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Theme: Psychosocial Issues of Insecurity and Deprivation for Sustainable Development

Education, Psychosocial Issues and Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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Preamble:

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I would start by thanking the almighty God who has made this great day possible despite the setback that altered the initial date of this conference. I would like to appreciate the Chief host of this conference, Prof. Francis Ogbonnaya Otunta, the Vice-Chancellor of this University. Our dear host, Prof. R.O. Nnachi, the president of this great association. The special guest of honour and Dean Faculty of Education and the keynote presenter Prof. Ike Nwachukwu. I would also like to extend my appreciation and thanks to the Chairperson of the LOC my friend and colleague Dr. Ngozi Uzoka (Assoc. Prof) and members of this association who have travelled far and wide to listen to this presentation. I count myself greatly privileged and honoured to be chosen to engage your attention today as the lead paper presenter.

Introduction

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Education is the key factor in the sustainable development of any nation that is aspiring towards advancement in science and technology, leading in policy matters and driving economic issues globally. Investment in education is an investment in the human resources of a nation. Education involves developing individuals along with the three domains of educational activities as proposed by Bloom namely the cognitive, which involves the building of mental knowledge and capacity, the affective which has to do with individuals emotional growth and control, manifested in the right attitude to self and others; and the psychomotor which equips individuals with physical, scalable skills that enhance their functionality in the society (Clark, 2014). Simply defined, education is the process by which individuals are trained to be mentally sound, emotionally stable, physically fit, and socially well adjusted. These constitute a balanced personality. Investment in Human resources should be the priority of any nation because human resources are the capital package of a nation. As such, undermining investment in human resources will not only put a clog in the will of the progress of that nation, in terms of achieving monumental strikes in sustainable development but will generate a barrage of psychosocial issues that

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would eventually plague such a nation. Declining quality education has dire consequences for any nation in all ramifications (Obanya, 2014), it weakens the political, social, traditional, and economic institutions. When governance emanates from products of poor education who are bereft of ideas and lack skill, will power, proficiency, vision, and mission there is bound to be an upset in the orderly inter-connectedness of the entire social fabric, resulting in convulsive outbursts of psychosocial stressors. These ultimately obstruct sustainable development machinery.

The concept of sustainable development is best understood as a comprehensive approach to development that is all-inclusive in the sense that it makes use of new technologies to promote life quality and at the same time unobstructed to environmental conservation. It ensures that human development needs and goals are met, without compromising on the future unborn. In September 2015, world leaders gathered at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit to deliberate on how to tackle the increasing challenging natural and man-made crisis rocking our social systems and causing social upheavals. They took steps to counter-reactions in response to some policies and actions of nations that are not development friendly. The 193 member nations in attendance came out with a development road map of 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) among which are to fight poverty and hunger and enhance life quality for all, guarantee support and access to development opportunities through inclusive education, reduce inequality and combat climate change and environmental crisis. Furthermore, the goals include strengthening institutions, promoting social justice, providing clean water, and promoting sanitation and health and developing sustainable economies and smart cities among others (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2017; Levi & Rothstein, 2018). These 17 SDGs are binding on all nations both rich and poor to pursue and achieve by 2030. To ensure that these goals are achievable, the education sector becomes very relevant as an agent of change. Future leaders should be made to pass through an education that would broaden their minds in critical thinking, decision making, and strategic planning for good policy formulation. Education for sustainable development will prepare teachers to equip students with life skills for economic empowerment, value orientation, positive behaviours, and attitudes (Levi & Rothstein, 2018; UNESCO 2018). This will go a long way in reducing psychosocial factors and issues that may arise in society.

Psychosocial issues arise when individuals are unable to function due to the influence that the psychological and social environment exerts on their physical and mental wellness. As individuals develop, their cognitive abilities progressively get more matured and they begin to develop some self-understanding and ways of engaging with others and facing challenges they encounter within their environment. They also form attitudes and perceptions of the world around them (Slavin, 2003; McLeod, 2018). To understand the crisis and challenges individuals go through and how they cope with them as they develop, Erick Erickson a German-American developmental psychologist and psychoanalyst developed a set of principles that are foundational in understanding young people's needs and how they relate to it within their environment. He argued that human beings pass through eight stages in their circle of development from infancy to later adulthood. Each stage has a set of critical issues called psychosocial crises whose resolution prepares the individuals for the next stage. When the crisis of a stage is resolved satisfactorily, individuals move on to face new challenges, but when they are not resolved, they will have to struggle to resolve those challenges in later stages of their development. The first three stages of basic trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame/doubt, and initiative versus inferiority revolve around child-rearing practices in the home and family. Each child has the opportunity to develop the positive attributes of basic trust, autonomy, and initiative or the alternative crisis of basic mistrust, shame/doubt, and inferiority. The next two stages of industry/inferiority

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and identity versus role confusion bring the role of the school into focus in helping children overcome the challenges of their academic work and resolving the identity crisis and conflicts that arise from their psychological makeup. While the last three stages of intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, and ego integrity versus despair deal with human relations in adulthood. Erickson concludes that each stage successfully passed, individuals emerge with stronger psychological quality and a sense of competence able to face the challenges of the wider society. Otherwise, they will live through life with the negative consequences of inadequacy and low self-esteem (Cherry, 2018).

In tandem with Erickson's psychosocial theory is Maslow's hierarchy needs theory which reveals a set of needs of individuals which he structured and categorized. The first four needs he calls basic or deficiency needs. Deficiency in the sense that these needs arise when individuals are deprived. They are physiological needs that are fundamental to our survival such as nutrition, water, and so on. The next is the safety needs of security and freedom and needs for social belongingness and love because human beings are designed to have companions and live securely. Deprivation of any of these needs will lead to loneliness, frustration, depression, and anxiety. While the last is esteem need of self-worth and value. These basic needs often may have to be satisfied before motivation to satisfy the higher-order needs can be sought. The last need in order of Maslow's hierarchy is self-actualization which is a growing need and involves realizing everything an individual wants to become to be fulfilled in life (Cherry, 2018, Slavin, 2003).

Erick Erickson's psychosocial theory and Maslow's hierarchy needs theory form the basic framework for understanding this paper. They emphasize the role of the environment in shaping individual's personalities with positive attitudes and mindsets when their psychosocial needs of food, shelter, love, security, trust, and the mastery of cognitive skills among others are met. These will aid in their overall mental and emotional wellness and adjustment in the wider society. Where these needs are not resolved, they cause serious crises for individuals as well as constitute major constraints for their upward mobility in society.

A study on the analysis of human development indices reported that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in its 1990 Human Development Report (HDR) introduced some new measures to assess countries developmental strides through their Human Development Index (HDI), which captures three vital aspects of human wellness. They are health care [299]
measured by life expectancy access to education determined by rate of literacy and enrolment at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels and life quality standards and employment rate among others. If the human, economic and social dimensions of human needs are met without jeopardizing the needs of the development of future generations, then development is to be sustainable (Aziz, Amin, Yusof, Haneef, Mohamed & Oziev 2015; Dervis & Klugman 2011). Taking a cursory look, Nigeria is far below the UNDP's HDI. A report by the world poverty clock shows that almost 50% of Nigeria's estimated population of 180 million people is deprived of very basic needs such as food and shelter. Approximately, 89.9 million Nigerians are living in abject poverty (Kazeem, 2018). This naturally would give rise to psychosocial issues. Given this detailed background, on the relationship between Education, psychosocial issues, and sustainable development. This paper will examine some aspects of psychosocial issues of insecurity and deprivation for sustainable development in Nigeria.

2 Psychosocial Issues of Insecurity and National Development

The issue of security is very fundamental to national development in Nigeria. This is conspicuously captured in the 1999 constitution Chapter 14 section 2(b), that the security and welfare

shall be the primary purpose of government and that participation by the people in their government shall be ensured following the provisions of this constitution. The constitution also provides for the fundamental rights of all Nigerians among which are right to life, right to personal liberty, right to freedom of movement within Nigeria, freedom from discrimination, and freedom to acquire and own immovable property anywhere in Nigeria. Security, peace, and unity as embedded in the motto of the Federal Republic of Nigeria are necessary for her national development. Unfortunately, the hydra-headed monster called corruption, has pervaded the society and dismembered the Nigerian social structure and hugely opposed its national development. Not only has it done that, but it has almost successfully reversed it into a downward degradation trend because the government has not fulfilled its responsibility to the people.

There is gross deprivation of basic life needs like food, good drinking water, energy, and good roads amid the vast human and natural resources the country has. This has resulted to gross indiscipline and insecurity and the practice of all manner of nefarious activities by some citizens, ranging from the looting of government property and treasure by individuals and cabals who are scrambling for the limited available resources for survival to vandalization of natural resources by individuals who feel grossly undermined (White, 2014). The grabbing and get rich syndrome mindset currently prevalent in the society has given rise to incessant kidnapping, ritual killings, armed robbery, political thuggery, violence, and terrorism. These have caused citizens to live and move with trepidation, anxiety, and uncertainty because of the gloomy picture of the state of the nation. Deep ethnic and religious divide also has generated an atmosphere of insecurity of lives and property in the country, making both internal and external investment and trade unattainable (Dabak, 2014). The apparent break down of law and order has also given rise to mistrust of the political class and governance. This growing challenge of insecurity is obstructive to national investment and development. If not addressed by the government, national development becomes a figment of the imagination.

3 Psychosocial Issues of Deprivation and Quest for Sustainable Development

The Nigerian constitution chapter 11 section 16(2b&c), clearly states that the state shall direct its policy towards ensuring that the material resources are harnessed and distributed as best possible to serve the common good. The economic system should, therefore, be operated in such a manner as not to concentrate the wealth or means of production in the hands of a few individuals. The inability of the government to ensure the equitable distribution of wealth has resulted in psychosocial issues of deprivation and denial of basic life support systems like employment, good wages, housing, and a good road network that will enhance life quality. Three categories of deprived people in Nigeria can be observed. The first is women. Studies have proved that about 60-70% of Nigerian's rural labour force are women and over three-quarters of them have never been to school (Ugbede, 2019). These women are deprived of access to education, ownership of land, and access to agricultural loans and even denied rights to be voted into certain political offices, yet they make a tremendous contribution to the economy which is very often not reflected in the national productivity index. The percentage of the population of women in the rural labour force is so significant. To undermine the continuous deprivation of their basic needs that give them a sense of worth, emotional stability, and mental wellbeing will upset sustainable development. The second group of people that are deprived is the youths. Many of the young ones are unemployed; some do not have access to quality education, while some of the young ones are out of school. They roam around in anxiety, frustration, depression, and anger.

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Consequently, many indulge in all manner of vices and criminal acts such as substance abuse,

armed robbery, advanced fee fraud popularly known as "419" or "yahoo, yahoo boys", bunkering and all manner of vandalism and hooliganism. In a bid to secure a better life, many youths have undertaken very risky and illegal adventure into foreign countries like Libya, China, and Malaysia, where reports have shown that Nigerian youths have been tortured, imprisoned, raped and dehumanized. Many have died and others deported.

A report revealed that 10,000 youths had been repatriated from Libya since April 2017, while 7,720 were reported stranded in Libya as of May 2018 (Nwafor, 2018; NAN, 2018). The lives of our youths have become endangered and that alone obstructs sustainable development and distorts the role they stand to play as future leaders. The third group of deprived people in Nigeria is the masses, who fall within the majority of low-income earners. The disparity between the poor and rich is wide in terms of general living conditions and quality of life. There are an unequal access and distribution of resources between poor and rich. For instance, the poor find it more difficult to secure jobs they are qualified for than the rich, simply because they lack the "necessary connection" or "Godfather". This pattern is virtually replicated in every sphere of their lives and leaves them angry and frustrated, their reaction is translated into vandalizing our natural resources in a bid to survive and also fight the rich. There is no way sustainable development can thrive in this situation.

4 Psychosocial Issues of Insecurity and Education in Nigeria

Security is a global issue. It is a fundamental human right for the lives and property of individuals to be secured within their environment, and freedom of movement without molestation to carry out legitimate business. Nigeria in recent times has witnessed a spiral wave of insecurity that has almost ranked highest in the list of our social problems. It has had tremendous consequences on the education sector. Learning requires an environment that exudes a tranquil atmosphere that necessitates appropriate cognitive, emotional, social, and psychomotor state of the individual for optimal learning and achievement. Unfortunately, insecurity in society has transfused into the learning environment exposing learners to psychosocial factors of stress, frustration, misery, violence, hostility, and so on. Values that society upholds like respect for other people's rights and moral codes have been totally eroded in the practice of the educational sector. Our learning environment has become so porous and unsecured by the unchecked unwholesome activities of some students like bullying, fighting, violence, substance abuse, cultism, kidnapping within the school compound, vandalization and loss of valuable learning resources and threats of [301] life to both teachers and students to mention a few, which are negative stimuli that have affected the learning environment.

A major wave of insecurity, which took an ethnoreligious dimension, rocked the educational sector of the nation in April 2014, when Boko-Haram an Islamic terrorist group that is opposed to any form of western education ravaged the Government Secondary School in the town of Chibok in Borno State of North-East Nigeria and carried away 276 girls and held them hostage for about two years. This put the Nation's educational system on the global scene and sparked off protests by national and international women's groups and human right groups and activists notably in the United States, France, and South Korea with the slogan, "BRING BACK OUR GIRLS", Consequently, in February 2018, the Boko-Haram struck again at the Government Girls' Science and Technical College Dapchi in Yunuasari Local Government Area of Yobe State in the North-East of Nigeria. They carried away 110 school girls aged between 11 – 19 years (Abu et al 2018; Searcey, 2018). These sporadic attacks have led to the closure of schools in and around Borno State, truncating learning activities and causing both parents and school children to stay back

home in a panic, extreme fear, anxiety, and restlessness.

In the South-South of Nigeria, insecurity has also affected the smooth running of educational activities in some places by the Niger Delta militancy group and the most recent incessant communal clashes that have claimed lives and property largely in Cross-Rivers state and environs (Edem, 2018; Okoli, 2018; Owaboye, 2017; Ojukwu, 2017). Insecurity has disrupted teaching and learning and the government has not been able to provide maximum security for schools, resulting in their closure.

5 Insecurity and Education of Internally Displaced Persons

Education of children in an emergency situation in Nigeria is a growing phenomenon, particularly those displaced as a result of terrorist acts, violence, command conflicts, and natural disasters. These children are faced with a lot of psychosocial challenges because they have been forced to flee with their parents from their natural comfort zones into a new environment with makeshift shelters in camps. There are about nine internally displaced persons' (IDP) camps located in Maiduguri, Abuja, and Lagos with over 2,000 people (Agu, 2018). The camp environment lacks basic facilities ranging from good drinking water, healthcare system, and schools in some cases. The security in most camps is porous and the vulnerable group, comprising children and the girl child are subject to all kinds of abuses like rape, violence, child marriage, and labour. The government is often not prepared for the sudden arrival, care, protection, and education of these children. Where schools are available, there is not enough qualified staff to give psychosocial support to the children. So the general atmosphere of incessant attacks, violence, and insecurity within the camp, affects the emotional and mental wellbeing of the children. Much still needs to be done to enable these children to receive education uninterrupted and the necessary support to live a self-enhanced life.

6 Deprivation and Human Resources Management in Education.

The education sector is Nigeria suffers all kinds of deprivation. The teaching profession is highly rated globally as a noble profession in most countries especially the developed ones. In Nigeria the reverse is the case, it is a profession that suffers relegation in terms of occupational preference among students. According to United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the minimum standard recommended for funding education in every country in the world should be at least 26% of the GDP or annual budget of that country, to help it achieve its objectives. Unfortunately, poor funding, lack of funding, and mismanagement of released funds have constituted a major deprivation suffered by educational institutions across all [302] levels in Nigeria. Particular challenges include poor training and retraining of teachers, teachers' lack of job satisfaction, poor job performance, poor remuneration, and loss of interest in the teaching profession are some indirect consequences of poor human resource management. Teachers have been accused of the poor learning outcome of their learners. Many believe that the quality of teachers' performance is as a result of the system in which they operate. Unfortunately, the work environment of many public primary school teachers is appalling. There is a lack of motivation, infrastructural provision, poor classroom design, inadequate/ no learning resources, and inappropriate teacher-pupil ratio among others, which have affected learners' outcomes. In all aspects of educational management, the sector suffers from misdirection, mismanagement, and political intrusion among others; which have led to the psychosocial issues of frustration affecting all.

7 Psychosocial Issues of Insecurity and Environmental Management.

Environmental management has become a strategic discussion on national security. Environment predates man and it is meant for man's survival, happiness, and security. Therefore, it is man's responsibility to sustain the environment. Drastic environmental degradation of any form can cause tensions, violence, and war within and between nations. In Nigeria, the mismanagement of a number of our environmental issues has given rise to a state of insecurity. They include the exploitation of renewable resources and the emission of wastes, which has polluted the land and aquatic life of the people within that environment. The unequal distribution of the nation's resources has increased poverty rates. Climatic changes like flooding have displaced entire communities, while desertification has led to the loss of grazing lands and destruction of farmlands. In education, an inadequate learning environment fraught with noise, congestion of pupils and students within a learning space, inappropriate location of the school building, and in most cases an unhygienic classroom environment has exposed learners to study with anxiety, unwholesome behaviours, and insecurity. These environmental challenges have disrupted social cohesions and caused political upheavals, economic downturns, and educational declension causing fear, agitation, anxiety, anger, and insecurity.

8 Psychosocial Issues of Insecurity and Information Management

Psychosocial issues have direct importance in ensuring the security of information systems (Frangopoulos et al, 2013). The link between the psychosocial issues of people and the integrity of information systems is a vital one because users are the primary handlers of information systems. Irrespective of the technological and physical security measures in place, the human element remains a potent threat in compromising the security of information systems when they are the subject of malicious intrusion attacks. It is therefore important to access and understand the psychosocial issues as they constitute a security risk. The term psychosocial refers to how the mental well-being of an individual is influenced by the prevailing social environment. Some of the psychosocial issues that result in risks to information security include job instability, lack of esteem by peers, difficulties in the work environment and the working conditions, poor physical work conditions, taking work home, etc. (ILO, 2012; Martel & Brun, 2003; 6 & Michie, 2002)

When a person is experiencing adverse psychosocial issues, they are susceptible to ignore the stated and sometimes wearisome security policies in-favour of quicker, yet insecure alternatives. Also, they are more prone to lapses in judgments as it concerns the dissemination or transfer of information from one point to another. As an example, this may involve sending sensitive and confidential information through insecure channels (Frangopoulos et al. 2013). To mitigate these [303] adverse psychosocial issues, measures must be put in place to identify and assess psychosocial issues, procedures that must be enacted to control and alleviate their impacts as a security policy (Frangopoulos et al, 2013).

9 Conclusion

Drastic problems require drastic solutions. The psychosocial issues in Nigeria must be addressed by the government at all levels to forestall the nation becoming a failed state. Deliberate strategies must be consciously taken to reverse the current downward trend of events. The first on the list is to address the security situation in the country particularly as it relates to the school environment. Priority should be directed at making the school and community safe for the teeming population of school-going children. Integrating the community policing strategy recently on the table by the Nigeria Police Force with the protection of schools that reside in the communities

should be explored as the first line of protection for the school children.

Teacher training should be upscaled as a corollary strategy to equip teachers with psychosocial support tools to enable them to provide psychosocial support to school children traumatized by the current state of insecurity in our nation and schools. Another key area of attention is to de-emphasize the national cake syndrome and concentrate more on the diversification of the economy, to favour the Nigerian youths so that there will be ample opportunity for employment and empowerment. Youths with employable skills should be able to get jobs without connection in any part of the country and fear of segregation or undermining. Achieving the above stated requires the economic and political restructuring of the Nigerian nation as a panacea to diversify her largely mono-economy.

The present mode of allocating and distributive federalism should be reversed by a return to economic and fiscal federalism that empowers the federating units of the country to generate their resources and be more accountable to its proper management. This will require constitutional reforms through the national assembly with recourse to the sovereign rights of the Nigerian people. A massive injection of funds into the school system should follow in line with the criteria recommended by UNESCO. A restructured policy with appropriate value orientation by managers of the school system will ensure that the funds are properly channeled to create a congenial school environment devoid of psychosocial issues associated with a dysfunctional learning environment. Efforts to bridge the dichotomy between the rich and poor should be pursued vigorously by restoring the middle-class and upscaling life quality for the poor, through the provision of basic life support like food, water, and shelter.

Strong basic education should be made accessible to all children of school age; irrespective of their circumstance. This can be achieved by having a baseline standard for all public primary and secondary schools in the nation. Finally, a real step towards diversity of equality and inclusion, by a long term plan and implementation shall go a long way in minimizing psychosocial issues and paving way for sustainable development.

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