

Managing Gender-Based Violence in Basic Schools for Sustainable National Security

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined how management of gender-based violence in basic schools can promote sustainable national security. The paper looked at the level of insecurity in Nigeria such kidnapping and armed robbery attack, economic and political related assassinations, bombings and killings which have constituted a very grave threat to the country's sovereignty. These security challenges in so many ways encourage gender-based violence in basic schools where girls are proportionately the victims. The paper therefore, views the concept of gender, violence, gender-based violence, basic school and sustainable national security. The paper examines banditry, kidnapping, abduction bullying, sexual harassment and abuse, and physical insults and threats as the types of gender-based violence in basic schools. The paper also identified school location, nudity, the media and lack of girl-friendly school environments among others as some factors promoting gender-based violence the basic schools. The paper also identified the effect of gender-based violence on girls' education such as absenteeism, drop out, and truancy. The paper identified lack of physical facilities, lack of community cooperation, lack of expertise or corruption among educational leaders as some of the challenges inhibiting effective the management of gender-based violence in basic schools. Providing school fence for security, installing cameras (CCTV), providing buses for schools, are some of the ways forward to preventing gender-based violence in basic schools. The paper suggested that school authorities should the teaching of positive behaviour a highly coordinated activity. This could be achieved through, coaching, modeling, anger management, and conflict management to help students control their natural instincts and desires. The paper also, suggested that school management should facilitate the removal of culture and traditional norms promoting nudity among girls through legal instruments and policies.

Keywords: Gender, Violence, Gender Based Violence, Sustainable National Security, Basic Schools.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the main pillar, which supports the entire life of a society. According to Nwagwu (2002) many African governments and peoples believe that education is the best instrument for social adjustment and development of their economy. Self-reliance and self-sufficiency can only be achieved when there is education for the generality of people and supply of skilled man-power. Education provides society with all forms of security – social, environmental, health, economic, etc. It is the duty of any country to provide quality education for its citizen irrespective of their gender. The education of women and girls is very significant for the national development. But in most African countries, girls do not enjoy same educational privileges like their male counterparts. In addition to this, the level of insecurity in African countries affect mostly girls' education.

The insecurity challenges such as raping, kidnapping and abduction affect women and girls in most cases. With the development of insecurity in Nigeria, gender-based violence goes on increase. Gender-based

violence is an issue that causes fear and stigma among students. Girls are mostly the subjected to gender-based violence, often in more severe forms and with more severe consequences, although boys are also vulnerable in very few cases (World Health Organization, 2002: p.154).

Researches conducted in some countries of Africa show how abusive behaviour are continually mated on school girls in almost all parts of the continent. This is why many countries launched campaigns on gender-based violence for educational stakeholders to counter the problem (United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), 2009). Many cases of child abuse in schools, especially girls' school, have become so rampant. Children are found to be sexually abusing themselves in secondary schools (Bakwai & Sarkin-Kebbi, 2015). This could be the adverse effect of media that keeps exposing school children into sexual misbehaviour.

The effects of violence on girls' psychological and physical last longer and are devastating on their well-being. It hinders human resource development and reduces productivity particularly girls and women. For the developed countries that are non-violent who are committed to the fulfillment of peace, freedom and prosperity, there is need to tackle the problem at the adolescent stage since the adolescents are the most vulnerable group to violence (Akpan, 2009). This paper intends to examine how the management of gender-based violence can promote security in basic schools and as a result, sustainable national security in Nigeria can be promoted.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

The concept of gender is usually referred to as attributes which a society places on the physical role of men and women. A society assumes that the roles, responsibilities and capabilities of boys and girls are based on the assumed differences. The process of learning socio-cultural attributes shapes the kind of role boys and girls have play in a society. Because of the different roles, different limitations and expectations are imposed on both boys and girls (Moorosi, 2010). Gender difference is a construction of the societies. It is that part of life which society expects an individual to understand and accept as being a male or female (Olubor, 2004). It is the roles, responsibilities, and duties ascribed to females and males by the society.

Violence is a deliberate use of power or force, threatened or actual, against oneself, other persons, groups or community that can result or has a high likelihood to result to injury, death, harm, or deprivation (World Health Organization (WHO), 2002). Gender Based Violence (GBV) is a major public health and human rights problem involving all school ages and sexes (Oladepo, Yusuf & Arulogun, 2011). The term "gender-based violence" is widely used as a synonym for violence against women, even though it occurs among men. It is the United Nation Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVW), defines gender-based violence as "violence against women". They see gender-based violence as any act that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women and girls. In this paper, gender-based violence refers to violence against female children in basic schools either by their male colleagues, teachers, or other members of the community.

The term national security, can be referred to as anything that is equivalent to state interest which can be predicated upon social, economic, energy, environmental, and food. National security is about safeguarding the sovereignty, territorial integrity, citizenry and socio-economic functionality of a nation from an aggressor intent on undermining a particular valued aspect of a nation through violent or unjust means. It is the sum of efforts, energy, intelligence, communication and the use of institutions to enforce and ensure adequate protection of interest, people and properties of a nation. National security involves the protection of the integrity of a particular country through economic resources use, power projection, diplomacy and political might.

The concept sustainable national security encompasses what a nation, its government do in for safeguard and protecting itself from foreign threats, as well as ensuring the safety and wellbeing of its population, economy, political and social system. It also involves the protection of national interest, development plans,

territorial image through a variety of power projections. These include political power, diplomacy, economic power and military might over a long period of time.

Challenges of Security in Nigeria

The level of insecurity in Nigeria is very high (Egwalusor, 2020). No second goes without a report of security issues, scaring children and their parents. The worst fear is that of the girls themselves; if they can be giving a chance, they could give up their years of schooling so that they be save at home. Due to security challenges in the north, parents could choose a living child than a kidnapped or dead one. Considering one of the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, children in Nigerian, especially in the Northern part of the country, are left with no choice but choosing between school and safety. This is a serious challenge as m any girls are joining the estimated 10 million out-of-school children of whom the majority are girls (Obahopo & Arenyeka, 2014).

Gender-Based-Violence (GBV) in Basic Schools

Gender-based-violence have different dimension in basis schools. This ranges from intimidation, bullying, physical assaults and attacks, and anything that lead to making a victim. In this paper, only four types of gender-based violence commonly found in basic schools will be discussed. These include banditry and kidnapping, intimidation, sexual harassment, bullying and sexual abuse:

1. Banditry and Kidnapping

The security challenges in Nigeria has constituted serious threat on girls education (Saleh, 2011). One of such challenges is kidnapping. Kidnapping is an imprisonment of an innocent victim. It is an illegal confinement of innocent individuals against their own wish by another individual or group of individuals who confined individual's right to be free from the restraint of movement (Ngwama, 2014). The kidnapping sometime resulted in collection of ransom or in furtherance of another crime such as raping or any other form of physical attacks. Today no one seems to be free from being kidnapped but the most vulnerable targets are mostly school girls. In recent development, it is possible for school children to be kidnapped and abducted from a school in the heart of a city.

2. Threats and Intimidation

Threat and intimidation are one of the serious gender-based violence found in basic schools. Many students went through a lot of intimidation by other students within the school fence or along school way, which make school life difficult for victims to bear. This crime is mostly on the vulnerable girls that hardly report such crime to school authorities. It is a known fact that many the school boys and some young teachers do not have enough money to buy their love out, imstead, they resort to threat and intimidation to earn the love from their victims.

3. Bullying

The problem of bullying permeates school system in Nigeria. It is a serious problem that affects students especially the weak ones. Bullying should not be seen as a child's play, but also a seriously terrifying experience that many school children face day by day. In recent years, it is becoming a serious crisis with vicious consequences (Aluede, 2006; Thornberg, 2010). Bullying according to Aluede (2011) is a form of aggression, a particular kind of violence to which students are exposed. Bullying does not occur when there is conflict between students of equal or similar strength (Aluede, 2011). This distinction is important because of the effects of being repeatedly attacked or threatened by stronger student or group of students are likely to differ from the effects of being threatened or attacked by someone of equal power. In the former case, one is apt to feel more helpless (Fajoju, 2009).

4. Sexual Harassment and Abuse

Sexual harassment has been seen as any unwanted sexual comments or advances, sexual attempts, or acts to attract girl sexuality, using force, threats of harm or physical harm by any person regardless of relationship to the victim in any setting (Krug, Dahlberg & Mercy, 2002). Enforcement of law on sexual offenders is not taken seriously. The legal requirements are very ambiguous and the agencies responsible for enforcing the law are usually frustrating parents on issues of their ward harassment by refuse to take action on the culprits. They sometimes collaborate with the wrong doers against the parents or guardians of the victim. This makes some parents reluctant to send their girls to school for the fear of sexually related crime on their wards (Migosi, Nanok, Ombuki & Metet, 2012).

Factors Promoting Gender Based Violence in Basic Schools

There are so many factors promoting gender-based violence in basic schools. These include:

1. The Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is emerging as the best means for transformation of education in the globalized world (Mohanty, 2005). Even though the ICT provides good opportunities for education as well as propelling the national economy. The internet which is an open, free and unregulated arena has also come with it negative consequences to schools and education system that cannot be ignored. It is known to introduce students to corrupt and immoral communication, especially the adolescents, by exposing them to bad and immoral behaviour (Adesina, 2012). This is because adolescents learn from what they see from the internet good or bad. Sexually related violence is learned and reinforced through the internet. Violent behaviours according Lawal and Ishaq (2011) are learned through observation in the internet.

2. Lack of Girl-Friendly School Environments

The learning environment in schools is not girl-friendly and is being gradually recognized as crucial to girls' participation in education. Looking at the place of girls' education, the State of the World's Mothers 2005 reiterates that girls are also denied of education where the school environment is not conducive and girl-friendly (UNGEI, 2009).

Many literatures show that many girls drop out of school half-way because of the poor conditions of the learning environment. The proof of a safe learning environment lies on how teachers handle classes, the way they treat girls in the school. So, attention should seriously be given to making the environment of schools girl-friendly.

3. School Distance

The distance of a school poses serious problem and promote gender-based violence on girls (Bakwai, Yisa & Jega, 2014). According to Oluma (2013) school distance is one of the factors that is known to affect girl's participation in education. Relatively long distances to and from school provide rooms for gender-based crimes (Indabawa, 2004; Salman, Olawole & Yahaya, 2011). There were cases in which school girls were being raped by school boys, community members or strangers on their way to school (Omare, 2007).

How Managing Gender-Based Violence can Promote Sustainable National Security

Education is among the vulnerable institutions that easily get affected by insecurity. Whenever there is a crisis, schools will be the first to close. This is because safety of children is a safety to all. No parent will feel secured when their children are in danger. Any situation that makes school unsafe, definitely that situation is a security threat to any nation. Gender-based violence is one of those threat that has been escalated by other security challenges like the activities of Boko Haram, cow rustlers, Kidnappers, and other criminals in the

community. Therefore, bringing an end to gender-based violence mean overcoming the greater part of the national security challenges, and can help sustain national security.

Challenges Affecting the Effective Management of Gender Based Violence.

Educational managers have been doing so much to prevent gender-based violence in basic schools. Their efforts have been deterred by the following challenges:

1. Lack of Communities Involvement

Most people, especially in rural communities, believes that anything about school belongs to teachers alone including their security while coming or going to school. Only 1 in 10 fathers and 1 in 20 mothers are of what their children are going through in school. Therefore, community members are not usually involved in watching school children and ensuring their safety.

2. Lack of Expertise among School Administrators

Most of the basic school administrator are not professionals of school management or expert the control and prevention violence, which means they lack the ability to manage gender-based violence in basic schools.

3. Inability to Implement Laws Protecting the Right of a Child

The laws which are made to protect the right of girl child are hardly enforced and fully implemented. This is largely because the laws have not been coordinated, poorly implemented and are not properly enforced (ICAI, 2012). Where some of these laws are implemented, they are sometimes not fully enforced. It is unpleasant to understand that the implementation and enforcement of laws protect the girl child made marginal impact on protecting child from sexual violence. To prevent girls from gender-based violence, related laws must be enforced and implemented.

Ways Forward in Managing Gender Based Violence for Sustainable National Security

To minimize the problem of gender related crime in basic schools, school authority should empower student leaders to investigate and report gender-based violence related cases to the school authority. Student leadership can be used to properly manage gender related crime in basic schools because some of the abused girls prefer to confine in student leaders than to the teachers.

The school leadership should emphasize on establishing and revitalizing counseling offices in basic schools and support the counselors to diligently carry out their duties. The councellors should work towards shaping students' beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and anger management.

The parents should engage to monitor the behaviour of their children to prevent them from falling victims of gender related crime or indulge in act of abusing other children. Where they observe that their wards are subjected to abuse, such case should be reported to school for full investigation.

Teaching of empathy and management of anger should be introduced in basic school curriculum. This will entrench in the youth the ability to manage anger when infuriated, and also have love for others as they love themselves. Thus, the global culture of violence will be curbed and in so doing the gains of globalization will fully be enjoyed in Nigeria secondary school system and the world at large.

CONCLUSION

The number of cases on gender-based violence in basic school in which the girls are always the victims seems to constitute big threat in school setting as reported by many studies. However, it should acknowledge that both boys and girls are in many cases have been documented to also be victims of sexual abuse, but the

rate at which girls suffer in schools is seriously alarming. This has great implications for the general well-being as it affects girls' participation in basic education.

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