RIGHT TO EDUCATION AND SECURITY IN NIGERIA: THE GIRLCHILD IN NORTHEASTERN NIGERIA IN FOCUS

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ABSTRACT

Education is a fundamental human right and essential for the exercise of all other human rights. Yet millions of children and adults remain deprived of educational opportunities....[1]

In Nigeria, Section 14 subsection (2)(b) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria states that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government." While section 18 subsection (1) states that "Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels." Gender equality is a global priority for UNESCO. Gender inequality in education affects both girls and boys, and women and men, but girls and women are still more often disadvantaged. Poverty, geographical isolation, minority status, disability, early marriage and pregnancy, gender-based violence, and traditional attitudes about the status and role of women, are among the many obstacles that stand in the way of women and girls' fully exercising their right to participate in, complete and benefit from education[2] in Africa, especially Nigeria.

Keywords: Right to education, Security in nigeria, Girlchild, Northeastern nigeria.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Education is designed purposely to assist individuals to develop their skills and abilities so as to fulfil their potential and to lead productive satisfying lives. In the preliterate societies, education focused on hunting, cooking, following stars, and obeying the gods. The power to teach then rested with parents, elders or priests. Illiterate adults had learnt from folklore, ballads, and sermons. Education at that time focused on the transmission of essential skills and the orally preserved traditions of the tribe or community. Teaching was not a specialist function until the early civilizations in which teaching was accompanied with more complex and regulated social organization.[3] The purpose of education in modern times is wider in scope than in preliterate

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[1] Retrieved from http://www.unesco.org/new/en/right2education, accessed on 28th May, 2018.

[2] Retrieved from http://en.unesco.org/themes/women-s-and-girls-education, accessed on 28th May, 2018.

[3] Encyclopaedia Americana (2001) Vol. 9, USA: Grolier Inc.

societies. Education now shapes politics, culture, family, and economy, among others. As the society is dynamic, and constantly changing and growing, education must follow suit.[4]

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

There are varied definitions of the concept of education. It is seen as a race course, the transmission of what is worthwhile from generation to generation, and "the various ways in which a society transmits knowledge, including factual information and occupational skills, as well as cultural norms and values, to its members. Education also involves formal instruction under the direction of specially trained teachers.[5] Education is also seen as a process by which individuals are assisted formally through proper direction and guidance to develop their capacities not only for their own benefit but for the society at large.[6] Suffice to say that the essence of education is to develop individuals so that they can become effective and efficient in what they do and also contribute to the advancement of the society where they live. Orikpe[7] avers that education plays a critical role in changing the behavioural patterns of citizens to the desired direction.

The next concept for clarification is security. The issue of security is not alien as it has been the central focus of primitive society.[8] In the same vein, Audu, Lukeman and Mohammed[9] argued that since the end of the cold war, there appears to be a shift from viewing security from state-centric perspective to a broader view that places emphasis on individuals, in which national security also encapsulates human security, human right and national development. National security according to Iredia[10] simply mean, the capacity of a state to overcome challenges confronting her. He added that national security is not limited to military might, defence or law enforcement; it covers basic dimensions like job, water and food security. National security is also seen as a state or condition in which most cherished values of a country and the people are permanently protected and continuously enhanced.[11]

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[4] Azikiwe, U. (2008) Reforms in Education and Future of Nigeria: Sociological Perspective. *Nigerian Journal of Sociology of Education* 2(2), pp. 1-21.

[5] Macionnis cited in Azikiwe, Ibid.

[6] Okeke, C. (2003) Philosophy of Education. Owerri: Design Print Publishers.

[7] Orikpe, E.A. (2013) Education and National Security: Changes and the Way Forward. Journal of Educational and Social Research 3(10, pp. 53-59.

[8] Joshua, S. (Forthcoming) Governance and Security Management in Nigeria: The Need for ESecurity Approach.

[9] Audu, C.T, Lukeman, A.A and Mohammed, N.N. (2014) A Nexus between Higher Education, Security Challenges and Sustainable Development in Nigeria. Journal of Research and Methods in Education 4(4), pp. 16-22.

[10] Iredia, T. (2011) What is National Security? Nigeria Today, December 13.

[11] Radda, S.I (2013) The Role of Education in Promoting National Security. Being a Paper Presented at the FAAN Conference held in November 2013 at Ahmadu Bello University, Samaru, Zaria.

The concept of security also denotes the condition or feeling of safety from harm or danger. It also means the defence and protection of values acquired.[12] To Oche[13] security has to do with freedom from danger or threat to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values, legitimate interests and enhance the wellbeing of its people. Internal security implies freedom from danger to life and prosperity. Audu, Lukeman and Mohammed[14] explained security as any mechanism devised to alleviate the most serious threats that prevent people from pursuing their cherished values. From the various explanations of security above it can be deduced that insecurity implies a state of vulnerability to attacks, danger or threats to a people, their properties, cherished values and the inability of the nation to protect its citizenry.

Alemika[15] postulated that insecurity can be classified into several dimensions. The most significant dimensions are:

a)   Physical insecurity- violent personal and property crimes;

b)   Public security- violent conflicts, insurgency and terrorism;

c)   Economic insecurity- poverty, unemployment

d)   Social insecurity- illiteracy, ignorance, diseases or illness, malnutrition; water borne disease, discrimination and exclusion

e)   Human right violations- denial of fundamental rights by state and non-state actors in different states;

f)   Political insecurity- denial of good and social democratic governance.

The dimensions of security as highlighted above are interwoven and cannot be treated in strict isolation as explicated by Anan[16] that: Today we know that "security" means far more than absence of conflict. We know that lasting peace requires a broader vision encompassing areas such as education, health, democracy and human rights, protection against environmental degradation and the proliferation of deadly weapons. We know that we cannot be secure amidst starvation, that we cannot build peace without alleviating poverty, and that we cannot build

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[12] Igbuzo, O (2011) Peace and Security Education: A Critical Factor for Sustainable Peace and National Development. International Journal of Peace and Development 2(1, pp. 1-7.

[13] (cited Nwaneggo and Odigbo) Nwanegbo, C.J and Odigbo, J (2013) Security and National Development in Nigeria: The Threat of Boko Haram. International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences 3(4), pp. 285-291.

[14] Audu, C.T, Lukeman, A.A and Mohammed, N.N. (2014) A Nexus between Higher Education, Security Challenges and Sustainable Development in Nigeria. Journal of Research and Methods in Education 4(4), pp. 16-22.

[15] Alemika, E.E.O (n.d) Security Challenges and University System in Nigeria. Retrieved from http://repos.unijos.edu.ng/jspuit/stream/.1973--/security%20challenges

[16] Anan, K (1998) The Causes of Conflicts and the Promotion of Democratic Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa. Report of the UN Sectretary-General to the Security Council. New York: UN Department of Public Affairs.

freedom on the foundations of injustice. These pillars of what we now understand as the people-centered concept of human security are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Condoleezza Rice, former Secretary of State of the United States of America posited that quality education of a nation is a direct function of a country's national security.[17] This relationship springs from the role education plays in providing the knowledge base for technological training. In the main, education is as important as national security.

In the Nigerian context, internal security particularly from 2007 till date seems to be elusive. Some of the indicators of insecurity in Nigeria include; ethno-religious conflicts, violence, kidnapping, terrorism among others. Insecurity has taken different dimensions in the various regions in Nigeria. For instance in the Niger Delta region (South-South), the militants slugged it out with oil companies in the area, killing their staff and destroying their properties as well as Federal Government properties especially from 1999-2007. In Jos, Plateau State (North Central Nigeria), the Hausa and the indigenes have been at war from around 2002 till date. In South-East, kidnappings, ritual killings and armed robbery has been the nature of insecurity in the region same with the South-West region of the country. Boko Haram insurgency has been the greatest challenge to internal security in the North-East, North-West and North Central Nigeria from 2009 till date. In all these cases of insecurity, youths are the prominent figure in the crusade of crime. Such youths either lack requisite education that render them jobless, unemployable, poor and disenchanted; or are educated and are still jobless. Poor youths find it difficult to resist temptation to commit crime, provided such will open way to meet their immediate needs. In other words, education and national security are inexorably linked together.[18] Little wonder that Abugu[19] contends that strength, security and wellbeing of Nigeria rest squarely on the quality of education.

3.0 HISTORY OF WESTERN EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Fafunwa,[20] Taiwo,[21] Ozigi[22] and Adesina[23] had given detailed history of Western education in Nigeria. The history of Western education in Nigeria can be traced to the Portuguese traders who

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[17] Ejirika, P. (2014) The Need for Educaion Reform in Nigeria. Sept. 23. Retrieved from http://dailyposting/2014/09/23/peter-ejirika-need-education-reform-nigeria

[18] Joshua, S, Ibietan, J. and Azuh D. (2016) Education and Nigeria's National Security. In: INTED2016 Proceedings l0th International Technology, Education and Development Conference, March 7th-9th, 2016, Valencia, Spain. pp. 3660-3665.

[19] cited in Abayomi, A, Youdeowei and Uwandu, E. (2016) Rethinking Primary, Secondary Education in Nigeria Vanguard, Thursday, January 14th. Retreived from http://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/rethinking-primary-secondary-education

[20] Fafunwa, A. (1974) History of Education in Nigeria, UK: George Allen and Unwin.

[21] Taiwo, C. O (1980) The Nigerian Education System, Past, Present and Future. Lagos: Thomas Nelson, Ltd.

[22] Ozigi, A. And Ocho, L. (1981) Education in Northern Nigeria, London: Gorge Allen and Unwin.

[23] Adesina, S. (1988) The Development of Modern Education in Nigeria, Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.

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came to Benin as far back as 15th century. They only concentrated their teachings on the sons of the Oba of Benin and his chiefs. However, meaningful Western education in Nigeria actually started in 1842 through the activities of Christian missionaries under the Wesleyan Methodist Society that opened Christian Mission in Badagry near Lagos and later moved to Abeokuta. They built a mission house, a church and a school. The Catholic Mission Society, the Presbyterian Mission among others also joined and made their marks on the education landscape of Nigeria. Later, government intervention led to the taking over of some of the missions' schools. Today there are primary and secondary schools and tertiary institutions owned by the Federal Government, State Government, Local Governments, religious bodies and private individuals.

4.0 RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) provides that:

(1)   Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2)   Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3)   Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 17(1) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) states that: "Every individual shall have the right to education." While section 18 of Chapter II of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria which contains the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy provides that:

(1)   Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels.

(2)   Government shall promote science and technology

(3)   Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy; and to this end Government shall as and when practicable provide -

    (a)   free compulsory and universal primary education;

(b)   free secondary education;

(c)   free university education; and

(d)   free adult literacy programme.

The provisions of Chapter II unlike chapter IV which contains fundamental rights provisions are not justiciable (enforceable). However, once a legislation is enacted to give legal effect to any of the provisions of Chapter II, the right contained in such provision become enforceable under section 6 (6) (b) of the Constitution. This was the basis of the recent decision of the Federal High court, Abuja in the case of *Legal Defence and Assistance Project (LEDAP) GTE & LTD v Federal Ministry of Education & Anor[24]* which held that: with the enactment by the National Assembly of the Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act, 2004, the specific provisions covered by that Act have become justiciable or enforceable by the Courts.

Afe Babalola[25] perceives education as the full development of the human mind, cutting across cognitive, affective and psychological domains. According to him, education goes beyond schooling; it transcends classroom teaching and the attendant certification. It is the process of inviting truth and acquiring all-round knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and character needed to become a better citizen. He stated that education is the birth right of human beings. That the right to education is one of the most basic rights recognized in International Law and in the laws of every civilized country of the world. Education has long been recognized as both a human right and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights. Education is also a principal tool for unlocking prosperity and eradicating endemic poverty.

According to the United Nations, every year of formal education increases an individual's earning capacity by up to 10%, the higher the level of education, the greater the chance of escaping poverty. Education also has a role to play in eradicating diseases and premature deaths. This is why life expectancy rates in highly literate countries is often very high, 88 years in Australia, 87 years in Canada, 85 years in the United States, while unfortunately the life expectancy for an average Nigerian is 47 years. For example, United Nations statistics suggest that a child born to a mother who can read is 50% more likely to survive past age five. This is understandable because in our current highly polluted world, education provides mothers with the tools to make proper choices in nutrition, sanitation and water consumption, all of which can reduce infant mortality. The UN also notes that each extra year of a mother's schooling reduces the probability of infant mortality by 5-10%. No wonder the US Philosopher, Brigham Young,

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[24] (FHC/ABJ/CS/978/15) [2017] NGHC 2 (18 April, 2018)

[25] @ The 2017 edition of the Annual Lecture of the Faculty of Education, Obafemi Awolowo University. Retrieved from https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/06/difficult-march-toward-educational-security-nigeria-law-policy-gorvernance-imperatives/

stated that: "You educate a man; you educate a man. You educate a woman; you educate a whole generation."[26]

5.0 GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION

Girl-child education is the education and training of a female child who is below 18 years. About 60 per cent of out-of-school children are girls. Many of those who do enroll drop out early. Low perceptions of the value of education for girls and early marriages are among the reasons. Some northern states have laws requiring education of girls and prohibiting their withdrawal from school. Although Girls' primary school attendance has been improving, but this has not been the case for girls from the poorest households.[27]

Girl-child education has been a problem and often given minimal attention in some rural and urban areas of the country. Whether a girl should be educated or not is an unresolved issue in the latex of most cultures in Nigeria with disparities between the education that boys and girls receive. Girls in Nigeria are often seen moving around in towns and villages hawking items of paltry value that hardly justifies the hours spent in the burning sun. Sometimes they become vulnerable to harassment from men. The parents of the girl child especially the mother, consider their daughters as a tool for generating income for the family due to poverty and illiteracy. Nigeria is one of the countries listed amongst the developing nations, this is so because of her inability to harness her resources towards nation building in other sensitive areas that need special attention like the education of the girl-child.

Girl-child education falls under goals two and three of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) enshrined under United Nation's resolution in 1996 of which Nigeria is a member nation. Now in goals four and five of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015 based on the success of the MDGs. On 1 January 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at an historic UN Summit officially came into force. Over the next fifteen years, with these new Goals that universally apply to all, countries will mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind. The SDGs, also known as Global Goals, build on the success of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and aim to go further to end all forms of poverty. The new Goals are unique in that they call for action by all countries, poor, rich and middle-income to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and addresses a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/education.html

environmental protection. While the SDGs are not legally binding, governments are expected to take ownership and establish national frameworks for the achievement of the 17 Goals. Countries have the primary responsibility for follow-up and review of the progress made in implementing the Goals, which will require quality, accessible and timely data collection. Regional follow-up and review will be based on national-level analyses and contribute to follow-up and review at the global level.[28]

Nigeria recognizes education as a fundamental human right and is signatory to the major conventions for the protection of the rights of children and women, especially, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In 2003, the Nigerian government passed into law the Child Rights Act. This Act is aimed at facilitating the realization and protection of the rights of all children. In the quest to achieve the objectives of World Conference on Education For All (EFA), and MDGs, Nigeria also enacted the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act, which provides for a nine-year free and compulsory basic education to fast-track education interventions at the primary and junior secondary levels. The Nigerian government have been working in active collaboration with International Development Partners such as the UNICEF, DFID, UNESCO, USAID, JICA, World Bank as well as Civil Society and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) to achieve the EFA/UBE goals.[29]

5.1 Importance of educating the Girl-child

Educating girls empowers them, both intellectually and financially to become their own masters and to throw off the shackles that society has historically bound them. One extra year of education increases an individual's earning by up to 10 percent, exemplifying the effect that girls' education can have on their earning power thereby reducing the financial dependence that reinforces gender inequality. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that women with a secondary education had significantly greater bargaining power over resources within marriage and greater choice over partners and the age of marriage, buffering them against many forms of violence. Lower educational attainment increases the vulnerability of girls to child marriage, as well as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) which is positively linked to involuntary high fertility rates.

UNICEF supports efforts to increase equitable access to quality basic education and to improve learning achievements. Special emphasis is given to girls' education.

The Education Programme focuses on three main areas:

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[28] Retrieved from https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/.
[29] Maryam Ahmad Makama, 'Importance of girl-child education'. Retrieved from
https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/home-front/ importance-of-girl-child-education/

- **Strengthening Education Systems**

  UNICEF helps improve planning, budgeting and monitoring, and assess learning outcomes and teacher competency. It also helps build the capacity of School Based Management Committees (SBMC).

- **Improved and equitable access to quality basic education**

  UNICEF supports early childhood development in disadvantaged communities, and helps traditional Koranic schools adopt a broader curriculum. Cash transfers are being piloted in Sokoto and Niger states to help families afford the cost of sending girls to schools, while scholarship incentives help attract qualified female teachers to rural schools.

- **Improved quality of teaching and learning outcome**

  UNICEF helps teachers improve their skills, promote quality standards for child-friendly schooling, and supports capacity building for emergency preparedness and response.[30]

6.0 EDUCATION AND SECURITY

In north-eastern Nigeria, conflict has deprived many children of access to education. Teachers have been killed and schools burned down or closed for security reasons. Education and security can influence each other positively or negatively depending on the context. This is necessarily so because it enables individuals, groups, countries and human race to explore, appreciate, understand and develop their physical and social environments for the satisfaction of their needs. An educated person has broad view of issues as against narrow and parochial outlook. Education makes people to be tolerant of other people's religion, belief, culture, limitations and promote social harmony and security. It is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence. A good number of conflicts often arise from ignorance and manipulation of ethnic and religious identity. In fact, education (not just passing through the four walls of the school) system produces tolerant and civil citizens who are able to understand and live with people from different ethnic, economic, religious and cultural backgrounds and other forms of identities.[31]

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[30] Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/education.html

[31] Alemika, E.E.O (n.d) Security Challenges and University System in Nigeria. Retrieved from http://repos.unijos.edu.ng/jspuit/stream/.1973--/security%20challenges

A country that bequeaths the right type of education to its citizens makes it difficult for such citizens to turn against their father land.[32] In fact, it is meaningless to talk of security in the absence of the right type of education. It is therefore, not a surprise that Radda[33] opines that education, when well imparted and utilised, has the potency of promoting national security. This is because it is mostly uneducated jobless and educated jobless youths that are easily attracted to crimes, thereby, constituting insecurity in a country. While Western education that is not geared towards self-reliance (education that makes youths job seekers) may be dangerous as far as developing countries are concerned, lack of Western education or low education is even more dangerous. Low education often translates to absence of competitive skills, adequate income, exclusion from participating in vital political, economic and social organizations and relations; lack of access to adequate food and nutrition, housing, health care and efficient public emergency and safety services-all which are elements on human security. Youths who are educated have hope of a better future than youths who are not educated and failed to learn any craft. Children or youths with low education are easily recruited as thugs, insurgents and terrorists through indoctrination. Suffice to say that lack of education itself is insecurity.[34] Inadequate education also constitutes a problem to national security. Akande and Okuwa[35] averred that, youth unemployment is a major factor in conflict experiences in Africa including Nigeria. The prevailing socio-economic environment entices youths to turn to war, crime and violence as a means of livelihood. As bad as the situation appears, education can be used to curb this ugly trend.

6.1 Security in Schools

Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states that "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person." While Article 26 states that:

> Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

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[32] Orikpe, E.A. (2013) Education and National Security: Changes and the Way Forward. Journal of Educational and Social Research 3(10, pp. 53-59.

[33] Radda, S.I (2013) The Role of Education in Promoting National Security. Being a Paper Presented at the FAAN Conference held in November 2013 at Ahmadu Bello University, Samaru, Zaria.

[34] Alemika, E.E.O (n.d) Security Challenges and University System in Nigeria. Retrieved from http://repos.unijos.edu.ng/jspuit/stream/.1973--/security%20challenges

[35] Akande, S.O and Okuwa, O.B (2009) "Empowering Nigeria Youths for the 21st Centrury" NISER Occasional Paper No 3. Ibadan: NISER.

Article 6 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) states that: "Every individual shall have the right to liberty and to the security of his person." Whereas Article 23(1) states that: "All peoples shall have the right to national and international peace and security."

These provisions are reflected in Section 14(2)(b) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria. In line with this objective of government, **Head teachers from 114 institutions including 100 schools in northeastern Nigeria attended a UNESCO workshop on security in November, 2014 to help them handle the instability caused by extremists of the Boko Haram insurgency, which has been disrupting education in the area.** Hajiya Asabe Ali Kwambula, Principal of Chibok Government Secondary School in Borno State, from where 276 young girls were abducted in April, 2014 attended the workshop and stressed the importance of helping school administrators learn about security best practices to enhance the safety of schools across the country. Participants from primary, junior and secondary schools in the three Nigerian states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe were given 1,350 Safe School kits for their establishments. The workshop was financed by UNESCO as part of the Organization's response to the abduction of the young girls from Chibok Secondary School.

Concern for the security of school children in the northeast of Nigeria and for their right to receive an education led to the establishment of a Child Protection and Education Working Group, of which UNESCO is a member. A "safe school programme" was drawn up to provide teachers, parents and students with comprehensive information on safety skills in simple understandable language; empower school communities with appropriate guidelines, dos and don'ts, that will enhance their safety and their ability to assist security agencies at a time when safety has become a matter of general concern; provide schools with the information and skills required to conduct customized risk and threat audits of their establishments; and, finally, give schools templates for emergency response plans and the establishment of School Emergency Response Teams and Incident Command Systems. In 2013, the Government of Nigeria declared a State of Emergency in Yobe, Adamawa and Borno states, due to attacks by extremists of Boko Haram, whose name means Western Education is evil, which began in 2009, targeting teachers and students in northeast Nigeria.[36]

On 16th December, 2016 the Government of Norway donated $11.5 million, (approximately 3.6 billion Naira) to improve basic education and support girls and women who have been victims of sexual violence by Boko Haram in the conflict-affected northeast Nigerian states of Borno, Yobe, Adamawa and Gombe. The funding is part of the Safe Schools Initiative in northern Nigeria. Norway was a pioneer member of the Safe Schools Initiative committee established in

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[36] Report from UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Retrieved from https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/unesco-training-safety-and-security-schools-northeast-nigeria

response to Boko Haram attacks on schools in the northeast and the urgent need to provide a safe learning environment for children. With the support of UNICEF, about 100,000 children are currently accessing education through Temporary Learning Spaces and schools in northeast Nigeria. This fund will further boost access to education for an additional half a million boys and girls in Internally Displaced Persons' (IDP) camps, host communities and areas of Borno state that have recently become accessible areas to humanitarian assistance. Teachers were trained to improve their skills so they can deliver quality teaching and improve learning results for children; school systems has improved through training and mentoring of head-teachers on management knowledge and skills. School Based Management Committee (SBMCs) members were trained in school planning, including disaster risk reduction to make schools a safer place for children.[37]

The funding also supported approximately 1,600 of the thousands of girls and women that UNICEF estimates have been raped, abducted and forcibly married as a result of the conflict. Not only have these victims of violence suffered the trauma of their experiences when they were held by Boko Haram, but when they have managed to escape or have been liberated, they often face rejection by their communities and families. Instead of being welcomed back, they frequently face stigma, discrimination, and in some cases violence, especially when they return pregnant or with children born out of that sexual violence. In addition to traditional stigma associated with sexual violence, many communities are afraid that girls and women who have been held by Boko Haram may have been indoctrinated by their captors. Part of the Norwegian funds is to be used in Borno State to help these women and girls to reintegrate with their families and communities and rebuild their lives. The funding will also help to empower these women and girls to engage in the community peacebuilding process. The UNICEF Nigeria Representative, Mohamed Fall, said: "Tackling the crisis in northeast Nigeria requires a broad coalition of support from all". He stated that: "The Government of Norway was with us at the beginning of this crisis, providing support, and they are still here. This latest funding will go a long way to get thousands of children back in school and will help to reintegrate girls and women who were victims of Boko Haram back into their communities."[38]

On 18th July, 2017 Nobel Peace Prize winner and international education activist Malala Yousafzai met with girls displaced by the Boko Haram crisis in northeast Nigeria. Twenty year-old Malala understands how violence can disrupt education. At the age of 15, she was shot by the Taliban in her native Pakistan for speaking out against their ban on girls' education. She recovered, continued her campaign and, as co-founder of Malala Fund, is building a global movement of support for girls' education. During a visit organized by UNICEF, Malala talked to

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[37] Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/education_11061.html
[38] Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/education_11061.html.

girls at a school in a camp for the displaced on the outskirts of Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state, which is the most affected by the crisis. The schoolgirls shared their experiences with Malala and described how violence and insecurity have disrupted their lives and their learning. 1.7 million people are displaced by the Boko Haram crisis in northeast Nigeria's three most affected states. Over 2,295 teachers have been killed and 19,000 displaced, and almost 1,400 schools destroyed since the start of the Boko Haram insurgency in 2009. UNICEF estimates that some three million children in the area need support to continue their education. Girls' education is key to the future, said Malala. "Studies are clear — educating girls grows economies, reduces conflict and improves public health." UNICEF's Representative in Nigeria, Mohamed Malick Fall, re-affirmed UNICEF's commitment to stand with Malala and ensure that all children in Nigeria have access to quality education. He stated that: "We will do everything in our power to make sure all children can keep learning. We believe that education – especially for girls, is the single most important way to bring hope, peace and prosperity not just for this generation, but for also for future generations."[39]

In September, 2017 Justin Forsyth, Deputy Director of UNICEF at the end of a three-day visit to Maiduguri, the epicentre of the crisis in the northeast said: "Children in northeast Nigeria are living through so much horror. In addition to devastating malnutrition, violence and an outbreak of cholera, the attacks on schools is in danger of creating a lost generation of children, threatening their and the countries future." Some children living in IDP camps in Borno state, however, are actually benefiting from education for the first time in their lives. In the Muna Garage camp on the outskirts of Maiduguri, for example, an estimated 90 per cent of students were enrolled in school for the first time.

However, in February 2018, approximately four years after the 2014 Chibok abduction, in the nearby town of Dapchi in Yobe State, another 110 schoolgirls were abducted by Boko Haram. Though the girls have been released, five did not survive the ordeal and one other - a Christian who refused to convert to Islam - is still being held.[40] There is still some reluctance in sending girls to school in northern Nigeria as a result of these kidnappings. It is our duty to be our brothers' keeper. Let us all join hands to make our schools and communities safe for all our children, especially the girl-child.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

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[39] Abubakar, 'Education is key: Malala visits schoolgirls displaced by the Boko Haram crisis in northeast Nigeria.' Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/education_11585.html

[40] Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-43535872.

1. The Federal Government of Nigeria should beef up security in schools especially in Northern Nigeria.
2. The benefits of educating the girl-child should be emphasized to encourage parents to send their female children to school.
3. There is need for increased funding of education and improved collaboration with international organisations.
4. There is need for transparency and accountability in the administration of funds/grants for the education/welfare of displaced children especially those in IDP camps.

8.0 CONCLUSION

Education has been proven to effectively mitigate varying forms of gender violence – be it marital rape, child marriage, or economic violence. Education is the gateway to women's empowerment, providing leadership skills that can benefit and protect women. Universal female secondary education is an achievable goal but developing countries must go that extra mile to make it happen. Governments and the international community must dedicate greater resources to the plight of women and girls around the world that suffer at the hand of gender violence and the way by which we can make a difference is through education. By educating girls we are empowering them to defend and fend for themselves. The best legacy of every society is to have a peaceful, enlightened, knowledgeable and socially coherent life in order to archive development and growth in all sectors. The only way to achieve this is through having sound builders of that society, who is 'the girl child' the future mother, educated.