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QUESTIONING THE SAFE SCHOOL INITIATIVE AND MAKING A CASE FOR A SAFE NIGERIA MODEL: THE MEDIA AS THE NUCLEUS

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ABSTRACT

This study is a follow-up to the safe school initiative which overall aim is to secure Nigerian schools and protect them from further attacks especially from the Boko Haram insurgency. The study through focus group discussion and focus interview as instruments of data collection for qualitative analysis, found that there cannot be safe schools in war-like zone, findings further showed that what Nigeria needs is a comprehensive approach that addresses the myriad of challenges facing the country. These challenges were identified to cover the social welfare of Nigerian citizens to strengthening of public institutions to gain public trust. The researcher thus, deviates from the initiative and argues that rather than safe school initiative, what Nigeria needs is a secure Nigeria and not only schools. Consequently, the study proposes safe Nigeria model with the media at the centre and argued that if properly implemented, it will create a convivial Nigeria for all and sundry.

Key works: safe school initiative, safe Nigeria and media.

INTRODUCTION: NIGERIA'S SECURITY IN PERSPECTIVE

Nigeria, the acclaimed giant of Africa, is today faced with a myriad of security encumbrances that have percolated all facets of her existence. From social security to the security of lives and property, the story is the same. The prevailing mindless killings of innocent citizens orchestrated by Boko Haram sect has become pronounced such that the word "security" or "insecurity" is now as synonymous to Boko Haram. While that may not be completely false, it is not the only side of the coin, in fact, social insecurity bred and still breeds the insecurity of lives and property. Hussein, Gnisci and Wanjiru (2004) corroboratively notes that security conditions for people's development are not bound traditional matters of national defence but rather encompass all political, economic and social issues enabling a life free from risk and fear. Oyebade (2014) equally quips that human security is increasingly emerging as a critical component of the global political and

development agenda. It is perhaps, in consideration of the centrality of social security that the United Nations (1948) in its Universal Declaration of Human Rights article 25(1) proclaimed:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control

This goes to show that to think of a secure nation, devoid of crimes and criminality, the people must be free from hunger, they must be educated to a level that they can discern good from bad, from the perspective of civilization and global accepted standard. But can this be said of the Nigeria of today? The Nigerian story with regards to human security

or social security is a dismal one. Statistics showed that unemployment rate in Nigeria is on the increase. Unemployment rate in Nigeria increased to 23.90 percent in 2011 from 21.10 percent in 2010. Unemployment rate in Nigeria averaged 14.60 Percent from 2006 until 2011, reaching an all time high of 23.90 Percent in 2011 and a record low of 5.30 Percent in 2006 (National Bureau of Statistic, 2012 cited in Okoye, 2014,p.22). Also, published data by the National Bureau of Statistics (2010) indicates that 40% of the children aged less than 15 years make up Nigeria's population of 3 million (8.1%) and that the children under 15 years of age have never attended school while the school dropout rate among children was estimated at a little above 1 million. This raises another poser- If at age 15 someone has not attended school, what is the possibility that he/she will attend school at all? At the moment, Nigeria's literacy rate is 61%, little below India with 62% while countries like Canada, Estonia, Australia and the UK have achieved 99% literacy rate (Trading the Economic 2014,). Equally surprising, Nigeria's poverty rate is 70% with India's poverty rate estimated at 30%, Canada 9.4%, UK 14% and Australia 2.1% (see above). How then do you have a peaceful society with this conspicuous uneven distribution of wealth? It is often said a hungry man is an angry man. Poverty is capable of leading some people to violent act. For example, a study conducted by Owasa (2013) indicates that Nigerians electorates sell their votes to politicians because of poverty! With this sad reality, coupled with the prevalence of diverting voices in Nigeria, one will have no option but agree with some scholars (Leaning and Arle 2000 and Florim & Simmons 1998) who have advocated for good human security in societies.

The current security challenges facing Nigeria today cannot be divorced from the failure of government to address issues

relating to social security. The African giant is faced with the kidnapping in the Niger Delta, succession threats from the Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra (MOSSOB) in the South east, herdsmen – farmers conflict in the north central, and even in other parts of the country and worst of it all, the Boko Haram Insurgency. All these security threats have further tarnished the image of the country. Danyi (2014) observes corroboratively that Nigeria which used to be home for other displaced persons have become a major exporter of refugees. While Gever and Nwabuzor (2013) add that in a country (Nigeria) where there are no enough factories to cater for the teeming unemployed graduates, there are still bomb manufacturing factories deployed against the citizens by anarchists (terrorists).

The Nigeria of today is where females are used as suicide bombers, people disguise as beggars to unleash mayhem, as students to kill innocent people, as army to destroy lives and property. It is a Nigeria where public places like churches, mosques, institutions of learning, motor parks, markets, viewing centres etc are targeted and bombed. It is a Nigeria where school children, women and other vulnerable groups are abducted and abused! It is a Nigeria where anybody carrying a big bag is suspected to be a suicide bomber, it is a Nigeria where mutual suspicion has taken the place of love, pieces the place of peace, retrogression taken the place of progress, hostility the place of hospitality. The Nigeria of today is a Nigeria where nobody is sure of what happens the next minute! The Boko Haram insurgency has caused untold suffering to Nigerians who are now refugees in their own land. The April 14, 2014 abduction of over two hundred students from Government Secondary School, Chibok attracted global condemnation. This leads to the next segment of the people.

The Chibok Saga and the Safe-School Initiative

Activities of the outlawed Boko Haram sect attracted global condemnation with the April 14th abduction of over 200 female students of the Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok, Borno state, Nigeria. The abduction was seen as a set back in a bid to encourage girl child education particularly with the fact that Northern Nigeria has the highest number of out of school females. For example, a study conducted by Africa Coalition on Maternal Newborn and Child Health (2013) revealed that the first eleven states with the highest number of out of secondary school girl children are from the North. The result showed that Kebbi (north west) tops the list with 87.1%, Sokoto (north west) 87.0%, Bauchi (north east) 86.7%, Jigawa (north west) 80.7%, Yobe (north east) 77.4%, Zamfara (north east) 96.8%, Niger (north central) 73.8%, Katsina (north west) 72.1%, Borno (north east) 70.9%, Gombe (north east) 67.8% and Kano (north west) 59.9%. Apart from the dismal statistics on the wide ratio between female-male child school enrolment, in Nigeria, the abduction was/is perceived by many as a set-back to goal 3 of the United Nations on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which is to promote gender equality and empower women, an indicator of which is the ratio of literate female – male of 15-25 years old (UNICEF 2005). The simple fact is that, the Chibok girl abduction is not cheering news, to not only to Nigeria, but all those who are advocates of girl child education.

As a result of the abduction, different groups have carried out different protests under the dominant theme of 'Bring back our girls.' The campaigns have even gone virulent on social media. The government of Nigeria or its part set up a committee to determine the exact number of girls held hostage. The committee was inaugurated on the 6th of May 2014. The mandate of the committee was to

clear all doubts about the abduction saga. On the 20th of June same year, the committee submitted its report. The committee found that some school girls from GSCE Chibok were actually abducted on 14th of April, 2014 and that during the siege, 119 girls escaped, 276 were abducted while 57 of them managed to escape from the abductors when they were moved through a Zig-Zag route (Adetoyo 2014). One popular outcome of the Chibok girls' abduction is the safe school initiative. The safe school initiative was launched after World Economic Forum on Africa (WEFA) in Abuja which took place between 7th -9th of May 2014. It was launched by a coalition of Nigeria business leaders, former British Prime Minister and United Nations special Envoy for education, Mr Gordon Brown and the Global Business Coalition for education with the aim of securing schools in North-East geopolitical Zone of Nigeria.

The coalition after launching it, provided \$10 million, with a request for matching funds from the Nigerian government that was promptly approved by president Goodluck Jonathan. The minister of finance and coordination minister for the Economy, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo - Iweala who announced the approval of the \$10 million matching grant by the president barely three days after the request was quoted as saying the initiative would help to ensure the safety of schools to prevent a reoccurrence of the Chibok saga (*Daily Sun* editorial, 2014). The initiative hopes to build community security groups, to promote safe zones for education, consisting of teachers, parents, the police, community leaders and young people themselves with a view to having long term physical protection of school, provision of school guards and police partnership with Nigerian authorities, training state school safety officers and provision of communication tools and school counselors. The initiators of the project equally hope that it will help schools create

security plans and work with government to develop a rapid response system so that response units are put in place to briskly repair, rebuild or replace destroyed education materials. Also, the project intends to present a plan for the international community to partner with Nigeria on school expansion and improvement of their security to get the nation's out of school children back to school (*Daily Sun* editorial, 2014).

The safe school initiative, though, began as a private initiative; the Federal Government of Nigeria seems to have taken a leading role. For instance, the government through the minister of finance and coordinating minister of the economy was on November 7, 2014 quoted thus:

The steering committee is a very comprehensive one, but today is very important because we are ready to start implementation of the first component of the safe schools initiatives. The components involve the transfer of students from the three states under emergency rule who want to study in other parts of the country. It is a purely voluntary programme (Ugwu 2014, paras 3 & 4).

During the media briefing, the minister was further quoted as disclosing that the German government is putting £2 million, British £1million, Norwegian \$1.5 million and USA \$15million. Others are African Development Bank \$1million and World Bank \$3million.

A close examination of the safe school initiative, one will ask, can we have safe schools in a war zone? What if the insurgents spread their tentacles beyond the north east? Can we not have a safe Nigeria? What role can the media possibly play in the safe Nigeria model? These posers are very relevant in any discourse on the safe school initiative. This is more so that the number of governments that have indicated interest in the safe school initiative appear to be passive on the general

security of Nigeria – lets quickly examine media matrix vis-à-vis state security.

Media Matrix and Nigeria in the Era of Insecurity

To say Nigeria is in a war, some people may argue that it is too harsh, some may simply say it is not true, but a few others may agree. The security intelligence of Nigeria's security personnel have brought to question as a result of the mindless attacks on innocent and defenseless citizens. The various media - considered in this study are radio, television, newspaper, magazine and film – have their strength and weaknesses that can complement each other such that, if properly used, can help in salvaging the country. For example, the radio is portable and cost effect, but lacks the visual impact, which can be gotten from television, the television has the visual impact but does not have enough time, the messages are fleeting, the viewers have no control over it. If you miss it, you miss out, the film can then become relevant where the messages are on a CD ROM, the viewers can fast forward, back forward, pause to closely examine a shot, etc. However, without electricity, viewing messages from either television broadcast or film will not be possible, hence, the newspaper. Newspapers give you the information, most times with pictures. However, newspapers, possibly because of the frequency with which they are published, do not contain details investigation as much as magazines, hence, the need to make use of magazines when the objective is to investigate and give in depth report (Uyo 1987). The point here is that, all the different media options have their advantages and disadvantages and if used properly, they could complement each other in developing a viable communication strategy.

1. **Radio:** The radio has the advantage of reaching wide range, it is relatively cheap,

it is portable, it is appropriate for simple message, it gives room for feedback especially during phone-in and it can be produced in local languages. However, radio lacks visual impact the timing of the programme may not be convenient and finally, it has Fleeting messages

2. **Television:** The television has visual impact, it has the power of immediacy and can induce attention and interest through attractive shots. With TV, short messages which are easy to memorize can be passed across. It is a medium for a group of people e.g family, friends etc. It unifies people. Television Also has its shortcoming: TV is very expensive; it is not portable, TV programmes are difficult to produce and involves many people. Programmes may not be aired at viewers convenience and it cannot function without electricity.
3. **Newspaper:** Newspaper messages are not transient, the messages can be stored and revisited after a very long time. Readers can receive the message at their convenience. It is very portable. It enhances status especially in public places like in a vehicle etc. It has pictures. The disadvantages of newspapers include :It is capital extensive, it requires literacy, the receivers do not get the message at the same time, there may be challenges of circulation. and it takes longer time to publish a newspaper than a broadcast programme.
4. **Magazine:** The magazine gives more investigative report than newspaper messages, it can be stored, it is portable and the messages are not transient, Readers can receive the message at their convenience, the paper quality is attractive and may interest readers, magazine has pictures and this gives credence to news stories. Magazine, like other media, has its weaknesses: It is very

expensive even more than newspaper, it takes longer time to publish a magazine than a newspaper, it requires literacy and there may be challenges circulating magazines in addition to it not being published as frequent as newspaper.

5. **Film:** Film is an electronic medium and has visual impact, the receiver has control over the content, the messages can be received at convenient times, it can combine information and entertainment in creating awareness, it can be produced in local languages for a special audience. As well as it is a viable instrument of mobilization. The disadvantages of film include: It depends largely on electricity: It is expensive it does not use air waves, it is time consuming, it requires many people and it is very expensive to shoot a quality film.

From the above media matrix, this study argues that a combination of all the media in strategic communication can go a long way in promoting peace in Nigeria, it can go a long way in promoting public education, awareness, value reorientation and implanting a sense of decorum, self respect and respect for one another, patriotism and alertness. What Nigeria needs now is safe Nigeria model, a model that can take care of the myriad of issues surrounding insecurity, insurgency characterized by mindless killing of innocent citizens and destruction of property worth billion. A model that can protect the lives of Nigerians in line with article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948- 'Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.' The institute for Economics and Peace (2014) in a global survey ranked Nigeria 4th on the 2013 Global Terrorism index while Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan came first, second and third, in that order. The report equally ranked Nigeria 151st out of 161 countries on global peace ranking

index. According to the report, only in 2013, Nigeria recorded 303 bomb blasts, 1, 826 fatalities and 457 injured. The economic cost of insurgency in Nigeria was put at a surprising \$28.48 billion. This is not cheering news and there are strong indications that the devastation will be more in years to come as carnage has continued unabated. One therefore wonders why Nigeria is talking of safe school initiative instead of safe Nigeria initiative. Where will schools operate if Nigeria as a nation is completely taken over by insurgents? As an alternative, therefore, this study had a focus group and focus interview to chart the way forward.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This study is anchored on agenda-setting theory. The theory posits that the media; most especially the news media, dictate what issues (agenda) to be considered most important by the society. The theory was proposed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972/1973 (Asemah 2011, p. 176). Folarin (1998) remarks that the agenda-setting theory implies that the media predetermine what issues to think about. The scholar adds that the media do this through factors like; frequency of reporting, prominence given to the reports through headline display, pictures and layout in newspapers, magazines, films, graphics or timing on radio and television. Also, the degree of conflict generated in the reports and cumulative media specific effects over time. Gevers (2013) argues that the theory is important because it explains media effects. This theory was considered appropriate for this study because, it gives an insight on the effect of media messages. Based on this study, if the media covers and reports issues investigated in this study, the government will prioritize such issues through policies and actions that will address them (the issues) with corresponding effects on the general well being of the Nigerian society.

METHODS

Survey method was used for this study with focus group and interview as instruments of data collection. The decision to adopt survey was to gather empirical evidence so as to propose a model for the study. Qualitative data analysis was employed for the study.

Focus Group

A focus group was organized with 27 people which information and significant statements were gathered from participants for data analysis. The participants were chosen based on two criteria: those who indicated interest and those who were literate, at least to read and write. It was decided it would be beneficial to conduct a small focus group because a comfortable and intimate setting would allow for a free-flowing discussion. The 27 participants were assured that their names would not be mentioned in the study and they would be described as participants. The following questions guided the discussion.

- 1) Can Nigeria be safe if the following are well taken care of: corruption, poverty reduction, unemployment provision of quality and affordable education, electoral reform value reorientation among Nigerians, prevention of militancy and communal clashes, formidable defense and fight against insurgency?
- 2) Is it possible to have safe schools in war-like zones?

Focused Interviews

The second form of data that was collected was from the focused interviews. Five journalists and five mass communication scholars were involved in the interview. They were all asked the same questions as:

- 3) Do the mass media have any role to play in the fight against; corruption, poverty reduction, unemployment provision of quality and affordable education electoral

reform value reorientation among Nigerians, prevention of militancy and communal clashes, formidable defense and fight against insurgency?

4) How can the mass media achieve this?

It should be noted that both the focus group participants and structure interview group were asked the same question to enable the researcher arrive at an acceptable conclusion.

RESULTS

Result of the study reveals that, 86% of the participants during the focus group discussion agreed that Nigeria can be safe if the following are well taken care of: corruption, poverty reduction, unemployment, provision of quality and affordable education, electoral reform value reorientation among Nigerians, prevention of militancy and communal clashes, formidable defense and fight against insurgency. Also, 92% of participants agreed that insurgency is fueled by high poverty rate, corruption, illiteracy and the general failure on the part of the government to make the welfare of the masses their top most priority. The result also showed that 84% of the participants reported that it will be difficult, if not impossible, to have safe schools in war-like zones. They reported further that moving school children to other parts of the country may not be the best option but making the entire country safe for schools to operate. The findings of this study are consistent with that of the Human Rights Watch (2014,p.13) which notes "A range of issues, including widespread poverty, corruption, security force abuse, and longstanding impunity for a range of crimes have created fertile ground in Nigeria for militant armed groups like Boko Haram." The result of this study corroborates the controversial sermon of a catholic Priest, Ejike Mbaka (2015), who blamed Nigeria's woes on bad governance. The sermon which was

entitled "When you go home, tell anybody you see that from the oracle of the Holy Spirit, we are announcing change" alleged,

What is the fate of our children? Tears fill my eyes when I see our young graduates hoping and walking our streets. What is the meaning of kidnapping? Kidnapping is the grandson of unemployment. Boko Haram is a grand great child of the same unemployment, mass looting, and poor governance (*Daily Sun* 2015 para 10)

Result from the focus interview revealed that 89% reported that the media have roles to play in the fight against; corruption, poverty reduction, unemployment, provision of quality and affordable education, electoral reform, value reorientation among Nigerians, prevention of militancy and communal clashes, formidable defense and fight against insurgency. On how the media can achieve this, 91% of the participants reported that the media can achieve this through investigative reporting of relevant issues bothering on corruption, poverty reduction, unemployment provision of quality and affordable education electoral reform value reorientation among Nigerians, prevention of militancy and communal clashes, formidable defense and fight against insurgency. Also, result revealed further that the media can do this through critical and constructive editorials and commentaries regarding those issues. They (the participants) also added that the media can do this through awareness creation to the general public to on the need for them to be active citizens by contributing their quota to the development of the society while at the same time holding the government accountable where need be.

Safe Nigeria Model

Based on the result of this study, a model to be known and called "Safe Nigeria Model" is hereby proposed

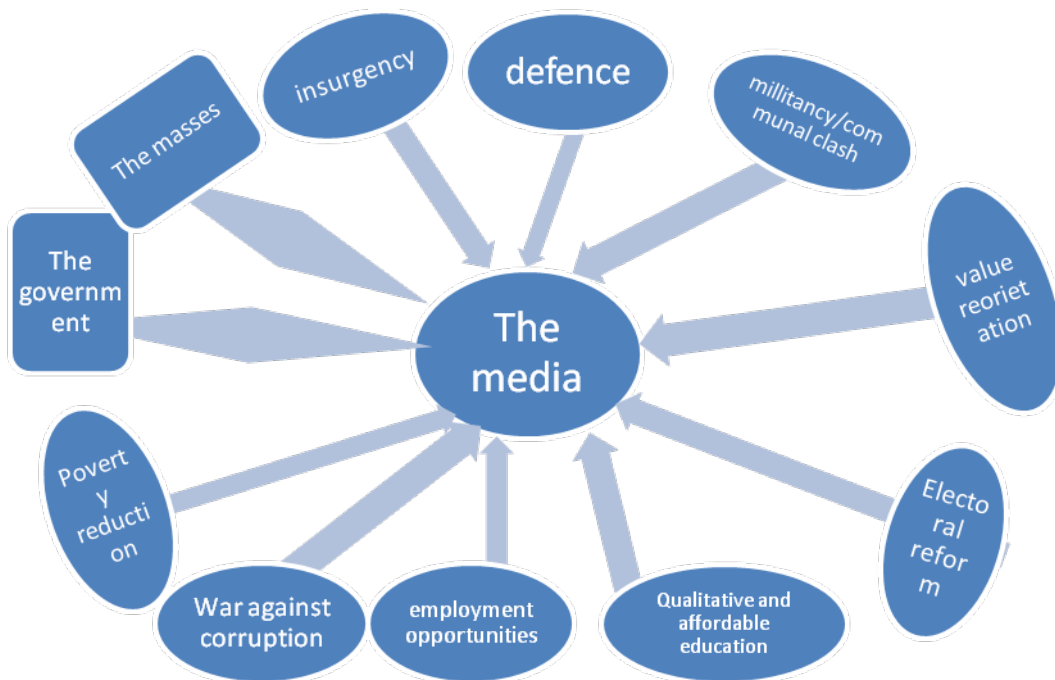


Figure 1 Safe Nigeria Model

The circular model above shows that the media are at the center of any plan aimed at changing Nigeria for better. According to this model, the government of Nigeria, Nigerians and the media are supposed to be maintaining frequent communication. This explains why from the model, the arrows on government media, and media – Nigerians are pointing from point ends.

Certainly, the government whose *raison d'être* is to serve the general interest of Nigerians should initiate programmes that can eradicate poverty in Nigeria. Currently, the poverty rate in Nigeria is 70% (National Bureau of Statistics 2010). This which means, 70% of Nigerians cannot afford a three – square meal per day! This is not good for a country like Nigeria which is blessed with abundant natural and human resources. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (2014) in its Global Hunger Index (GHI) grouped Nigeria among countries with a high level of hunger threat, with an index of 14.7 compared to

Ghana's 7.8. The report notes that higher index scores indicate higher level of hunger threat in rated countries. The report further placed the level of hunger threat in Nigeria as "serious" while that of Ghana was described as moderate. The question is – what happened to the N720 billion earmarked for food sufficiency programme by the Federal government in 2013? Poor implementation. Poverty is not limited to material things alone, but the interest of this study is on the welfare of Nigerians. The media can liaise with the government so as to fight poverty. A situation where a vast majority of people are in abject poverty and government and its cronies gather to raise a whopping ₦21.27 billion for campaign does not portray seriousness. The people's Democratic Party (PDP) had on 20th December 2014 organized a fund raising where the said amount (₦21.27 billion) was realized. This was editorialized in the *Punch* (2014) as 'Impunity taken too far' The newspaper cited relevant extant laws such as the Federal Republic of

Nigeria 1999 Constitution which states in Section 221 clearly: “No association, other than a political party, shall canvass for votes for any candidate at any election or contribute to the funds of any political party or to the election expenses of any candidate at an election.” The Federal Government of Nigeria Companies and Allied Matters Act (1990) also expressly forbids companies in Section 38 (2) from funding or donating gifts, property or money to any political party or association. Then Federal Government of Nigeria Electoral Act (2010), as amended, specifies in Section 91 (2) that the maximum election expenses to be incurred by a candidate at a presidential election shall be N1 billion. Commenting further, the Punch (2014, para 2&3) writes;

But Jonathan, the ruling PDP and its 21 state governors took lawlessness to a new height on Saturday when one Tunde Ayeni, leading other donors, gave N2 billion on behalf of himself and his unnamed “partner” and “friends.” Jerry Gana, a permanent fixture in successive governments, announced N5 billion on behalf of his equally mysterious friends and “associates in the power sector.” Not to be outdone, oil and gas sector “friends” also pledged N5 billion; real estate and building sector, N4 billion; transport and aviation sector, N1 billion; food and agriculture, N500 million; power, N500 million; construction, N310 million; road construction, N250 million; National Automotive Association, N450 million; and Shelter Development Limited, N250 million.

The assertion above captures the root in Nigeria’s government circle as people display ‘generosity’ in a manner that makes mockery of the word in its real sense.

The next one is corruption. Corruption has permeated almost all facets of the Nigerian society – schools, family, market, government public service, civil service, etc. The

government of Nigeria in a bid to stem the tide, set up anti-graft agencies like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC). The role of the media here is to investigate corrupt tendencies and report to Nigerians and the general public. The media must continue to set agenda on corruption related cases. A study conducted by Asemah and Asogwa (2012) in which survey research design was used, focus group discussion was held with thirty journalists from both the print and electronic media in Jos, Plateau state, Nigeria. The result reveals that investigative Journalism plays a central role in the fight against corruption by way of exposing corrupt practices for onward punishments. Eradicating corruption is an important component of safe Nigeria model otherwise, even the money earmarked for the safe school initiative will be siphoned. Commenting on the negative impact of corruption, Transparency International writes (2014, p.2) writes

From children denied an education, to elections decided by money not votes, public sector corruption comes in many forms. Bribes and backroom deals don’t just steal resources from the most vulnerable, they undermine justice and economic development, and destroy public trust in leaders

A survey conducted by the Transparency International (2014) in which 177 countries were studied to determine their level of corruption perception index, Nigeria was ranked 144 and scored 25. According to the international body, a score of less than 50 out of 100 signified serious corruption problems while countries whose scores were between 20-29 were classified as highly corrupt countries and Nigeria’s dismal 25 score falls into this category!

It is on record that unemployment rate keeps increasing in Nigeria. The media must, through advocacy report, urge the

government (set agenda on it) to create employment opportunities for the teeming unemployed graduates in Nigeria to save the nation the disaster of criminal elements engaging these jobless Nigerians. Duze cited in Temple (2014, p.18) captures the joblessness in Nigeria thus:

In Nigeria today, school leavers including university graduates in their millions, roam the streets searching for non-existing collar jobs. It has become increasingly difficult for school leavers from all levels and types of education (including vocational/technical/business education graduates) to transit from school to wage earning employment as hundreds of thousands of them are turned into the labour market at the end of every academic session, without a corresponding rise in paid jobs. It is no longer like the oil boom years of the seventies and eighties when automatic transition from school to employment was the case. Employers of labour (private and public), now shortlist only first class and second class (upper) honours degree graduates for possible employment. Only a handful of Nigerian graduates fall into these two categories

Similarly, qualitative and affordable education for all Nigerians is a sin qua for a safe Nigeria. The continuous and indiscriminate school fees increment in Nigerian schools is capable of sending children of the poor out of school. Primary education in Nigeria is in a sorry state. The structures are dilapidated, near absence of seats, teachers are poorly motivated and a combination of these factors is already affecting the performances of Nigerian students in public examination. An evaluation of the previous performances of students in secondary schools indicates that in 2005, only 25.53 percent obtained up to five credits in core subjects and the figure went down to 15.56 percent in 2006. 25.54 percent scaled the line with a sharp drop down to 13.78 percent in 2008 with a slight improvement to 25.99

percent in 2009. But the figure down to 20.04 percent in 2010 (Sam 2011 and Olorundare 2011). The situation has continued unabated as evidenced in the 2014 November/December result released by West the African Examination Council which indicates that out of the 246,853 candidates that sat for the examination only 72,522 candidates representing 29.37 percent obtained credits in five subjects including English and mathematics. This connotes that 70.63 percent failed (Ameh 2014). The media must continue to set agenda on the need for qualitative and affordable education for all Nigerians with a view to making the government give the issue top priority attention.

Furthermore, the need for a free and fair election through electoral reform is long overdue. You can hardly have an accountable and responsible government whose process that led to her emergency is faulty. Nigeria needs electoral reform than most people imagine. Iwu (2009, p.8) writes:

The need for reform in the Nigerian society is much more comprehensive than is being discussed today. There is once a very urgent need for reform of the mentality of the political and leadership elite. Reforms in their most meaningful character are not isolated but compound packages.

Which ever reform, mentally, socially, politically, etc, the media must continue to champion the course so that elections result in Nigeria will produce the will of the people of Nigeria. Attitudinal change among Nigerians through value – orientation is a necessity. Nigeria, just like any other country has it values that must be respected at all times for all and sundry. For example, the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) outlines the national ethics in section 23 thus “The national ethics shall be discipline, integrity, dignity of labour, social

justices, religious tolerance self – reliance and patriotism.” This quickly raises a poser – are these ethics so valued by Nigerians through their actions and inactions? How many people are even aware of the existence of the ethics? The media owns it a duty reorient the masses on them so as to promote public decency.

The defense structure of a country is a paramount factor that determines whether such a country can effectively handle both external and internal threat. A reliable defense structure takes into account continuous training and retraining of personnel, up to date and adequate equipment, motivation of personnel and their general welfare. Can this be said of Nigeria? The government and the media must work hand in hand to achieve this. Communal clashes and militancy have at different point occurred and are still occurring in Nigeria. The herdsmen/farmers conflict is just one out of many. Jos communal clashes, the Niger Delta militancy are threats to the corporate existence of Nigeria. The media can help in preventing these conflicts through its surveillance function (Gever 2014). A study conducted by Gever (2014b) shows that the challenges that prevent the media from effectively building peace between herdsmen and farmers are poor rural-urban road network, language barrier to communicate with farmers and herdsmen, lack of mobility and poor incentive. The government can collaborate with the media so as to avoid such conflicts.

Insurgency is gradually becoming Nigeria’s baptism name with casualty as the confirmation name. It is the belief of this study that other components discussed earlier, if well addressed, the issue of insurgency will be a forgone conclusion. The federal government of Nigeria must, henceforth, plan for insurgency in Nigeria. It should not be a fire brigade approach as it is the case today. The media in Nigeria must however, be strong components of the plan. The media

must always communicate with the government and masses, known in this model as Nigerians.

CONCLUSION

The safe school initiative which aim is to secure Nigerian schools may be a good project, however, it is questionable, if not impossible to have safe schools in a war zone. This study advocates for a safe Nigeria model that will take into account all those factors that breed insurgency. It is the position of the paper that the mass media of communication occupy a strategic position in a bid to win the war against terror.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the result of this study, the role of the media in the reign of insurgency should be as follows

1. Creating awareness on insurgency with a view to promoting a sense of alertness among the general public.
2. Public education on the operation of insurgents. This will make the citizens less vulnerable to avoidable danger.
3. Collaboration with security agencies and providing security tips.
4. Serve the environment and providing warning signals to the general public where necessary.
5. Planning and executing investigative journalism endeavor with a view to making public hiding important facts on the insurgents. Example, their sponsors, sources of weapons, level of operation, members, strong hold, leaders, etc.
6. Consistently reporting the insurgency in a manner that condemns it and not glorifying it.
7. Where necessary, reminding the government on its constitutional responsibility of protecting lives and properties. The media can do this through commentaries, editorial and interpretative reporting.

8. In reporting insurgency, the media must be factual and crosscheck all facts before making them public. This is because, false and unprofessional reports are even more dangerous than the insurgents.
9. Extra-care must be taken in casting headlines. For example, headlines like "War drum," "200 Igbos killed in the north", "Igbos plan retaliation of the killing of their relative" "20 Christians killed in another bomb blast" "Muslim suicide bomber attacks church" et al should be avoided.
10. The media must report insurgency as a national disaster and not a regional one. Regionalizing insurgency has the possibility of dividing the country.
11. Discouraging stereotyping. It behooves the media to try as much as possible to avoid stereotyping of insurgency on the bases of religion, tribe etc. It is a fact that that Boko Haram insurgency has become a dent on Islamic religion, however, the media have to educate the public in this regard that not all Muslims are terrorists and not all terrorists are Muslims.

Policy Implication

For the media effectively play its role as situated by the safe Nigeria model, the

following recommendations have been made for policy makers

1. The government should review existing press laws such as the law of sedition, official secret acts and defamation so as to accommodate new demands.
2. There is the need for the government to enact an act of parliament mandating all media stations in Nigeria to dedicate 60% of their effort in the fight against the insurgency.
3. The media and security operatives should form a formidable synergy in the area of public enlightenment.
4. Media owners (both public and private) should provide a conducive working environment for journalists to operate. This should include proper remuneration and other incentives.
5. Journalists should be professional in their reportage of insurgency in Nigeria. They should uphold the edicts of the profession.

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