Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies (SGOJAHDS), Vol.4 No.2 June, 2021; p.g. 68 – 74; ISSN: 2695-2319 (Print); ISSN: 2695-2327 (Online)

MANAGING SAFE SCHOOL INITIATIVES FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND NATIONAL SECURITY OF NIGERIAN EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study aimed at strategies for making use of safe school initiatives (SSI) for the security of Nigerian education. The paper therefore examined the concepts and types of safe school initiatives, the methods of initiative involvement, the menace of the insecurity in Nigerian educational institutions and the strategies for making use of the Safe School Initiatives to provide lasting solution to the persistent security challenges in the different Nigerian institutions. Suggestions and conclusions were made on the methods of adopting Safe School Initiatives for sustainability and national security in Nigerian Educational institutions.

Keywords: Higher Education, Safe School Initiatives, Utilization, Security, Sustainability.

Introduction

In recent times, there are series of global crises which had been retarding the national growth and development. The crises experienced include insurgency, killings armed robbery, kidnapping, abductions, raping, sexual harassment, arson, natural disaster, social disaster s and pandemic and epidemics of diseases. However, the crises experienced had caused a lot of havocs to the national socio-economic activities in Nigeria. For instance, many schools are closed down leading to truncated school calendars; the fear of insurgency had made many citizens to abandon schooling. Insurgency had lead to the destructions of school building by setting them on fire, through bombing many of the students was abducted by the Boko-haram insurgents. Examples of the chronic abduction cases was the abduction of 110 Chibok girls, 380 boys at Katsina, kidnapping travellers along the major roads Kaduna to Abuja, herdsmen-farmers clashes which also lead to killings of the innocent children. The school environments are no more conducive for effective teaching-learning process. The menace of insurgency on the educational Institutions is toying with the educational provision for sustainable national development (Alaku, 2014). In the same view, Ogundele (2017) noted that any nation that toys with quality education provision to her ctizens, such nation can never be ranked high among the developed nations at the global level. The author noted that mass illiteracy have baneful effects on the sustainable national development. However, the Nigeria as a country had been experiencing high rate of security challenges which requires a drastic curbing interventions and approaches. The approaches that can safe Nigerian education programme from total destructions have to be initiated by the three tiers of government, philanthropists, non-governmental organizations, communities, security agencies and youth associations. This is

to say the security of Nigerian educational system is in the hands of all and sundry (Manga, 2019).

However, the basic objective of this paper is to examine the types of safe schools initiatives methods of implementations, the responsibility agencies, the problems and prospects of the safe school initiatives especially in Nigeria.

Concept and Types of Safe School Initiatives in Nigeria

Since education is the only instrument for national transformation, social justice and sustainable national development. Yet the educational role had been shackled by series of insurgencies, bandits, kidnapping and natural and social disasters. In Nigeria, there are kidnappings of 110 Chibok girls in 2018, also, in 11th December 2020, 300 Nigerian school boys were kidnapped at Government science secondary schools in Kankara Katsina State, Nigeria by the Boko-Haram insurgents. The idea of the safe school initiative came up on 14th April 2014 when 210 girls were kidnapped from boarding house in Borno state. The initiative was designed to ensure that all schools in Nigeria are safe from the menace of series attacks in the future. In February 2021, more than 300 school boys were attacked and kidnapped in Niger state. The series of the attacks however, called for the implementation of the safe school initiative ideas in Nigeria. Recently, 300 students were abducted in G.S.S Jangebe. Safe School initiative according to Global Coalition to protect education (2021) is a n inter-governmental political commitment to protect students, teachers, schools and universities from the worst effects of armed conflicts and bandits. The idea of safe schools initiatives came to be as an effort to help protect hundreds of schools in Nigeria towards responding to the growing number of attacks on the right to education in Nigeria. In order to sustain education, SS1 was established in 2014. The agencies that are implementing the safe school initiatives as announced at the world economic forum in Abuja are United Nations special envoy for global education, Gordon Brown. The global Business Coalition for Education and a world at school. The safe school initiatives are a response to children and schools affected by the militants and insurgent groups in Nigeria. The safe school initiatives aimed at the process of saving the schools from any forms of attacks on education and initiate national security measure for the existence of Nigerian schools. Specifically:

1. The safe school initiatives seek to strengthen the group to bring back our girls and ensure that all attacks are eradicated In the schools.
2. Provide supports in the funding security equipments and employment of the security personnel for the schools.
3. Building of community security groups to promote safe school zones for education.
4. Providing school guards and police to partner with Nigerian security authorities
5. Providing counselor to schools at the risk of attacks in Nigeria.
6. To partner with international communities for the largest school expansion in the country.
7. To ensure that all schools in Nigeria are safe from attacks in the future
8. To safe and protect the rights and social responsibility of child to education without discrimination

The Major Safe School Initiative Action

In the recent time the bandits had kidnapped 939 and killed 396 innocent. Citizen in Kaduna state alone; series of the kidnapping and killing had been going on in different nooks and

corners of Nigeria by the Boko Haram terrorists (BHT), Herdsmen and ISIS group of people. They enter the student hostels, classroom, and different student areas to kidnap. It should also be noted that the Nigerian students and staff are also exposed to insecurity challenges of the environmental hazards and natural disasters such disasters include building collapse, student drown, accidents, floods and electrocution (Nwonkwo, (2020).

However various initiatives have been put in place by the three tiers of Government school management, community and the philanthropist towards providing adequate safety security to the schools in Nigeria. The safety initiatives are therefore tagged safe school initiatives (SSI). The safe school initiatives provided according to Crowe (2000) are: deployment of security personnel to safeguard the schools. The government needs to deploy the security personnel to safeguard the schools in Nigeria. The security like Army traditional security outfits, civil defence, etc are essential to provide the necessary security and safety for the students staffs and the school properties. (Manga & Ogundele (2019)

Approach through the community based interventions. The reason is that the schools are located in the communities, the communities people know what is happening to their schools. Even they may know the individuals involved. It should be noted that the community can be best used to devise a practical and traditional approach and solutions for protecting educational institution from the attack. The communities can also set up a security committee to oversee the security challenges in the schools.

Also, there should be intervention efforts of the students, staff and community members to form voluntary groups in the schools and all working together to combat all forms of the attacks in the schools.

Moral and religious education campaign: The religion leaders should be adequately involved in the promotion of moral values and creating the fear of God in the citizenry. The leaders can speak well on the importance of education and peace to a sustainable national development.

The need for quick maintenance culture to repair, rebuild and replace all the all destroyed school properties during the attacks. Nwachukwu (2020) also suggested the schools that are exposed to the attack can be relocated to alternative place, pending the completion of the initiated maintenance (Ekweme 2016).

The use of Law enforcement agents: Collaboration with law enforcement and military agents such as para-military, police, private hired security. The effort is an effective safe school initiative to neutralize any form of attack on the schools in the locality.

Guidance and counseling service initiative: The schools need to provide all the necessary counseling services. The service will save the trauma of the attack students and be able to face their studies. The counseling initiative will enable the students to understood themselves, the service will enable the students, staff and the school to have safety plan towards knowing what to do in case of security emergency situation. Also, the school managers can initiate the training of the students and staff as school security officers. As an initiative in the school, all the staff and students must be trained on the security measures such as communication to the

military officers and authorities, evacuation of the building collapse victims, safety for the flood victims (Afolabi, 2010).

Building of efficient infrastructure facilities in the schools: Such infrastructure include well concrete building to avoid collapse, fence around the schools to reduce the porosity of the school environment, provision of adequate channels to avoid erosion and flood attacks. The need to provide fire service in the school environment to avoid incidence of the fire outbreak and the need to provide cover grasses and tress to avoid densification of the schools. All the effort will provide safe schools environment in Nigeria.

Self-defence initiatives: The schools need to initiate self defence approach to have direct public attack to any form of insurgency in the school. Also, the following school based initiatives are explored such as transferring of programme from the highest risks areas to a safer part of the country through exchange students' programme. The schools need to provide innovative education strategies to the children living in the internally displaced camps (Ogundele & Auta (2021).

Safety financing initiatves: Adequate funding of safe school initiatives by setting up of safe school initiative committee. The committee is therefore charged with the responsibility of investigating the utilization of $20 million FGN (2014).

Towards Effective Management of Safe School Initiatives in Nigeria

For the schools to continue to function properly there is the need to provide a befitting atmosphere and conducive learning environment from the school. (Ezeofor (2020), Nwokedi and Ogundele (2019) described National Security as an impetus for quality education in Nigeria. It is therefore important to note that the schools management communities, teachers and the school need to provide security and peace in their schools. It is also important to provide effective management strategies for the success of the safe school Initiative (SSI) adopted in the schools.

However, the following are the management strategies for the effectiveness of the safe school initiatives (Ogundele, 2020)

Prudency, transparency and accountability in the allocation and utilization of the safe school initiative funds (Abdulkareem 2007)

The available funds need to be judiciously used for the purpose of which the funds are raised. The issue of misappropriation, embezzlement and other form of frauds should be avoided. However the effective safe school initiative funds management will encourage. cooperation of all and sundry of the society and they will assist in curbing the society challenge in Nigeria educational system (Durosaro, (2020), (Manga & Ogundele 2019) .

Embarking on regular security meeting in the community, when there is a regular meeting of the security agent and security information in the community, the meeting will always exposing the perpetration of insecurity in the community and in the school system. The regular meeting will help to secure and sustain the Nigeria secondary education.

The government should have firearm control centre to monitor the incoming and out going fire arms and its accessories. The monitoring will enable the indigents and culprits of the security in the society to be fish out and embarrassed. The adequate statutory and non-statutory records of the fire arms should be kept by the centre coordinator and provide daily feed back to the military head quarters.

The community needs to re-engineer the use of traditional indigenous approach to drive out the undesirable herdsmen, the Boko Haram terrorists from the community. For instance in Abia state the attempt to send out Fulani herdsmen, the indigenous made use of thunder storm to strike forty cows, Sunday Adeyemo Ugbor, cc, Nweke, P.O, Uwakwe, I.S, Iseaku, w.b, Opara, F.N Isiaba, N.C & Madu C.V (2020) security awareness as a panacea for effective mgt of SSI & Std acd ach in Nigeria unity school. The community should be encouraged to make use of incantation to drive out the terrorists .For instance Sunday Adeyemo used incarnation to drive the terrorists from Ibarapa in Oyo state, the same approach can be used to drive out the terrorists from the community in order to sustain our educational system Ugbor, Nweke, Nwakwe, Isaiku, Opara, Isiebo, & Madu (2020).

There is the need to declare state of emergency on security initiative security summit for the schools safe. The summit should advocate the need to have self defense method. The students should find way of having self defense method in order to save the schools for effective sustainability of Nigeria education.

The federal republic of Nigeria should restructure her educational policy in line with the Israelites education policy that allow the secondary education graduate to enroll in the military camps for two years and after which the individuals can defend her territory and community in the hands of the intrudes. If the secondary education is redesigned towards meeting up with the security challenges when they get to the university, they will be able to defend their schools from the bandits.

Finally the provision and supply of any form of security equipment for the security agents in the school is the responsibility of all and Sunday. Since the attack is not to anyone but on all.

Conclusion

In order to sustain Nigeria education program, there is the need to safeguard the life and properties of the schools. In the country since no country that toy with educational provision to her citizens can be ranked high among other the developed nations at the global level. Hence the need for safe school initiatives is inevitable and veritable approach for the national security and sustainability of education in Nigeria.

Suggestions

Establishment of paramilitary forces in the schools. Every school should have paramilitary forces Man-O-War boys and airs brigade students-Art-crime-force. They are to report any suspicious act to the school management,

The school management needs to adopt natural disaster precaution measures in the schools, such measure like building of fence round the school, leasing out of the unused land to the members of the community building of shops round the school. Construction of shopping

complex, channelization to avoid flood and erosion, forces provision of fire preventive equipment etc. There is the need to take responsibility for safe schools and quality learning. The efforts can be used to improve school culture, change the classroom environment model collaboration and beginning of mind set and inspiration. Moral talk in the school. The initiative will encourage togetherness and oneness in fighting bandits and kidnappers in the schools.

The need to provide assistance to the Bandits attacked school by moving the students in the highest risk areas to the safer parts of the country and provide all the necessary education package intervention that will aid the sustainability of the affected schools.

Effective use of information communication technology in the schools. The ICT gadgets in the strategic places in the campus such as CCTV, informant, cloud street light. The undesirable elements and their evil deeds in the school (Etejere & Ogundele, 2008). Again, there is the need to establish clear school policies to embrace goals: The school should provide a clear policy that will help curb anti-bullying behaviours, harassments and discriminative policies in order to embrace equity, access to quality education so that inclusive education should be reinforced.

Finally the school managers need to initiate intelligence and security training and retraining conference and workshops for the workers. The effort will broaden the school staff on the security intelligence and knowledge which in turn will help to sustain the schools safety in the society.

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