EDUCATION AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP: THE PANACEA TO POLITICAL APATHY AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Education is a critical driver of active citizenship and a sustainable remedy to political apathy and insecurity in Nigeria. 1999 was the year Nigeria began her promising journey to a new democratic dispensation. The Giant of Africa have witnessed insecurity in multiple phases ever since, from the Niger-Delta militants, the separatist agitations like Biafra, Boko Haram extremists, Herdsmen/Farmers clashes, Kidnappers, Bandits in the North and unknown gunmen in the Southeast. These challenges have in many ways, at one time or the other, disrupted the genuine efforts of government and adversely impeded the socio-economic and political lives of the people of Nigeria. Researchers have blamed the origin of these challenges to poor education, and bad leadership while others point fingers at the faulty foundation laid by the colonial authorities. However, using historical analysis and narrative methods on data mainly from primary, secondary and tertiary sources, this research revealed and concluded that a combination of all the above underpinned factors and other overlooked attributes like religious and cultural diversity constitute the interdependent variables that ought to be contained, if Nigeria must regain her pride of place as one-time global power from the African continent.

Keywords: Insecurity, Education, Amalgamation, Active Citizenship, Political Apathy.

Introduction

It is no longer debatable that Education alone is not a guarantee to active citizenship or even a definite variable to remedy insecurity in the Nigerian society in the 21st century as Nigeria has witnessed a lot of incidences that has changed such narratives on several occasions. Furthermore, historical evidences are replete with educated people being completely indifferent and passive about the way their country is being governed and equally being behind the insecurity situation in Nigeria today. This research work revealed the above assertions by critically analysing the origin of various agitations and insurrections from different parts of the Nigerian divide and some of the realities behind them.

On the other hand, to be more precise, while this research argued that proper education and active citizenship go a long way to cushioning and arresting the widespread of insecurity and political apathy in the land, these two factors alone do not constitute the only measures that must be attended to, in order to ameliorate the tides in question, but that proper education, and active citizenship when harnessed properly will obviously contribute in no small measures at bridging the gap and curtailing the extreme insecurity and political apathy in the land.

Two ideas rightly come to mind the moment education is mentioned. One is that of leading out into new knowledge and experience. The other is that of feeding and thereby, growing and developing."(Farrant,1982). Understanding the ideal concepts of education guided this work properly to buttress the needed points and arriving at the intended destination, (Gregory, 2013) also opined that "education is an instrument for technological advancement, economic growth, political development, religious tolerance and socialization, they further argued that no developing nation can ever hope to become significant and advanced in the world without paying adequate attention and committing huge resources to the education sector". It is equally crucial to point out that the importance of education has been emphasized by the Nigerian government over the years for example, in 2004, this statement was released that "Education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plans because education is the most important instrument of change, any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be proceeded by an educational revolution" (FRN, 2004). There is no over emphasizing the essence of education in a people's life, even as the Nigerian society lately has degenerated to the point where it seems education is no longer valued because excessive materialism, and money worship is taking over the mainstream, yet civilized societies cannot down play the role proper education play in sustaining and transforming the civilization of every society from the state of nature towards a paradigm shift that recognizes and respects the social contract between the leaders and their followers.

On this note it is also equally important that this research breaks down the concept of education so as not to limit our focus on academics alone, the Nigerian society has grown so complicated that many scholars now argue that the concept of education must not be seen only from the prism of western education. So, when this research talks about education as one of the remedies for insecurity and political apathy it is all encompassing because all the different types and means of acquiring the two things Farrant mentioned earlier on comes to mind. According to (Fafunwa, 1974) "Every society whether simple or complex has its own system for training and educating its youths and education for the good life has been one of the persistent concerns of men throughout history". And education has served as a medium of transmitting culture and tradition from one generation to another, hence (Kunle and Kayode, 1983) argued that "through education men acquire knowledge of the civilization of the past and are enabled to both take part in the civilization of the present and to make the civilization of the future, education is a means through which a change in behaviour is brought about through learning,(learning is a process of bringing about a permanent change in behaviour)". This research also considered the importance of looking at the various methods of learning as originally argued by the greatest scholars of our time, according to (Broudy,1977) "How folks came to have knowledge was once a standard philosophical topic. Descartes posited certain innate ideas; Locke denied their existence and argued for tabula rasa on which ideas and impressions of sense were recorded, combined, and retrieved. Plato's theory of recollection and Aristotle's theory of cognitive functions are also accounts of how knowledge is acquired. As the empirical study of human behaviour and mental functioning developed, the distinction became sharper between generalizations of the psychological processes and the structural-logical properties of knowledge". In recent times researchers have settled with formal, informal and non-formal forms of education.

Formal education or formal learning typically takes place in the property of the school complex, where a human being may learn basic, academic, or trade skills (Entrepreneurship). Little children often go to a nursery or kindergarten but often, formal education begins in elementary school and continues with secondary school. Post-secondary education (or higher education) is

usually at a college or university which may award an academic degree. It is linked with specifics or phase and is provided under a certain set of rules and regulations.

Formal education is given by experienced educators; they are supposed to be proficient in the art of tutoring. It also observes stringent discipline. The scholar and the educator together are thoughtful of the details and employ themselves in the progression of education.

Informal education could subsist in the form of a blood relation teaching a child how to prepare and set-up a meal or ride a bicycle. People can also get an informal education by reading various books from a library or educational websites on their own.

Informal education is when you are not studying in a school and do not use any exacting learning method. In this type of education, conscious efforts are not involved. It is neither pre-planned nor deliberate. It may be learned at some marketplace, hotel or at home.

Unlike formal education, informal education is not imparted by an institution such as school or college. Informal education is not given according to any fixed timetable. There is no set curriculum required. Informal education consists of experiences and actually living in the family or community.

Non-formal education includes adult basic education, adult literacy education or school equivalency preparation or 'Imu Ahia' 'Igba boy'(an informal trade arrangement and agreement between a Master and his student) in Igboland.

In non-formal education, someone (who is not in school) can learn literacy, other basic skills or job skills.

Home education, individualized instruction (such as programmed learning), distance learning and computer-assisted instruction are other possibilities.

Non-formal education is imparted consciously and deliberately and systematically implemented. It should be organized for a homogeneous group. Non-formal, education should be programmed to serve the needs of the identified group. This will necessitate flexibility in the design of the curriculum and the scheme of evaluation.

In all these narratives, this research argued that when these options in education are well harnessed and taken advantage of, whether formal, informal and non-formal education the society stands at a better pedestal if the citizens acquire any of these forms of education as it will go a longer way to enlightening such citizens and making them more patriotic to be able to contribute more to nation building.

Theoretical Framework

In narrating and analysing how Education and Active citizenship serve as one of the major variables in remedying the Political apathy and Insecurity situations that Nigeria is deadlocked with, this research will leverage on the, Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence, Epstein's (1987, 1992) theory which combines "psychological, educational, and sociological perspectives on social institutions to describe and explain the relations among parents, schools, and local environments. The three spheres are family, school, and local community; the overlapping spheres represent the partnership between these three entities, with the child at the centre as the focal point. According to Epstein, the extent to which the spheres overlap is influenced by time, accounting

for the age and grade level of the child and historical influences. The degree of overlap is also influenced by the experiences, philosophies, and practices of families, schools, and communities, and the spheres can be purposely pushed to overlap more or less. Much of Epstein et al.'s work focused on the types of family engagement and what educators can do to create more overlap between the spheres (e.g., Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Epstein, 1987, 1995; Epstein & Sanders, 2000)". Contribution Researchers have shown that the family, the school, and the community influence children's growth and development (Braunger & Lewis, school community journal 20 1997; Hull & Shultz, 2001), Epstein's (1987, 1992) "theory takes into account the importance of these contexts in a child's development, as well as the need for families, schools, and the community to share the responsibilities for the socialization of the child. Epstein acknowledged that some practices of school, family, and community need to be conducted separately but called for important practices to be done conjointly by individuals across the spheres. Epstein used the term "partnerships" to emphasize that schools, families, and communities share responsibilities for children through overlapping spheres of influence". This theory best explains the correlation of Education and Active citizenship in containing the surges of insecurity and political apathy as it juxtaposes the synergy in upbringing of the child between the family, the schools and the local environment, these factors contributes to the interdependent variables earlier mentioned, because according to the findings, Education and Active citizenship alone can serve as major constituent factors but the local environment where a child is raised equally contributes a greater percentage to how such a child perceives the society and reacts to the society.

According to (Mfeasy, 2017) "Epstein developed her theory of overlapping spheres of influence, positing that students learn more when parents, educators, and others in the community work together to guide and support student learning and development. In this model, three contexts – home, school, and community – overlap with unique and combined influences on children through the interactions of parents, educators, community partners, and students across contexts. With attention to contexts and social relations, the theory of overlapping spheres of influence changes the narrow focus of "parental involvement" from what an individual parent does to a broader, more realistic representation of how students move, continuously, in and out of several contexts and how the influential people in those contexts may work together to contribute to students' education and development". This assertion rightly fits in with the Biblical wise saying, "As the scripture teaches, `Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.' (**Prov. 22:6**.) And that sums up the conception that, there is no society if there are no humans, and since human beings act according to mainly their upbringing and other external influences, it then follows that the society will be shaped according to the collective behavioural patterns of the entire individuals that make up that society. Just as (Dewey, 1916) will claim that "Education is a means of social continuity" while (Uchendu, 1993), Concluded that "Education has been largely defined as the process by which a culture is deliberately transmitted from one person to another or from generation to generation". Education does not automatically translate to active citizenship, there are most Nigerians that are highly educated but are passive and indifferent to affairs and events in their country, and there are also well-educated members of the society who contribute to the insecurities in the land. These special cases reflect the earlier hypothesis that there are interdependent variables and not a single causative factor responsible for the way individuals relate with their society, but that with Education and having active citizens, every society will be in a better shape.

This research also looked into some other causative factors, that if not addressed could lead to insecurity and political apathy in the society. These factors are;

Birth Control: In countries like Nigeria adjudged to be one of the most populous nations in the world, Nigeria being the most populated black nation in the African continent yet without an official policy on how to regulate its population even in the 21st century is a thing of concern. With an estimated 200 million people and according to (World Population Review,2022) "Nigeria has the largest population in Africa. The United Nations project that the overall population of Nigeria will reach about 401.31 million by the end of the year 2050. By 2100, if current figures continue, the population of Nigeria will be over 728 million.

According to the Census Bureau of the United States, the population of Nigeria will surpass that of the United States in 2047, when the population of Nigeria will reach 379.25 million. With those numbers, Nigeria will become the third most populated country in the world.

The major contributors to Nigeria's population growth are early marriages, high birth rates, and a lack of family planning access. The birth rate in Nigeria is about 37 births per 1,000 people". Whereas (Worldometer, 2022) claimed that the current population of Nigeria is 217,793,690 as of Saturday, October 15, 2022, based on Worldometer elaboration of the latest United Nations data". These figures are worrisome especially considering the fact that Nigeria is a developing nation that is currently classified as the poverty capital of the world. According to (Victor 2022) "Nigeria has maintained the infamous title of 'World Poverty Capital' according to the World Bank since 2016. The World Bank data had shown that four in every ten Nigerians live below the poverty line of $1.9 per day.

In the words of Irene Khan, former secretary general of Amnesty International, "poverty is not only about income poverty, but it is also about the deprivation of economic and social rights, insecurity, discrimination, exclusion, and powerlessness. That is why human rights must not be ignored but given even greater prominence in times of economic crisis." Moreover, rising poverty is directly related to a surge in insecurity. Unfortunately, efforts by the present administration to address the rising challenges of poverty through the National Social Investment Program meant to improve the standard of living of the average Nigerian has yielded no result for a project that gulps N500 billion annually." In another perspective from This Day article where (Uzoho, 2022) claimed that, "Nigeria has maintained the infamous position as the poverty capital of the world, with 93.9 people in Africa's most populous country currently living below the poverty line. Managing Director, Financial Derivatives Company (FDC) Limited and a member of President Muhammadu Buhari's Economic Advisory Council (EAC), Mr. Bismarck Rewane, has stated. Quoting a World Bank data, Rewane, in a presentation at the monthly Lagos Business School's economic breakfast meeting for September 2021, stated that seven million Nigerians fell into extreme poverty in 2020. The report was titled: "Re: Growth Spikes (5.01 per cent), But People are Hungry?" Nigeria, with its 200 million plus population, was first declared world's poverty capital in 2018 in a report by the Brookings Institution, knocking off India from the position. The report had then stated that the number of Nigerians in extreme poverty increases by six people every minute. The Brookings Institution's report had stated in 2018, "At the end of May 2018, our trajectories suggest that Nigeria had about 87 million people in extreme poverty, compared with India's 73 million. What is more, extreme poverty in Nigeria is growing by six people every minute, while poverty in India continues to fall." So, this situation buttresses the fact that at this point in time Nigeria needs to regulate and effectively control its population explosion in order to plan well for the future generation.

Out of School Children: Nigeria the giant of Africa has myriads of challenges that must be confronted if the great nation must regain its pride of place amongst the global community, on October 20th, 2020 during the raging popular 'EndSARS Protest' (Adebambo, 2020) in an article on The Guardian, restated the comments made by some of Nigeria Hero's past, "Chief Obafemi Awolowo warned our leaders many years ago when he said, "The children of the poor you failed to train will never let your children have peace". The events of the past few weeks have shown that there is both a wide and wild gap between the classes of youths in the nation. Sijibomi Ogundele, the youthful and vibrant CEO of Sujimoto Group said, "If your neighbour is hungry your chicken is not safe". In addition to that, *Mallam Aminu Kano equally warned that, "Nigeria will know no peace until the son of a no-body can become somebody without knowing anybody".*

Out of School Children has become a menace to the Nigerian society, in fact it is a ticking time bomb, especially in the part of the North where Men are traditionally and religiously permitted to marry up to four wives even without having reasonable means of income, and the four wives have no source of income as well to support the family, so the couples keeps producing children without making provisions for them whatsoever, so these children end up becoming 'Almajiris', and continue wandering and in most cases constituting nuisances to the society.

In a similar vein, in the Southern part of Nigeria, a great percentage of poor parents produce more children that they cannot train or carter for, as a form of insurance package for old age, as they have convinced themselves that it is God alone that decide the fate of children, in an interview with three couples from the Southeastern region, (Ikechukwu, O. Ndubuisi E. & Chukwuemeka A. personal communications March 12, 2023), these men argued that their reasons for giving birth to seven, six and eight children respectively is because they believe that "God will definitely bless at least two of these children by anyhow means. So to these Men, their children who they are not ready to sponsor through school because according to them, "Even their own parents did not train them through school but they still survived" find it convenient to believe that it is better to give birth to more children because you do not put all your eggs in one basket" The different orientations and mindset parents have towards children and child bearing affects their actions, and government response to out of school children also plays a big role in its increase.

According to (Mojeed, 2022) *"*Nigeria now has about 20 million out-of-school children, according to the latest global data on out-of-school children by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNESCO, which says a new and improved methodology was used to arrive at the latest figures, said there are "244 million children and youth between the ages of 6 and 18 worldwide (who) are still out of school." According to the statistics, India, Nigeria and Pakistan have the highest figures for out-of-school children globally. The figures in Nigeria have oscillated between 10.5 million and around 15 million for more than a decade, with the situation growing worse due to the degenerating security situation in the country. UNESCO announced the figures in a statement issued on Thursday, a copy of which was made available to premium times by Dafalia Dimitra, a media specialist, with the Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM), which is developed by an independent team and published by UNESCO." While (Monsuroh, 2022) opined that, "Globally, children are entitled to free and quality basic education, yet the number of out-of-school children in the world is alarming and on the rise. The rise is particularly evident in sub-Saharan Africa with Nigeria as the epicentre. According to the World Bank, Nigeria, in 2020, had more than 11 million out-of-school children between the ages of 6 and 15. This figure represents 1 in 12 of all out-of-school children globally

and 22 per cent of all children in the age group in Nigeria. Out-of-school children in Nigeria, according to the **Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC),** include girl-child in northern Nigeria, boy-child dropouts in the south-south and south-east regions, internally displaced children and the almajiri Qur'anic and itinerant children who are predominantly found in northern part of the country". This research equally discovered from UNICEF website that "One in every five of the world's out-of-school children is in Nigeria. Even though primary education is officially free and compulsory, about 10.5 million of the country's children aged 5-14 years are not in school. Only 61 percent of 6-11 year-olds regularly attend primary school and only 35.6 percent of children aged 36-59 months receive early childhood education. In the north of the country, the picture is even bleaker, with a net attendance rate of 53 percent. Getting out-of-school children back into education poses a massive challenge. Gender, like geography and poverty, is an important factor in the pattern of educational marginalization. States in the north-east and north-west have female primary net attendance rates of 47.7 percent and 47.3 percent, respectively, meaning that more than half of the girls are not in school. The education deprivation in northern Nigeria is driven by various factors, including economic barriers and socio-cultural norms and practices that discourage attendance in formal education, especially for girls." While (Iyabo, 2022) concurred with the UNICEF claims by stating that "United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in its latest global data, said Nigeria now has about 20 million out-of-school children. It said there are 244 million children and youth between the ages of six and 18 worldwide who are still out of school." In a 2021 breakdown of out of school children by states, (Yusuf, 2021) claimed that, "Ten states were homes to more than half of Nigeria's out-of-school children, data published in the 2018 digest of basic education statistics by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) shows. The data was also published last month by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in its 2020 report on women and men. It shows that a quarter of Nigeria's 40.8 million school-age children were not attending primary education. The 10 states at the top of the chart had about 5.2 million of the country's about 10.2 million out-of-school children.

Kano State had the most with 989,234, while Akwa-Ibom (581,800), Katsina (536,122) and Kaduna (524,670) followed closely.

Other states that ranked high on the list are Taraba (499,923), Sokoto (436,570), Yobe (427,230), Zamfara (422,214) and Bauchi (354,373).

The states with the lowest numbers of out-of-school children were Cross River with 97,919, Abia with 91,548, Kwara with 84,247, Enugu with 82,051, Bayelsa with 53,079, FCT with 52,972 and Ekiti with 50,945" Nigerian government must as a matter of urgent necessity make policies that will checkmate the surges in population especially with the poor management of state resources by the elected politicians in the country. Regulating and curtailing population explosion will help to contain the insecurity situation in the country.

The New Generation Prosperity Preachers: This research discovered one other ugly trend in Nigeria lately which is the motivational preachers of prosperity in our various churches, mosques, and various other worship centres. This approach to religion where people are encouraged to seek wealth and rewards on earth, by all means instead of struggling and fighting for heaven, have changed most Nigerian youth's attitude towards hard work and handiwork.

Good percentages of Nigerian youths have adopted the Machiavellian dictum of 'The end justifies the means' rather than respect for the dignity in labour approach to life. So long as these

youths are concerned nobody cares about how anyone makes their money, what matters is the money. This singular mindset has contributed dangerously to the increase in insecurity and evil in the land as most of these people involved embark of all sorts of endeavours to make money, including killings, Rituals, Kidnappings, Political-thuggery, Prostitution(Hookup), Internet Frauds (Yahoo-yahoo), Armed Robbery, Political lootings, Domestic violence, and all sorts of social unrest in our society today.

The place of proper education and mentorship has been relegated to the background; morals and societal ethics are no longer observed and respected by the institutions that ought to be the custodians of morality. These abnormalities are becoming the new normal, hence creating a tensed society struggling to strike a balance between good and evil. Everyone has a role to play especially parents, educators and preachers who represent the triple behavioural moulding institutions of the Holy places of worship, the Academia, and the Family. These institutions must create a synergy that ensures that evil deeds do not over shadow and overcome good deeds in the Nigerian society.

Summary and Conclusion

Every civilized society needs its educated and active citizens to function optimally to its full capacity. The act of nation building requires all hands-on deck, while it is the place of the leadership to provide conducive and enabling environment for the society to make progress, it is also expedient that the entire citizenry cooperate and take their own duties and responsibilities seriously rather than sabotage government efforts or totally expect the government alone to fix the society.

The aim of this research was achieved by analysing the trends in the Nigerian society and all the data available. From the Niger-Delta militants, the Separatist Agitations like Biafra, Boko Haram extremists, Herdsmen/Farmers Clashes, Kidnappers, Bandits in the North and Unknown gunmen in the Southeast, this research observed that all these unrests have their foundation from the under listed topics discussed above, from poor education, passive citizenship, lack of population control, out of school children are the major causative factors behind these challenges.

This research suggested by concluding that the theory of overlapping spheres of influence, which emphasizes the need for families, schools, and the community to share the responsibilities for the socialization of the child must be taken seriously. The human society metamorphosed from the state of nature paradigm shift to the social contract to maintain and sustain laws and orderliness; Humanity must not revert back to the state of anarchy and lawlessness.

Some of the recommendations suggested by this research are itemized as follows:

   i.   Insecurity challenges in Nigeria requires the cooperation and collaboration of every patriotic citizen not just government alone.
  ii.   Issues bothering on elections and voting in the right candidates in positions of power and authority is a collective responsibility for active citizens.
 iii.   Education is the torch that lights the way to the future prosperity of every nation. Every society must make education a top priority.

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