Security and Safety of Learning Environment: A Panacea to Effective Participation and Achievement of Adult Education Learners, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
This article discusses in security of the learning environment and its effects on education in particular, the role of the Boko Haram insurgency in the North – Eastern part of Nigeria in creating an unconducive Environment which impeded educational activities is highlighted the insurgents’ attacks on schools have also led to the loss of life of many students as well as their teachers. They have also led to the destruction of many schools – buildings, facilities and learning equipment. Apart from the loss of life of many students and teachers, many others were also abducted to serve as child soldiers who had participated in suicide missions or acted as spies, emissaries or look – outs. There were female – victims’ among whom many had been forced into sexual slavery. These incidences had generated enormous psycho – social effects which had impeded educational and learning activities. Teachers, students and even educational managers were scared away from schools out of fear of being attacked. Where teachers and learners had the courage to attend schools, there were no learning materials, which had been vandalised or destroyed by the insurgents. The attacks and destruction of schools infrastructure and learning equipment as well as the killing, maiming and scaring – off of the school teachers all had direct effects on adult education programmes, since, most adult education programmes rely heavily on the facilities and teachers of the formal schools in the area, who they recruited and utilised during weekends and on part – time basis. Destruction of formal schools, therefore, meant destruction of adult learning centres while, killing, maiming and scaring of formal school teachers also meant killing maiming and scaring of adult education facilitators. Added to the issues of security, and safety, an ideal adult learning environment was also expected to have met both physical and psychological needs of adult education learners.
Keywords: Security and Safety, Learning Environment, Effective Participation, Achievement, Adult Education Learners

INTRODUCTION
Security and safety are two basic human needs and, therefore, of fundamental importance to human survival and welfare. They are, moreover, a panacea to virtually every human activity, particularly learning. A secured learning environment is a pre-requisite for effective participation and achievement in learning, especially among adult education learners. Learning requires a conducive atmosphere and an unsecured environment is far from being conducive to learning. A conducive learning environment is therefore, one which affords learners all they would require for learning take place; an environment devoid of fear and anxiety as well as free from rancour, noise pollution, distractions, chaos or intimidations, or all of these.
The interest in the relationship between society and learning has been rekindled in Nigeria, by the scourges of militancy in the southern part of Niger and the Boko Haram insurgency in the North – Eastern part and how these have both negatively affected learning in those two areas. The activities of the Niger – Delta militants had no doubt affected teaching and learning largely in the South – South. Many school
aged children, had been traumatised and even forced to join the gangs at the premature ages. Similarly, in the North – Eastern part of Nigeria where Boko Haram insurgents held sway, many schools had been burnt, teachers and students attacked and killed and laboratories and other learning resources centres and equipment vandalised or destroyed. Moreover, in many parts of the North – Eastern States of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe, many schools had to be closed for a long period of time due to fear of attacks by the insurgents.

In a nutshell, the ensuring insecurity had created an unconducive atmosphere which had made teaching and learning almost impossible, as students and teachers were scared to even attend school. It is therefore evident that security is a panacea for effective participation by and achievement of both youth and adult learners. This is because, as formal schools were closed, due to militancy and insurgency in the Niger – Delta and North – Eastern Nigeria, respectively, so also were adult learning centres across the areas affected, especially where facilities and teachers of formal schools were being used. It is, therefore, imperative for the Nigerian Government to do, everything within its power to ensure security in the whole country. This is the only way that a conducive learning environment could be ensure and thereby bringing about effective participation of and achievement by learners.

This paper discusses insecurity problems in Nigeria, especially the Boko Haram insurgency in the North – Eastern part of the country. The paper examines the activities of the sect, particularly its targeting of schools and the damages the attacks have caused the education sector in the sense of, the killing of students and teachers, the destruction of buildings and learning equipment as well as the psycho – social problems caused by the insurgency attacks on people of the affected areas. The paper also discussed the implication of the psychosocial disorders on the entire social life of the surviving victims especially with regards to education, both Formal and Non – Formal. It, finally, concludes by emphasising the need for the security of the learning environment as a panacea to effective participation and achievement of Adult Education Learners. Moreover, also stressed is the need for adult education to cater for the physical and psychological needs of learners in addition to their general security and safety.

**Theoretical Framework**

This paper is anchored on the Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory. According to Abraham Maslow (1970 in Darley M. 1996) human needs are in five (5) categories and the categories are pyramidically placed in what he referred to as a ‘hierarchy’. The categories are place in a hierarchy in the sense in which some of them have to be satisfied before others are anticipated: there are, therefore, basic and secondary needs. The basic needs, which are primary, fundamental and compulsory, include physiological needs such as oxygen, food, water, shelter and sex which are essential to human survival. After satisfying the basic or physiological needs, comes the need for safety. For human beings to be adequately comfortable and satisfied, feelings of security and safety must be assured. After being secured and safe then human being often seek to satisfy the other higher needs, viz the needs for belongingness, self – esteem and the apex need for self – actualisation. Since the need for security and safety are the must primary of the secondary needs according to the Maslows’ theory of needs. As such, they are, vital to every human activity, particularly Adult learning, hence the focus on them in this papers.

**Insecurity in the Nigerian Society**

The Nigerian society has been ravaged by different forms of insecurity ranging from the activities of militant youth in the Niger – Delta area, kidnapping – for – ransom and cattle rustling to the unfortunate incidence of the Boko Haram insurgency in mainly the North – Eastern part of the country. Upon of all these insecurity problems, that of Boko Haram appears to be the most prominent and devastating, because of its effects, contemporarily. The Boko Haram insurgency has had the most debilitating on the life of the people in the affected areas. The questions that need to be asked, however, are who are the Boko Haram and what activities do they carryout in the country that have devastated the social life of Nigerians, especially those in the affected areas?

The Boko Haram sects are followers of one member of the ‘Ulama’, called Mallam Mohammed Yusuf, and which started its operation at a remote village called Kanamma; in the extreme Northern part of the Yobe State. Their its activities were initially peaceful, before they started clashing with the constituted
authorities in the area, as a result of their strange preaching and interpretation of the teachings of Islam based on their new ideology which condemned Western education and culture. The group was exiled by the authorities from Kanamma, but which then moved to Maiduguri in Borno State where they later regrouped. Their activities continued there and became more prominent as they were popularly referred to there as ‘Boko Haram’, meaning “Western Education is Forbidden”. The name was externally designated from their teachings and expressions. However, their self – proclaimed name is “Jama’atu Ahlis sunna Lidda’awati wal Jihad” (People committed to the propagation of the Prophets teachings and Jihad).

The sect’s activities were largely peaceful even in Maiduguri until 2009, when it started clashing with authorities as a result of what government had considered inciting preachings. The sect came into conflict with operation Flush II in Maiduguri and as a result of which about seventeen (17) of its followers were injured. In retaliation, the sect attacked many police stations and engaged security forces in gun battles. The encounters took about five (5) days until when the sect was finally crushed by the Nigerian Armed Forces and their leader disarmed and handed over the Nigerian police, under whose care he died in custody.

Upon the death of their leader, the activities of the sect became low until a year later when Muhammad Yusuf’s Deputy Ibrahim Shekau, who was believed to have been killed in the 2009 encounter re-emerged. The sect renewed its activities through serial attacks using explosive devices and attacking public buildings such as the police Headquarters and UN building both in the FCT Abuja. The violence exacerbated form that point, especially in the Northern and Central parts of the country. From then on, the sect started targeting schools, where many students and teachers were killed and, equipments and infrastructures were destroyed and damaged. Some of the schools attacked were the Yobe State College of Agriculture, Gujba, Government Secondary School Potiskum, Abbaganaram Primary School in Maiduguri, Gomari Costain, also in Maiduguri; Federal Polytechnic, Mubi; Mamudo Government Secondary School, Yobe State, and Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok, where more than two hundred (200) girls were abducted. The attacks on schools and students have had a tremendous negative effect on the social life of the affected environments.

**Effect of Insecurity on the Social Life of Affected Nigerians**

The incursions of the militants and insurgents have no doubt caused general insecurity in the affected areas and have negatively affected the social lives of the affected people. Education which is the bedrock of social life is badly affected in so many ways. Not only have educational developments been brought to a standstill, to a large extend, too, there has been a great reversal in the progress recorded in the past. North – Eastern Nigeria, which had already been described as the most educationally backward area in the country has now been further become backward due to ongoing the burning and destruction of schools, killing of teachers and students as well as damaged to teaching and learning equipment. This fact has been established by the European Centre for Research Training and Development UK, thus:

> Considerable progress has been made since the world’s leaders committed to achieving education for all by 2015. Within the space of a decade, the number of out – of – school children had dropped by more than thirty eight (38m) million and the gender gap in formal education has been narrowed. Literacy rates have also increased, albeit slowly…

The current Boko Haran insurgency in Nigeria is threatening to halt or even reverse this progress. Education is under attack in Northern Nigeria. Since the beginning of 2012, according to Amnesty International’s Research, about seventy (70) teachers and over one thousand (1,000) school children have been killed or wounded about fifty (50) schools have either been burned or seriously damaged and more than sixty (60) others have been forced to close. Thousands of children have been forced out of schools across communities in the schools across communities in Yobe, Adamawa and Borno States (European Centre for Research Training and Development, 2014:2).

Consequently, the insurgency attacks have posed serious threats to education in the affected areas in so many ways and which have far – reaching future repercussions on the educational development of the entire North – Eastern region, the Guardian, 2014 further elaborates:

> These attacks have forced the affected State Governments to close down schools and Colleges for prolonged periods. This is an area that is reckoned to be educationally poor

The effects of insurgents’ attacks on students, teachers and educational institutions have been further stressed by Ugwumba et al., (2014) as follows:

- The long – term consequences of a prolonged time out of school, and permanently dropping out, can also translate into a loss of opportunities for young people living through conflict. While education offers the promise of greater social cohesion, denying children and young people an education often prevents them from leaving the circle of violence and conflict, preventing the positive impact of education may previously have had (Ugwumba, E.U. et al., :3)

The violent insurgency attacks on schools have had debilitating effects on education as further elaborated by the centre for Research Training and Development UK (2014) as follows:

- They have unleashed fear and terror in the minds of the teachers, students, education administrators, government, parents and citizens staying in these parts of the country thereby affecting education and education system in Nigeria, this is to say that the objective of education for all seems to be a distant prospect (International Journal of Education learning and Development, 2014:6).

The insecurity situation in the North – Eastern part of the country has affected education in so many ways from a decline in enrolment and attendance, through loss of teachers, destruction and damage of infrastructures to stress on educational management. On decline in enrolment and attendance, Amnesty International (2013:6) reported as follows:

- The entire town was locked down no movement is allowed in or out. The army has banned the use of all forms of transportation even within the town. So teachers cannot go to school, parents cannot send their children to school because you have to work regardless of the distance (Amnesty International, 2013 in International Journal of Education Learning and Development, 2014: 6)

On the loss of teachers due to insurgents attacks Amnesty International (2013), have further commented, as follows:

- Attacks on schools may lead to giving their job or flee the area, or even the country. In the North – Eastern region of Nigeria, many teachers were forced included having, to leave their community because of the increasing threat from Boko Haram. Continuing assassinations of teachers and the issuing of death threats will inevitably affect teachers’ concentration and frame of mind for teaching. Insecurity has compromised the ability of teachers to perform their jobs well and has affected morale. (Amnesty International, 2013 in International Journal of Education, Learning and Development, 2014: 7).

Similarly, the Education for all Global monitoring Report (2011) has commented on the effect of the insecurity situation in the North – Eastern Nigeria on teacher development and retention, as follows:

- Attacks on higher education and teacher training institutions may restrict research, teaching content and pedagogical training and cause drop out, distraction, demoralisation and traumatisation of tertiary students and academics. This can in turn lead to restrictions on teacher content, knowledge and teacher quality (EFAGMR, 2011 in International Journal of Education, Learning and Development 2014: 7).

The implication of the insecurity situation on teachers and the teaching profession is therefore, enormous, as posited by Ugwumba, E.U. et al., as follows:

- Persistent attacks on schools and teachers can also deter students from training to be a teacher. Similarly, attacks where teachers are killed in broad day – light, in some cases in full view of pupils, are likely to expose the children and other teachers to shock, distress and severe psychological trauma (Ugwumba, et al., in International Journal of Education, Learning and Development, 2014: 7).

The other effects of insecurity, due to insurgency attacks, are on the educational infrastructure. The damaging effects have been elaborated as follows:

- The destruction of and damage to school infrastructure and facilities grossly reduce the availability of an access to education of any children in Borno State. Schools are burned down, it is not only the classrooms that are lost but also all the learning materials, equipment and school records leaving children with nowhere to learn. Access to basic education requires that sufficient and proper facilities and services are in place and that
students can have access to adequate books and materials (Ugwumba, E.U. et al., in International Journal of Education, Learning and Development, 2014: 7).

The effect of the insecurity, is not limited to students, teachers and the infrastructure, it is extended to even the educational management. For instance, the damaged or destroyed schools needed repairs for them to be put back to use. At present, very few labourers dare go to such affected areas to undertake schools repair for fear of reprisal attacks. Even State Governments in the affected areas are hesitant to repair the damaged infrastructures out of fear of them being destroyed again. This fear has been expressed by the Yobe State Governor when he lamented the situation, as follows:

I am sad that the resources we would have used to provide other infrastructure are now being channelled to the reconstruction of the schools (International Journal of Education, Learning and Development, 2014: 7).

It was reported by the Yobe State Ministry of Education that, as at June, 2014, over two hundred and nine (209) schools were destroyed by insurgents’ attacks. The reconstruction of these schools had, cost the government of Yobe State billions of Naira, which could have been utilised to provide other vital services such as roads, portable drinking water, health facilities etc; were there no schools destroyed in the State. Another effect of the insecurity situation on education in the insurgency ravaged areas, and which is most pathetic and worrisome, has been the recruitment of school children as child – soldiers by the insurgents. The practice of recruiting children as soldiers in conflict areas is common in Africa e.g. Sierra Leone. In North – Eastern Nigeria, such cases are however, rampant, and such male children are forced to participated in suicide missions and acts as spies, carriers or look outs while the female ones are forced into sexual slavery (Ugwumba, E.U et al., in International Journal of Education, Learning and Development, 2014). This fact has been substantiated by Nina, (2014) who stated that “There, Boko Haram found young, uneducated fighters, easy to recruit from the ranks of vulnerable street kids and almajiris, poor boys who are sent to beg by Muslim religious leaders”. The Human Rights Watch Researchers also corroborated Nina’s assertion when they also reported as follows:

In Maiduguri, Human Right Researchers saw a video recording of the Interrogation by security forces of a fourteen (14) year old boy, who described the role he played in Boko Haram operations. Such children are robbed of their childhood and exposed to terrible dangers and to psychological and physical suffering they also face the risk of being uprooted from their homes and communities, internally displaced or refugees and deprived of education and recreation as a result of being children soldiers. Children in Nigeria being recruited as child soldiers by Boko Haram are denied access to education and killed or injured in indiscriminate attacks carried out in most affected areas in Nigeria (Ugwumba, E.U. et al., in International Journal of Education, Learning and Development, 2014: 8).

The Psycho – Social Effects of Insecurity on Education

There is, no doubt; that insecurity in the learning environment has tremendous psychosocial effects on education. The activities of insurgents in the North – Eastern Nigeria has demonstrated, beyond any doubt, that without security, education cannot prosper, and learning cannot be fully sustained. This is because where students and teachers have summoned the courage to attend schools, the required infrastructural facilities as well as teaching and learning equipment are often not there, as they have been destroyed or damaged. There is definitely, therefore, not conducive learning environment, because a conducive learning environment is that which is devoid of fear, threat, intimidation and all such things that traumatis and destabilise the minds of teachers and learners. In the present day North – Eastern Nigeria, such an environment is mostly lacking. This fact has been attested to by Brenda, (2010), thus:

“The reactions to Boko Haram attacks are not restricted to students in school that have actually been attacked, as an attack on one school leads to fear that any school in the area might be attacked. Boko Haram’s repeated attacks on schools in the North – East of Nigeria has insurmountable obstacles to learning for large number of pupils. The psychosocial impact will affect children’s ability to learn, and where the threat of attacks persists may lead to their (Pupils/student being kept at home from school, even if the school remains open such obstacles to access to education can result in severe developmental problems. Children run the risk of never being able to return to school or completing their education, thus diminishing that potential contribution they can make to
In the same vein, Munoz (2009) has also commented on the general psychosocial effect of the insecurity in the North – Eastern Nigeria on education and its constituents, as he argues that:

The symbolic effect is the promulgation of fear, subordination to others and the ideological effects in the removal of right to education and the denial of its purpose. The destruction of large numbers of schools or sexual violence against school girls is a rejection of the right of women. The result can be downgrading of women’s position in society and a widespread abandonment of education by student, teachers and governments and the consequent dilapidation and collapse of educational infrastructure and dwindling of expertise on a scale that fuel loss of faith in government and set back in development (Munoz, 2009 cited by Ugwumba, E.U. et al., in International Journal of Education, Learning and Development, 2014: 8-9).

From the above discussions and analyses supported by eminent scholars and constituted authorities, therefore, there is evidently a positive relationship between security and safety of the learning environment and effective participation and achievement of learners. This fact relates to both Formal and Non – Formal Education learners, as it would be established in due courses.

**Security and Safety of Learning Environment and Adult Learning**

It is important to state clearly that whatever happens to the formal education sub – sector invariably affects the non – formal sub – sector, especially with regards to infrastructural facilities, teaching and learning equipments and teachers. The fact of the matters is that, most adult education programmes rely on the formal sub – sector in terms of facilities and teachers. Moreso, Adult Education Programmes, especially Post Literacy, Continuing and Remedial Education, are run in Formal schools buildings during the weekends and late after school hours; only the Basic Literacy Centres could be said to be independent, as they are usually run within local communities, based on the learners choice and discretion.

In Nigeria today, however, very few states can boast of having adequate autonomous adult learning centres. As such most states rely heavily on formal school buildings to run their programmes. The same thing obtains for the facilitators that, except in a few states, where there are permanent facilitators employed by governments, most states, of the Nigerian Federation rely on primary and secondary school teachers as well as lecturer in tertiary institutions to facilitate adult learning and on part – time basis too. It is, therefore, clear that, any damage or destruction to formal school facilities and equipments also affects adult education programmes, because the same buildings serve as adult education centres. Similarly, all the learning equipments being utilised by formal students are also being utilised by the Non – Formal sub – sector participants, especially from the Post – Literacy through Continuing Education and Remedial Education levels. In the final analyses too, moreover, it should be noted that Participants of the Non – Formal Education sub – sector, eventually mainstream into the Formal Education sub – sector when they reach advanced level.

In view of the above therefore, any injury to physical infrastructure and equipment as well as teachers of the Formal Education sub – sector directly affects the Non – Formal Education sub – sector. It is therefore, where there is injury to one, there is injury to all, according to an adage. Similarly, the psychosocial effects of the insecurity situation of the insurgency ravaged areas is not limited to children and youth learners alone, but also extend to adult learners, as they too cannot pursue any meaningful learning endeavours amidst fear, threat or intimidation. Even if they have the courage to attend the learning centres, the buildings have been burned; the facilities and equipment damaged or destroyed and their facilitators, who were mostly teachers of the destroyed schools, have been killed or forced out of the areas. Even more so, the general trauma experienced by such adult learners must be attendant with some psychosocial conditions impeding intellectual engagements such as learning, especially since there is a close relationship between environment and cognitive ability as revealed by earlier – mentioned studies.

Several studies, moreover, conducted on the influence of environment on human intelligence have revealed that human intelligence grows and develops faster in stable environments. A study an adoption in France reported evidence of hereditability and also presence of substantiality of environmental influence. The study conducted revealed that children from impoverished backgrounds but adopted into educationally enriched home environments showed IQ increases of 12 to 15 points” (Capron and Duyme...
1989 in Usman, 2005). Similarly, environmental hazards such as toxins and nutritional deficiencies have been found to impair cognitive functioning (Mariowe, 1995 in Usman 2005). All the above conditions can apply to children who would later be expected to become adults in the insurgency ravaged areas of North – Eastern Nigeria. Moreover, apart from the fear of attack and threats to life and intimidation which jeopardised learning and denies a conducive learning environment, there are other important considerations for achieving a favourable atmosphere for adult learners. It is indisputable that Adult learning environments should meet both the physical and psychological needs of learners. An ideal adult learning environment should be:

1. An environment where learners feel safe and supported, where individual needs and uniqueness are honoured, where abilities and life achievements are acknowledged and respected;
2. An environment that fosters intellectual freedom and encourages experimentation and creativity;
3. An environment where facilitators treats adult learners as peer – accepted and respected as intelligent experienced adults whose opinions are listened to, honoured and appreciated.
4. An environment that affords self-directed learning. Where learners work with facilitators to design individual learning programmes which addressed what each person needs and wants to learn in order to action optimally in their profession.
5. An environment that encourage intellectual challenge just beyond their present level of ability.
6. An environment that enables active involvement in learning, as opposed to passively listening to lecturers, where students and instructors interact and dialogue, where learners try out new ideas in the work place, where expertise and experience are used to bolster facts and theory.
7. An environment of learning where there is regular feedback mechanisms for learners tell facilitators what works for them and what they want and need to learn and facilitator who fear and makes changes based on learners input.


CONCLUSION
From the aforementioned discussions and analyses made, it is evidently clear that there is a positive relationship between security of learning environment and effective participation and achievement of all learners. Participation and achievement of learners require favourable and conducive environments. Conducive and favourable environments are environments, physical and socials that are devoid of physical and psychological disturbances. They are environments devoid of any distraction to learning. As such, it is clear that Environments in North – Eastern Nigeria, particularly of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe State are not favourable and conducive to any learning. The activities of the Boko Haram insurgents have therefore, brought about general insecurity which has affected education in its entirety, schools have been attacked and burned; teaching and learning equipments damaged or even destroyed; teachers and students killed, maimed or score – off such that the level of the insecurity in the North – Eastern part of the country has created debilitating psychosocial effects on most people in the affected areas and thereby making educational activities virtually impossible.

The destruction of formal school buildings and equipment have had negative effects on both Formal and Non – Formal sub – sectors of education because, the non – formal sub – sector relies heavily on the facilities of the formal sub – sectors so, also, is this with respect to the their teachers and other learning equipment. Apparently, whatever affects the formal sub – sector also affects the non – formal sub – sector. In view of this, therefore, there is a strong relationship between security of learning environment and effective participation and achievement of both children, youth and adult learners. In addition to
being free from attacks, threats and intimidations adult education learners also require a learning environment that provides for their physical and psychological needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS
In order to revive learning activities in the insurgency – ravaged areas, the following recommendations are being made:

1. The Federal Government of Nigeria should provide security in the insurgency ravaged areas and all other parts of the country within the shortest possible period;
2. Governments of the insurgency – affected states should renovate all schools damaged within their States and ensure the provision of security for teachers and students while, so that teaching and learning can continue and be sustained;
3. State Governments of the affected states should provide all the necessary support to all those affected, including teachers and students, who by the violence and which should include rehabilitation and resettlement for those who have been forced to flee the violence;
4. The Federal Government through the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and State Governments of the affected should provide adequate educational facilities in the internally displaced camps, in the interim, so that children and adult learners could resume and continue learning, and
5. The International Community should assist the Nigerian government to negotiate with the insurgents, so that the situation would be brought to an end and equally be involved in educational rehabilitation.

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