



Research Article

Insurgency in the North East of Nigeria: Youth Unemployment in Focus

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Introduction

Since independence, Nigeria has been witnessing uneven development.

While the southern geopolitical region peopled by the divers tribes in the South- South, South- West, and the South East have laid premium on education, the north has been lagging behind in respect.

Other demographic indices have not spoken favorably about the north. There is large illiteracy rate, high population growth, large drug abuse, large violent, large youth unemployment and a gullible religious followership. It is therefore not surprising that fanatical religious leaders found ready hands in unemployed and unemployable youths and this is an indicator of a great threat ahead if not well managed.

The Boko Haram insurgency in the north east Nigeria started in 2009.

Recent statistics from multi- sectorial assessments reveal that in 2017, 14 million civilians were seriously affected by the conflict and suffer from instable livelihoods.

In responding to the insurgency in the North East, the government of Nigeria declared state of emergency and mobilized military to safeguard the areas which helped to root out the Boko Haram insurgent area.

Investigation has shown that some of the youths being trained by UNDP arrive the venues armed with dangerous weapons and charms. Their disposition shows stubbornness and radicalization. Some have got so used to war and violence associated with it, that they need De-radicalization and psychological reorientation.

The involvement of these youths in Civilian Joint Task Forces has exposed them to use of force and firearms, which will adversely affect the reintegration in post-conflict civil life in their communities. They would need reduction and debriefing. Besides, as indicated earlier, there grave likelihood of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that is accompanying the vagaries of a 9-year war.

No thanks to destruction of homes, investments, schools and socio-economic infrastructures, the minds of these impressionable youths may be

oriented to revenge, anger at government for not protecting them and their future. They would need healing to stop a new cycle of violence.

Northern youths are also fingered to be involved sexual assaults like rape, pedophilia and homosexuality, all of which are criminal offence in Nigeria.

Some are used in trans-border smuggling activities.

I submit that virtue, not crime should catch them young.

Kaduna State Governor, Malam Nasiru El-Rufai, on Saturday July 7, 2019 described the Northern part of Nigeria as backward, uneducated and unhealthy.

“We have to speak the truth to ourselves and ask why it is that northern Nigeria has development indicators similar to Afghanistan, a country still at war? “We have the largest number of poor people in the world, most of them in northern Nigeria. Nigeria also has the largest number of out of school children, virtually all of them in Northern Nigeria. “Northern Nigeria has become the Centre of drug abuse, gender violence, banditry, kidnapping and terrorism. We have also been associated with high divorce rate and breakdown of families. These are the challenges that confront us. This is the naked truth that we have to tell ourselves. “We must therefore, as leaders at all levels, have conversation about the way forward for our part of the country.

(Legit Nigeria, premium times)

Innovative Approach

One approach to reduce this is a robust planning, counselling sessions, and engagement in sporting activities.

Government should enforce compulsory basic education. Revolutionize Almajiri system by paying the Islamic teachers so that the young boys are not sent to streets. Reducing their exposure to drugs like codeine, Tramadol etc.

If given the chance, I will stimulate more sensitization and advocacy to traditional rulers in the north east to encourage youth education,

STOP girl child marriage, and systematic desensitization against drug abuse.

I would advocate that genuine and visible reconstruction efforts be embarked upon by government, supported by development partners and the global communities.

I will also advocate for multi sectorial approach to youth empowerment, involving government, civil society groups, development partners and global community.

Put in the empowerment. Issues of skill acquisition in fields of carpentry, welding and fabrication, air conditioning and refrigeration, as well as shoe making, bricklaying and phone repairs are popular among the youths in Nigeria.

Through multisectoral approach, such skills could be imparted, and they will reduce the vulnerability of the youths to crime and criminality.

References

Legit Nigeria, premium times- Saturday July 7, 2019.