments especially in Africa where youths are engaged in acts of thuggery especially during elections. Consequently, the political thugs turn to armed bandits or hoodlums after the election and begin to terrorize the people by abduction, kidnapping for ransoms, robbery and rape. This creates an atmosphere of insecurity.

Security, according to Francis (2006) is the condition or feeling of safety from harm or danger, the defense, protection and absence of threats to acquire values. Security is vital for national cohesion, peace and sustainable development in which education is prominent. According to Achumba et al. (2013) security is the existence of conditions within which people in a society can go about their normal daily activities without any threats to their lives or property. They emphasized that it is the protection against all forms of harm whether physical, economic or psychological. Security is not the absence of threats or security issues, but the ability to rise to challenges posed by these threats with expediency and expertise. Rising up to the challenges posed by the insurgencies is what many governments in the affected countries especially in Africa and particularly in Nigeria have failed to do until the situations go beyond the manageable control.

Security embodies the mechanism put in place to avoid, prevent, reduce, or resolve violent conflicts and threats that originate from other states, non-state actors, or structural socio-political and economic conditions (Stan, 2004). According to Ewetan & Urhie (2014), security is the absence of threats to peace, stability, national cohesion, political and socio-economic objectives of a country. Ewetan & Urhie (2014) reiterated that security is not the absence

of threats or security issues, but the existence of a robust mechanism to respond proactively to the challenges posed by these threats with expediency, expertise, and in real time. Coursen-Neff & Sheppard (2010) believed that an effective response to attacks on education will require more focused policies and action by concerned governments and a much stronger international efforts. Amnesty International (2013) emphasized that security in schools, which includes physical, psychological and emotional safety and an uninterrupted education in conditions conducive to knowledge acquisition and character development, form part of the right to education.

In every society there are bound to be security challenges but adequate measures in terms of prompt response to these challenges as they arise will go a long way to entrench peace and security in such society. It is, however, highly disappointing that the required prompt and effective response from governments of countries where insurgencies thrive are lacking and have been characterized by attitudes of negligence and politicization. Muzan (2014) lamented that Boko Haram insurgency, political violence, corruption, nepotism, tribalism, indiscipline, abduction and kidnappings, armed robbery, murder and extortion, bombings of places of worship and innocent Nigerians are all the indicators of a failing state.

The direct opposite of security is insecurity. Achumba et al. (2013); Ugwumba & Odom (2015), and Ganie & Ud Din (2015) conceived insecurity as a want of safety. They stated that it is a situation where danger and hazards are prevailing and people are vulnerable to harm and loss of life, property or livelihood. Insecurity causes people to live in fear and anxiety resulting from lack of protection. Fear of insecurity does not allow free movement, which development in education requires. Students need to go to school without fear, teachers need to go to school to teach without fear, schools inspectors and other personnel need to go to work without fear and threats to life. It is only when this is guaranteed that educational development can be in place.

Amnesty International (2013) reported getting information from many teachers in Borno State, Nigeria that they (the teachers) were not given adequate protection by the authorities. This is despite the fact that the government, according to Amnesty International (2013), has a duty to lawfully protect its population against abuse of their fundamental human rights by others. The reason the teachers and the students in insurgency areas are at risk was because many of the towns and communities were completely outside the control of the government. The attacks on the teachers in the affected areas have deeply affected the teaching in the states involved. The general insecurity has compromised the ability of teachers to perform their jobs well and has affected their morale (Amnesty International, 2013).

According to Ewetan & Urhie (2014) the alarming level of insecurity in Nigeria, as in many other nations bedeviled by insurgency, has fuelled the crime rate and terrorists attacks in different parts of the country, leaving unpalatable consequences for the nation's economy and its growth in general and education development in particular. Insecurity, Ewetan & Urhie (2014) said, connotes absence of safety; danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of protection, and lack of safety. Insecurity is a state of fear or anxiety due to absence or lack of protection (Beland 2005). It is a state of lawlessness, breach of peace and security.

The following are examples of threats that create fear of insecurity in the hearts of the people. It was quoted from a letter from Taliban in 2010, when 126 students were killed by insurgents in Afghanistan when 20 schools were attacked. "We warn you to leave your job as a teacher as soon as possible otherwise we will cut the heads off your children and shall set fire to your daughter" (Cursen-Neff & Sheppard, 2010). Amnesty International (2013) reported another threat by insurgents against teachers and education thus:

[T]eachers who teach western education, we will kill them. We will kill them. We would burn down the schools, if they are not Islamic schools. We don't touch small children. Our religion does not allow that, but we'll burn down the schools (p. 6).

Terrorism is another dimension of prevalence of insecurity. Achumba et al. (2013) defined terrorism as the premeditated, threat or use of violence by an individual or group to cause fear, destruction or death, especially against unarmed targets, property or infrastructure in a state, intended to compel those in authority to respond to the demands and expectations of the individual or group behind such violent acts. Muzan (2014) also said terrorism is any act which is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants (in a conflict) with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act. Examples are Boko Haram in Nigeria, Hamas in Palestine, Islamic State in Iraq and the Syria (ISIS), El-Shabab in Somalia etc. All of these insurgencies including other armed groups directly carry attacks on education.

### **Insurgency and insecurity: instances and cases**

**Table 1.** Attacks by Boko Haram Sect in Nigeria from 2009 to 2012

S/N	Date of Attack	State	Location of Attack	Impact
1	July 27, 2009	Yobe	Attack on Potiskum, Yobe State Divisional Headquarters.	4 people killed
2	March 13, 2018	Plateau	Another sect operation in the northern part of Jos, Plateau State.	300 people killed
3	Oct. 1 2010	Abuja	Explosions near the Eagle Square, Abuja.	12 people killed and many injured
4	Dec. 24, 2010	Plateau	A bomb attack, in BarkinLadi, Jos, Plateau State.	8 people killed



5	Dec, 31, 2010	Abuja	Explosions in Mogadishu Mammy Market, Abuja.	10 people killed
6	Jan. 21, 2011	Borno	Attack on Borno state Governorship candidate of all Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), for the 2011 election, Alhaji ModuGubio.	7 people killed
7	Mar. 2, 2011	Kaduna	Boko Haram killed policemen attached to the Residence of Mustapha Sandamu, at Rigasa	2 people killed
8	Mar. 30, 2011	Yobe	Bomb planted by Boko Haram in Damaturu, Yobe State, exploded and injured police officer.	1 injured
9	April 8, 2011	Niger	Bomb at INEC office in Suleja	8 people killed
10	April 26, 2011	Bauchi	Army Barracks in Bauchi bombed	3 people killed And many injured
11	May 29, 2011	Abuja Bauchi And Zaria	Multiple bombings in different locations in Northern Nigeria.	13 people killed And 40 injured
12	June 7, 2011	Borno	Series of bomb blasts occurred in Maiduguri	5 killed and several injured
13	June 16, 2011	Abuja and Borno	Nigerian Police Headquarters, Abuja, bombed by A suspected suicide bomber. A bomb blast also Occurred at Damboa town, Maiduguri	7 killed and many Vehicles damaged
14	June 20, 2011	Kaduna	Boko Haram stormed Kankara Police station in Katsina state.	7 policemen killed and 2 security men
15	July 9, 2011	Borno and Niger	A clash between Boko Haram and the military in Maiduguri, Borno State, also in Suleja, Niger State, a bomb was targeted at a church.	35 killed and many injured
16	July 12, 2011	Borno	Boko Haram threw an explosive device on a moving Military patrol vehicle	5 people killed
17	July 15, 2011	Borno	Explosion in Maiduguri.	5 people injured
18	July 25, 2011	Maiduguri	Bomb explosion near the palace of traditional ruler in Maiduguri.	8 people killed
19	Aug. 26, 2011	Abuja	A suicide Bomber drove into The United Nations building in Abuja	25 people killed and 60 injured
20	Sep. 12, 2011	Bauchi	A bomb attack on a police station in Misau	7 people killed
21	Sep. 17, 2011	Borno	Brother in-law of Mohammed Yusuf, the slain leader of Boko Haram, Babakura Fugu, shot dead in front of his house in Maiduguri by two members of the sect two days after he was visited by former President Olusegun Obasanjo.	1 person killed
22	Oct. 3,	Borno	Boko Haram attacked Baga Market in Mai-	3 people

	2011		duguri	killed
23	Nov. 4, 2011	Yobe	Attack by Boko Haram in Damaturu, Yobe state.	150 people killed
24	Nov.27,	Yobe	Attacks in Gendam.	7 people killed

25	Dec. 24 2011	Plateau	Bombings in Jos.	80 people killed
26	Dec. 25, 2011	Niger	Christmas Day bombing in Madalla.	50 people killed
27	Jan. 6, 2012	Adamawa	Christ Apostolic Church was attacked and Igbo People were also killed in Mubi in the same state	37 people killed
28	Jan.20, 2012	Kano	Multiple attacks in Kano.	150 people killed
29	Jan. 26, 2012	Kano	The Sabon Gari of Kano State witnessed another Explosion, which caused another pandemonium in the state.	Many injured and Some luxury buses damaged
30	Feb. 7, 2012	Kano	A bomb blast in Kano market and military barracks	5 people killed
31	April 8, 2012	Kaduna	Easter Day Church bombing.	38 people killed
32	June 17, 2012	Kaduna	Multiple attacks on churches.	12 people killed and 80 injured
33	Aug. 7, 2012	Kogi	Deeper Life Church.	19 people killed

Source: Adapted from Achumba et al. (2013) and Ewetan & Urhie (2014)

Of the 72 million primary school-age children not currently attending school worldwide, more than half – 39 million – lives in countries afflicted by armed conflict. In many of these countries, armed groups threaten and kill students and teachers and bomb and burn schools as tactics of the conflict. Government security forces use schools as bases for military operations, putting students at risk and further undermining education.

In southern Thailand, Separatist insurgents have set fire to schools at least 327 times since 2004, and government security forces occupied at least 79 schools in 2010. The UNESCO reports that attacks occurred in at least 31 countries from 2007 to 2009 (Coursen-Neff & Sheppard, 2010).

### **Reasons for attacking schools**

In literature, many reasons have been given for the attacks suffered by education by insurgents (Coursen-Neff & Sheppard 2010; Amnesty International 2013, Jones & Naylor 2014).

*Rebel groups/insurgents often see schools and teachers as symbols of the state.*

Since their grievances are against the governments and their policies, the insurgents see attacking schools as attacking one of the institutions that form parts of what gives the governments strength and relevance to the peoples they govern. The insurgents also are aware that education is what touches all the citizens, so attacking it makes all citizens to feel impact of their campaigns.

#### *Ease of attacks*

According to (Coursen-Neff & Sheppard 2010), Teachers and schools make high-visibility “soft” targets – they are more easily attacked than the government security forces, and attacks are likely to garner media attention to the assailants and their political agenda, and undermine confidence in government control.

#### *Hatred for content of education offered*

Sometimes schools are attacked because armed groups see the content of the education being delivered as against their religion or their ideology. For instance, they see education of girls (making women to be free and equal to men) as a violation of their religious tenets. Coursen-Neff & Sheppard (2010) noted that in some countries, schools have been targeted because their curriculum is perceived to be secular or ‘western’, as in the case of Nigeria’s ‘Boko Haram’ which means ‘western education is forbidden’ because it is evil!

*Schools are used as hideouts, base/camp by both the government troupes and the insurgents*

Both the government troupes and the armed insurgents use schools as hideouts, base/camp thereby making schools prone to attacks, counter attacks and battleground. Severally Israeli forces have been accused of shelling United Nations schools in Palestine. The Israeli's responses and reasons for the attacks have always been due to the allegation that Hamas of Palestine use schools as base where they carried out rockets attacks against Israel. Coursen-Neff et al. (2010) consequently regretted that military use of schools not only disrupts students' education; it may itself provoke attacks from opposing forces. They therefore suggested that the longer a school cannot be used for educational purposes, the greater the obligation on the state to ensure the affected students' right to education by other means.

### **Effects of the insurgents' attacks on education**

*Large numbers of teachers and pupils are killed or traumatized*

Coursen-Neff & Sheppard (2010) lamented that:

[S]tudents, teachers, and schools have all been caught in the conflict in Thailand's southern border provinces. Separatist insurgents have killed and threatened teachers; bombed and burned government schools and teachers' housing facilities; and recruited children into their ranks from schools. Government military and paramilitary forces have occupied school grounds to establish bases. Such violations by both sides to the conflict impede the access to a quality education sought by hundreds of thousands of children (p. 6)

### *Dramatic decreases in school attendance rates*

The attacks on education by the insurgents cause unprecedented decreases in pupils' enrollment and attendance in schools. It is practically impossible for the pupils and the teachers to go to schools where both the pupils and the teachers are killed and the schools are burnt down. The following quotation corroborates the above submission. "I was in my class when all of a sudden I heard a big blast. My sister (in class 3) was killed by the bomb attack.... I have not been able to go to school ever since...." (Amnesty International, 2013). Amnesty International (2013) regretted that the destruction of and damage to school infrastructure and facilities grossly reduces the availability of and access to education for many children in Nigeria. Because of insurgency, according to Amnesty International, it is hard to find schools functioning in the affected states in Nigeria, and where they manage to operate, the fear of the unknown keeps school children away.

### *Hundreds of schools are closed*

In Nigeria it was reported that over 800 schools have been closed down, and 194, 664 students affected by Boko Haram insurgency as of December 2014 (This Day Live, 4 Dec. 2014). In Afghanistan, Ministry of Education in 2009 reported that roughly 570 schools remained closed following attacks by the Taliban and other insurgent groups, with hundreds of thousands of students denied education (Coursen-Neff & Sheppard 2010). Coursen-Neff et al (2010) warned that other valuable education services provided to communities in school buildings such as adult education, community health among others may be lost to the insurgents' attacks on schools.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

It is often said that prevention is better than cure. However the cure becomes imperative at the instance of occurrence. Now that insurgency and

insecurity have occurred, proactive measures need to be made. The first thing is not rebuilding the damaged school buildings but repairing and rebuilding the damaged security. It is only when adequate security is put in place as earlier pointed out in this paper that every other acts of reconstruction of physical facilities can be meaningful. Thus, according to Coursen-Neff, et al. (2010), putting an end to attacks on schools, teachers, and students requires action at national and international levels on three fronts: (i) stronger monitoring systems; (ii) targeted preventive measures, and more decisive and timely response when incidents do occur; and, (iii) effective justice mechanisms that hold violators of domestic and international law accountable.

Buari<sup>1)</sup> quoting a development economist, said three questions should be asked about a country's development: "One, what is happening to poverty? Two, what is happening to unemployment? and three, what is happening to inequality?" Buari then added a fourth question – "What is happening to security?" What happens to the first three subjects of interrogation culminates into what happens to security. There is no doubt that what happens to security determines what happens to development in education and other aspects of human existence.

## NOTES

1. [https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field\\_document/20150226BuhariSpeechQA.pdf](https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field_document/20150226BuhariSpeechQA.pdf)

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