

## **BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY: A PERIL TO ACHIEVEMENT OF EDUCATION FOR ALL IN NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *An attack on education is a grave and rising concern in the world and Nigeria in particular. It includes violations of multiple provisions of international humanitarian and human right law, including the rights to life and liberty, the right to education, the protection of civilian and properties during conflict, and the rights to freedom of expression and association, among others. This study focuses on Boko Haram insurgency: a peril to the achievement of Education for All in Nigeria. The study concentrates on the Northeast Nigeria with primary focus on Borno state. The study also x-rays the Boko Haram's attack on education since 2012 till date and the effects of this attack on education and the possible solutions to halt further attacks.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Boko Haram, Insurgency, Achievement, Education.*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Education is under attack, as incidents of violence against students, teachers, union, schools and government officials are on the rise worldwide and in Nigeria in particular. Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, deliberate threat against students, academics, teachers and education facilities create barrier to accessing quality education for all. Education is a right, like the right to have proper food or roof over ones head. Article 26 of the 1996 universal declaration of human right states that, "everyone has the right to education". Education is not only a right but passport to human development. It opens doors and expands opportunities and freedom. It contributes to fostering peace, democracy and economic growth as well as improving health and reducing poverty. The ultimate aim of education for all (EFA) is sustainable development. The education for all movement is a global commitment to provide quality education for all children, youth and adults. It aims to achieve six key education goals by 2015, which relates to: early childhood care, primary education, youth and adult learning, literacy, gender and education quality. In the year 2000, the world's government adopted the six EFA goals and eight millennium development goals (MDGs), the two most important frameworks in the field of education. The education priorities of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are shaped by these objectives. The two sets of goals are an

ambition roadmap for the global community including Nigeria to follow. They offer a long term vision or reduce poverty and hunger, better health and education, sustainable life styles, strong partnership and shared commitments. 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 has dropped by more than 38 million and the gender gap in formal education has been narrowed. Literacy rates have also increased, albeit slowly (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2011).

The current Boko Haram 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 70 teachers and over 1000 school children have been killed or wounded. About 50 schools have either been burned or seriously damaged and more than 60 others have been forced to close. Thousands of children have been forced out of schools across communities in Yobe, Kaduna, Adamawa and Borno states. Many teachers have been forced to flee for their safety to other states. The highest number of attacks was in Borno state in the North-east. According to the Nigeria teachers' union, more than 1000 teachers have been forced to flee from areas in the north since 2012. Based on this backdrop of adverse effect of Boko Haram on education for all (EFA) in Nigeria, one is inclined to ask the question; how can Nigeria at the peak of Boko Haram insurgency arrive at EFA objectives by 2015 barely seven months from now?

### **Problem of the Study**

The threat to education from Boko Haram attack should be seen in the context of the wider problem of the impact of conflict in general on the degradation of education or prevention of educational development. The immediate impact of attacks include the loss of, injury to, or abduction of students, teachers and personnel and damage of buildings and facilities most typically due to the burning, bombing or shelling of buildings or transport facilities by Boko Haram. For instance the officials of education system close 85 schools in north-eastern Borno, affecting nearly 120,000 students, after a spate of attacks by Islamic militants, in an area that has the country's worst literacy rate (The Guardian, 2014). More than 200 school girls kidnapped on the night of 14th April, 2014, remain missing at the time of this work and currently have been forced into marriage with members of Boko Haram with a reputed "bride price" of N2, 000 each (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia). Of course, it is a known fact that early marriage hinders girl child education.

These attacks have forced the affected state government to close down schools and colleges for prolonged periods. This is an area that is reckoned to be educationally poor-performing even by Nigeria standards. Low school enrolment- especially of girls, low retention rates, high number of out of school children and grinding poverty already characterise northern Nigeria (The Guardian, 2014). According to Nigerian human right commissioner Chidi Anselem Odinkalu said, "The school closure could have far reaching consequences, including ending the education of some students in a region where few ever have the opportunity to get to high school". He continued,

“The average secondary school enrolment is slightly under 5% (in north-eastern Nigeria), so I think it is easy to understand that you cannot overestimate what consequences of this could be, given the parlous state of education in the region and the fact that, whoever is orchestrating this is focused on target schools, educational institutions”.

The problem of this study worries on the effect this insurgency might have on education for all (EFA) in Nigeria, for instance if schools are damaged or closed, children’s education progress is likely to be curtailed: they are not able to learn, complete courses, or sit exams. It may also affect students’ learning trajectories. As the inter-agency network on education in emergencies (INEE) states,

“Such violence has long-lasting consequences for...individual learners. Even when physically able to access education, learners and staff may be exposed to abuse, violence and discrimination that can adversely impact quality and learning outcomes and have devastating social and psychology effects”.

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 cycle of violence and conflict, preventing the positive impact education may previously have had.

### **The Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is set out to investigate on Boko Haram insurgency: a peril to achieving education for all in Nigeria. The purpose of this study is to draw attention to the damaging effect of the ongoing Boko Haram attacks on education in the northern Nigeria. It calls on Boko Haram and other unknown gunmen to immediately cease all attacks on schools and educational facilities as it is affecting the achievement of education for all (EFA) by 2015; and on the Nigerian authorities to take effective measures to ensure that the right to life and the right to education are adequately respected and promoted in Nigeria.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study relied on the already made documents on the attacks on schools and education structures in the north-eastern Nigeria, with primary focus on Borno state for its data collection. The study concentrates on the Boko Haram attacks from February 2012 till May 2014.

**Boko Haram attacks on Nigerian Schools (Education)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Casualty</b>	<b>Nature of attack</b>
Feb 17, 2012	Kaduna state	2 dead	Gunmen attack on zonkwa killing 2 students.
Feb 21, 2012	Borno state	No death	Boko Haram destroyed gomari costain primary school by fire.
Feb 22, 2012	Borno state	No death	Abba Ganaram primary school Maiduguri was set ablaze by Boko Haram.
March 1, 2012	Kaduna state	_____	Boko Haram attacked government secondary school fadan kaje.
April 11, 2012	Damaturu	_____	Boko Haram attacked and bombed police station and one primary school in Fika.
April 29, 2012	Kano	15 dead	Boko Haram struck Bayero university open theatre being used as church by Christians killing 15 people including two university professors.
May 12, 2012	Maiduguri	_____	Boko Haram burnt a private nursery, primary and secondary school in Maiduguri.
May 13, 2012	Maiduguri	_____	Boko Haram burnt Mafa central school in Maiduguri.
Aug 19, 2012	Yobe	_____	Boko Haram attacked and blew up a primary school, church and police station in damagun.
Sept 27, 2012	Maiduguri	2 injured	Boko Haram attacked Mahammed Goni college of legal and Islamic studies in Maiduguri shooting security men, burnt down admin block, the office of the deans and the council chamber.
Oct 1, 2012	Adamawa	25 dead	Attack by gunmen in university in mubi town Adamawa state killing 25 students
March 18, 2012	Borno	3 dead, 7 injured	Boko Haram on 4 public schools in Maiduguri killing 3 teachers injured 4 people and 3 students.
April 7, 2013	Borno	1 dead	Gunmen attacked and killed a teacher in Gwange III primary school in Maiduguri.

April 9, 2013	Borno	2 dead plus unknown number of officials	Boko Haram attacked and killed two teachers plus other officials on their way to provide food to schools during inspection tour in Dikwa LGA.
June 18, 2013	Damaturu	11 dead	Boko Haram attack on GSS Damaturu, shooting sporadically, killing 7 students, 2 teachers and 2 gunmen. Headed to the teacher's quarters killing another 2 teachers, 6 students sustained various degrees of injuries.
June 24, 2013	Borno	9 dead	Gunmen attacked and killed 9 students in Gamboru on their way to take exam.
July 6, 2013	Yobe	42 dead	Boko Haram attacked GSS mamudo in Yobe state. Killing 41 students and a teacher.
Sept 29, 2013	Yobe	41 dead	Boko Haram stormed a dormitory of college of agriculture in Gujiba Yobe state killing 40 students and a teacher.
Feb 25, 2014	Yobe	25 dead	Boko Haram stormed a co-educational, federal government college boarding school in Buni Yadi killing 29 male students, injured 59, abducted some female students, some girls ordered to quit school and get married or be killed in future attacks.
April 14, 2014	Borno	16 dead	Boko Haram attacked Girls Secondary School and kidnapped 234 Chibok girls, burnt library and other government properties.
April 11, 2014	Borno	8 dead	Boko Haram attacked and exchanged fire with soldiers killing 8 teachers in Dikwa Borno state.
April 20, 2014	Plateau	More than 200 dead	Twin Jos bomb blast by Boko Haram claimed over 200 lives.

Sources: Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia (May 13, 2014), Thisday live (2014).

The list of various attacks by Boko Haram on education system since 2012 is endless. 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.

### **Effect of Boko Haram Insurgency on Education**

The negative effects of Boko Haram attacks on the education system in north east Nigeria occur in differing, yet generally closely interwoven forms include:

#### **– Falling enrolment or attendance of students**

Generally it has recorded that between 2012 till date, the insecurity generated by the constant attacks and fighting in Borno and other states in the north-eastern Nigeria led many parents to send their children away or leave the state, disrupting their education (Amnesty International, 2013). According to documents provided by Director of Basic and Secondary Education in the Federal Ministry of Education, in 2013, schools in the north-east recorded the lowest number in recent years of pupil who applied and were admitted into junior secondary schools in the country. In one school in Mungono, out of 160 eligible pupils, only 60 applied for admission into junior secondary school in 2013. An official in the Ministry of Education in Borno state reportedly stated that “around 15,000 children in Borno state have stopped attending classes” following the increased insecurity in the state, including the attacks on schools. A teacher from one village in northern Borno state, hiding in Maiduguri in fear for his safety, told Amnesty International that there is no opportunity for children in the village to continue their education after the school were forced to close. He, said, “None of the children go to school now. Those who were taking exams had to hide their school uniforms in a plastic bag before they leave home. Boko Haram even tore the uniforms of students who travel to Maiduguri to attend school from the village. They warned all the students to stop attending schools, except Islamic schools”. A 25-year old teacher from old Bama primary school, lamenting;

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 walk, regardless of the distance” (Amnesty International, 2013).

#### **– Effects on Teachers and Teaching**

**Loss of Teachers:** Attacks on schools may lead teachers to giving their job or flee the area, or even the country (Brendan , 2010). In the north eastern region of Nigeria, many teachers were forced 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). According to Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2011 (EFAGMR):

“Attacks on higher education and teacher training institutions may restrict research, teaching content and pedagogical training and cause drop out, distraction, demoralization and traumatising of tertiary students and academics. This can in turn lead to restrictions on teacher content, knowledge and teacher quality”.

Persistent attacks on schools and teachers can also deter students from training to be a teacher. Similarly, attacks where teachers are killed in broad daylight, in some cases in full view of pupils, are likely to expose the children and other teachers to shock, distress and severe psychological trauma.

### **Impact on Infrastructure**

The destruction of and damage to school infrastructure and facilities grossly reduces the availability of an access to education of many children in Borno state. Schools are burned down, it is not only the classrooms that are lost but also all the teaching materials, equipments 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. In some places schools that have not been attacked have been equally closed, teaching has been suspended and teachers forced to abandon their classrooms. When education institutions are targeted or attacked, the damage and its consequences can be major and far-reaching. This is because after the attacks, many schools remain closed and un-repaired for long periods.

### **Effect on Education Management**

Boko Haram insurgency has an adverse effect on the management of education. This is because repairs to damage from attacks and normal maintenance and investment in education may be put on hold either because labourers dare not risk repairing or reconstructing a school that has already been targeted out of fear of reprisals. Equally government may not risk investing in a development of schools for fear of the money being wasted if attacks are repeated. As at June 2014, statistics from Yobe State Ministry of Education indicated that over 209 schools were destroyed by the insurgence. The Governor, Ibrahim Gaidam lamented, “I am sad that the resources we would have used to provide other infrastructure are now being channelled to the reconstruction of the schools.” The reconstruction of the schools has cost so much to the government. The Government Day Secondary School alone cost over 339 million naira, Government Secondary school, Mamudo cost over 160 million naira, and fencing of College of Agriculture cost about 120 million naira. What was spent is excluding all the primary schools and equipment being destroyed by the insurgence across the state (Duku, 2014). The State Universal Basic Education Board of Borno state had to issue directives to all their staff assigned to those areas to stop going to school for a period of 6 months until things calm down. This directive affected the students most whose education had to be halted.

– **Recruitment of School Children for child Soldiers**

As Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria escalates, the group is building an insurgency that increasingly includes children, a practice finding increasing favour among the latest round of uprising in Africa (Drew, H and Gbenga, 2014). Thousands of children are serving as soldiers in armed conflicts around the world. Often they are abducted at school, on the street or at home. Others enlist “voluntarily”, usually because they see few alternatives. They may fight on frontlines, participate in suicide missions and act as spies, messengers or look outs. Girls may be forced into sexual slavery; Nigeria abducted Chibok girls as typical example. The northern region of Nigeria, where the attacks are concentrated, is a home to the majority of Nigeria’s 11 million out-of-school children. 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 (Nina Strohlic, 2014). In Maiduguri, human right watch researchers saw a video recording of the interrogation by security forces of a 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 child 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.

– **Psychological and Social effects of Boko Haram’s Attack on Education**

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 northeast of Nigeria have 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/students) 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 the potential contribution they can make to society (Brenda, 2010).

Teachers may also experience psychological effects that are overcome by grief at the loss or maiming of their colleagues and students or are distracted by threats to colleagues, making it difficult for them to support their students or perform their job to the highest standards. If they are visibly anxious, this may heighten the fears of their own students. Fear may cause teachers to stay away from school for long periods, forcing their closure or preventing their resumption after attacks.

The social effects of Boko Haram attacks have both symbolic and ideological effects on education which exacerbate the physical effects. According to Vernor Munoz (2009), the special reporter on the right to education argues that the symbolic effect is the promulgation of



fear, subordination to others and the ideological effects is the removal of right to education and the denial of its purpose. The destruction of large numbers of schools or sexual violence against schoolgirls 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 students, 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.

### **The Way Forward**

- The state government should provide adequate security to prevent attacks on school buildings, teachers and school children in the state.
- The state government should renovate all schools damaged in the state as a result of the violence and ensure that they are provided with adequate teaching staff and other resources in order that children's access to education can be resumed as quickly and smoothly as possible. The federal government on their part should provide adequate support to the affected states government including Borno state, to expeditiously rebuild and renovate all school buildings and facilities destroyed during the attacks.
- The State government should provide all necessary support to all those, including teachers and students, who have been affected by violence in northeast Nigeria. This should include rehabilitation and resettlement for those who have been forced to flee the violence.
- The federal government should take effective and lawful measures to prevent unlawful killings, particularly those of teachers and students, as well as attacks on schools by Boko Haram and other armed groups in northern Nigeria.
- The Ministry of Education should ensure that re-opened schools are subjected to regular inspection to ensure that standards are being maintained.
- The international communities should put pressure on the Nigeria authorities to conduct an independent investigation and prosecution of suspected perpetrators of human rights abuses including the abuse of the right to education.
- The study is also calling on Boko Haram and other armed groups to cease all unlawful killings, including targeted attacks on teachers, school children and other human right abuses against civilians and immediately stop all attacks on schools and other education facilities.

### **CONCLUSION**

Boko Haram and its variants have really wreaked havoc in the states targeted so far. The impact is devastating, various communities have become refugees in their own country; hamlet and homes are destroyed under the Boko Haram' scotch-earth policy; the school infrastructure is damaged; both teachers and pupils are traumatised and displaced. The present situation calls for urgent intervention from the whole nation but the responses so far do not say anything specific about children and adolescents of school-going age who are vulnerable and also part of the displaced population. The little the government have done so far is through the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) that sees its function as providing palliatives-food items, beds, bedding and mattresses as well as bags of rice to displaced persons. The agency,

in most cases assumes that the school buildings are ready made accommodation for internally displaced persons, who looks after displaced school children and adolescents (Okoro, 2014). It must be understood that as the crisis give rise to displacement of communities, emergency schools should spring up to keep the displaced pupils occupied. Granted that in crisis situation, education may be regarded as a luxury and perhaps the least of parental worry, all the same, special and deliberate interventions are necessary if victims of crisis and conflicts are to access education. Nobody knows when the Boko Haram insurgency will end. Therefore, there is no need to suspend the education of pupils in the affected states. Wherever there is a safe haven for the displaced population, a school should be located immediately by erecting temporary tents or other makeshift structures. All teachers displaced by the crisis situation should be mobilised as soon as the structures are in place to justify their salaries.

The right to a child's education should not be tampered with. It is really at this crisis situation that education is needed. One must assert that "education does not come after the emergency but as an integral part of it" (Ndoye in okoro, 2014). Why? Children must be protected at all cost through the instrumentality of education. It is through it that they are offered some immediate sense of security and comfort as well as socialization of interaction and understanding hope for the future. In addition, education in emergencies saves home by directly protecting vulnerable children from exploitation and harm.

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