

Technical Education as a Tool for Curbing Terrorism in Nigeria

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Abstract

Terrorism is a global challenge that needs to be tackled headlong. Nigeria as a nation has had its fair share of this challenge and its attendant consequences negatively affect economic development and stability in the country. Various security and intelligence means have been put in place in Nigeria towards tackling this challenge. However, the incidence of terrorism acts seems to be escalating. This paper advocates the role of technical education in curbing this ugly challenge. The concepts of terrorism and technical education were presented. The paper also highlighted the importance of technical education and how it can be used to curb terrorism in Nigeria. Therefore, to adequately curb terrorism in Nigeria, it was recommended that Nigeria as a nation must think technical education, talk technical education, trust technical education, try technical education, tap technical education and make technical education a Nigerian way of life.

Introduction

The term terrorism emanates from a Latin word "terrere", meaning "to frighten". It is the use of violent acts to frighten people in an area as a way of trying to achieve a particular goal. It connotes unlawful use of violence or threat of violence to instill fear and intimidation on government and societies towards achieving a predetermined aim. Terrorism has been diversely defined by various individuals and organizations. For instance, Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism (1998) defines terrorism as any act or threat of violence, whatever its motives or purposes, that occurs in the advancement of an individual or collective criminal agenda and seeking to sow panic among people, causing fear by harming them, or to publically placing their lives, liberty or security in danger, or seeking to cause damage to the environment or private installations or property or to occupying or seizing them, or seeking to jeopardize national resources. United Nations Security Council (2005) on the other hand defines terrorism as any act intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act. Generally, terrorism may be seen as the aggression unjustly carried out by individuals, groups or states against human beings. It includes forms of unjustly terrifying, harming, threatening, and killing of people and banditry. It also includes any violent act or threat carried out as part of individual or collective criminal plan aimed at terrifying or harming people or endangering their lives, freedom or security.

Furthermore, Nacos (2005) stated that terrorism is the use or the threat of the use of violence, a method of combat, or a strategy to achieve certain targets. It aims to induce a state of fear in the victim, which is ruthless and does not conform to humanitarian rules. Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by individual, or group for ideological, criminal, or political reasons. In a nutshell, it is the use of violence against random civilian targets in order to intimidate or to create generalized pervasive fear for the purpose of achieving political goals. For this article terrorism is the use of violence to physically and psychologically terrorize a population of people by an individual or a group in order to draw attention to a cause, enact political change, or gain political power. Hence, terrorism is the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear for bringing about political change. All terrorist acts involve physical acts of violence or the threat of violence and crime. These violent acts are committed by members of the terrorist group. Terrorist acts involve unlawful killings, bombing, threat of attack,

kidnapping, rape, destruction of property, armed robbery, insurgency, rebellion, among other criminal vices. The weapons used by terrorists in the various types of terrorism basically include bombs, firearms, chemical and biological weapons, and several forms of information and communication technology devices. Terrorism did not gain global popularity until September 11, 2001, when a terrorist attack was carried out on USA.

Types of Terrorism

Based on research data and empirical evidence by Nick, David and Irving (2013), the various types of terrorism among others include:

1. **Domestic terrorism:** This is a type of terrorism carried out by residents of a country within that country.
2. **International terrorism:** it is carried out by representatives of a country against another country.
3. **Non-state terrorism:** it is carried out by extremists and revolutionist for their own sake
4. **State-sponsored terrorism:** carried out by a government against its own people or in support of international terrorism against another government
5. **Internecine:** this is a conflict that spills over into another country or fought on foreign soil
6. **Religious terrorism:** is the type of terrorism motivated by religious ideologies and grievances. Religious terrorism is particularly dangerous due to the fanaticism of those who practice it and their willingness to sacrifice themselves for the cause
7. **Right wing terrorism:** is the type that aims to combat liberal governments and preserve traditional social orders. Right Wing terrorism is commonly characterized by militias and gangs; many times these groups are racially motivated and aim to marginalize minorities within a country.
8. **Left wing terrorism:** is the type of terrorism where the terrorist groups seek to overthrow capitalist democracies and establish socialist or communist governments in their place.
9. **Separatist terrorism:** is the type of terrorism that seeks to cause fragmentation within a country and establishment a new country. This type of terrorism is typical of minorities within a country that desire their own, commonly due to discrimination from the majority group.
10. **Cyber terrorism:** it involves the use of information and communication technology devices such as computers, internet devices, wired devices and wireless devices communication devices to hack into an organization data base, corrupt computer data files with the aid of virus and other criminal activity that has often combined destruction of property with financial crime, posting false information, propaganda, economic warfare and possibly physical harm to innocent human lives.

Brief History of Terrorism in Nigeria

Though Nigeria has remained a relatively peaceful and terror free country between 1967 and 1970, Obene (2012) argues that the killing of Mr. Dele Giwa, by a 'Letter Bomb' in October 1986 marked the beginning of violent killing and use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in Nigeria. Subsequently, the Movement for the Advancement of Democracy hijacked a Nigeria Airways aircraft in October 1993 following the annulment of Chief M.K.O. Abiola's presidential election. After this, a vicious bomb blast ripped Shed 6 of Ilorin Stadium in August 1994.

Several other incidents have occurred since then. For instance between 1996 and 1998 there was bomb attack on the car of the then Chief Security Officer of Federal Aviation Authority of Nigeria, Dr. Omoshola. Subsequently, the escort car of the former Military Administrator of Lagos State, Brig Gen M.B Marwa (Rtd) was attacked.

Other notable acts of terrorism in Nigeria can be summarized as follows:

- i. General sectarian violence in Jos (2004, 2010, and 2011).
- ii. Series of bombings and killings in Maiduguri (since 2004 to date).
- iii. The 2010 New Year's Eve bombing of Mogadishu Military Cantonment Mammy Market Abuja.
- iv. The 1st October 2010 bombing in Abuja that disorganized the marking of Nigeria's 50th Independence Anniversary.
- v. The Mammy Market bombings in Bauchi, and Zuba near Abuja in 2011.
- vi. Post-April 2011 Presidential Election violence in the Northern parts of Nigeria.
- vii. April 8, 2011 INEC office Suleja bombing
- viii. May 29, 2011 bombing of social drinking sports in Maiduguri and Zuba an outskirts of Abuja.
- ix. June 16, 2011 Nigeria Police Force Headquarters bombing in Abuja.
- x. August 26, 2011 bombing of UN House in Abuja.
- xi. Nov 4, 2011 bombing of Army Task Force Operational, Police Headquarters and other government buildings in Damaturu, Yobe State and Maiduguri in Borno State.
- xii. Christmas day bombing at St Theresa Catholic Church in Madalla near Abuja (25th December, 2011).
- xiii. Mubi, Yola, Gombe and Maiduguri bombings (5th-6th January, 2012).
- xiv. Kano bombings (20th January and 1st February, 2012).
- xv. Headquarters of 1 Division Nigerian Army and Kawo bridge bombings in Kaduna (7th February 2012).
- xvi. Nyanya Motor Park bombing on Monday, April 14, 2014.
- xvii. Kidnapping of over 200 school girls in Chibok, Borno State on Monday, April 14, 2014. And many more.

Causes and Effects of Terrorism

Based on an extensive examination of journal articles and books on terrorism written by various experts on the matter, the causes of terrorism are: unemployment, underemployment, poverty, ignorance, corruption, religious fanaticism, oppression, historical grievances, violation of international law, hatred for world powers, social and political injustice, financial gain, racism, guilt by associations, supporting sympathizers, mortality silence, and failure of conventional channel of expression, communication and publicity. However, research data revealed that the major cause of terrorism in Nigeria is unemployment, poverty and corruption (Linus, 2012). This is true because a high percentage of Nigerian youth are unemployed. These desperate unemployed youths most of which are graduates from various tertiary institutions in a bid to survive becomes a tool for terrorist groups to use to perpetrate evil. The activities of terrorist in any part of the world may lead to the following: (1) Public insecurity (2) Livelihood crisis (3) Human right abuses (4) Population displacement and refugee debacle and (5) Human casualties/fatalities. Since it has been shown that unemployment is a major cause of terrorism in Nigeria, this challenge may therefore be tackled with the use of technical education.

Concept of Technical Education

Technical education is the type of education that leads to the development of skills and knowledge to be applied in practical situations. It is the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for a place in the workforce (Foks, 1990). It is education that prepares and qualifies the learner for work in a trade or other technical skill-based jobs. The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) (2004) in her National policy on education defined Vocational Technical education as a term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. The concept of technical education is further elaborated as

It is:

- i. An integral part of general education,
- ii. a means of preparing for occupational fields and for effective participation in world of work
- iii. an aspect of lifelong learning and a preparation for responsible citizenships,
- iv. an instrument for promoting environmentally sound sustainable development,
- v. And a method of alleviating poverty.

Technical education is designed to provide technological skills and prepare individuals for gainful employment as skilled or semi-skilled worker in a recognized occupation such that such individuals could be self-reliant. Technical Education has also been described as an integral part of national development strategies in many societies because of its impact on productivity and economic development. It therefore gives individuals the skills to live, learn and work as productive citizen in various occupational areas in the society. One cardinal philosophy of technical education is to ensure human dignity by enabling individuals acquire skills necessary for securing and holding employment for a decent living.

Such occupational areas include agricultural education, business educations, computer education, fine and applied arts education, home economics education, trades occupation, industrial technical education, and industrial technology education among others. The basic areas of specializations under industrial technology education usually include: automobile technology, building technology, electrical electronics technology, metal work technology and woodwork technology. It includes sub professional training and retraining offered at technical colleges and trade centres to prepare individuals for gainful employment and for progress in advanced technical or professional occupations. In addition to these, there are also other lifelong learning opportunities available for acquiring technical knowledge and skills through technical education.

Importance of Technical Education in Economic and Technological Development

My research findings revealed that many developed countries of the world have recognized the great importance attached to Technical education and have therefore accorded it the attention it deserves. They have regarded Technical education as the basis of industrial and technological advancement. They saw Technical education as a means to job creation, poverty reduction and technological development. Several countries that have breakthrough in the technological world today are those that have placed more emphasis and invested substantially on Technical education and have proper planning and reasonable policy. The United States of America in recognition of the importance of Technical education established public technical secondary schools that introduced extensive public instruction in agriculture, while the Dutch school system provided technical education for one-third of its pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 years.

Dutch provided Technical training centers in secondary or high schools offering technical training for lifelong trade together with general academic studies. India and Asia have invested heavily in technical education and the benefits are very glaring with a great impact on their technological and economic development. In the past decade they have shifted to information and communication technology. These countries that have developed their Technical education have been described as being secured economically. In addition, they have also been able to produce productive entrepreneurs. As a matter of fact, some of the so-called expatriate professionals who are now highly rated in Nigeria are products of the technical and vocational training centers of these countries and not necessarily university graduates.

How to Use Technical Education as Tool for Curbing Terrorism in Nigeria

Having established that a large percentage of Nigerian youths are unemployed and have often been the ready tool in the hand of unscrupulous individuals or group to perpetuate a state of insecurity in the nation, and that technical education is a more effective tool in the hand of government to curb the problems of underdevelopment and terrorism, it is important to consider how we can adopt technical education in Nigeria and use it effectively. Furthermore, many individuals view the root cause of terrorism especially the domestic terrorism on youth unemployment, poverty, and idleness, as it is said that unemployment brings about idleness, idleness brings about evil, and an evil mind will surely lead to terrorism. This scourge could be avoided or addressed through technical education. This could be achieved by engaging or providing the youths with technical skills needed for self-employment thereby alleviating poverty and subsequently eliminating terrorism.

Technical education can be used to curb terrorism in the following way

- i. Organizing saleable skill acquisition training programme for the youths where each of them will be equipped with a vocational skill in a particular field. This should not only be limited to technical fields, it should extend to agriculture, textile among others.
- ii. Provide them with machines and equipment at the end of the training programme
- iii. Provide them with all the necessary incentives to start up their own business
- iv. Carry out periodic supervision on them to ensure continuity

Once this is properly done, individuals will be fully engaged and there will be no time for idleness as it is said that an idle mind is a devil's workshop. It is worthy of note that it will be very difficult to convince an individual who is having a decent job to leave his job and be engaged in a dirty work such as terrorism. Hence, the need to create job opportunities for our youths through technical education towards curbing terrorism in Nigeria. Apart from using technical education to equip individuals with job skills for employment, technical education can be used to curb terrorism when the military, paramilitary and other security agents undergo:

1. Massive technical training in the use of various information and communication technology devices for information sharing and tracking communication links.
2. Massive technical training and retraining in the use of remote sensing devices, mapping and imagery surveying techniques to view objects from a very far distance and altitude.
3. Technical training in the use of cutting-edge technologies to detect, disrupt and pursue terrorists.
4. Technical training in bomb detection and deactivation.
5. Technical training to develop their capacity in information technology needed for surveillance, intelligence gathering and information processing and interpretation.
6. Technical training in the use of technological gadgets such as surveillance cameras, social network analysis, biometric surveillance, data mining and profiling, corporate surveillance, satellite imagery, among others to monitor data and traffic, such as phone calls and broadband internet traffic.
7. Technical training in the use of closed circuit television (CCTV) and to analyze closed circuit television (CCTV) images and spot aggressive human behavior.

Challenges to Effective Technical Education in Nigeria

Technical education in Nigeria has gone through a series of problems; from the humble beginning it was perceived wrongly as the education for the drop-outs or those who could not cope with academic rigor in the formal schools setting but had to be sent to trade centers. This has led to the slow progress from the earliest times till date. Technical education has been neglected over the years until recent time when the national policy on education (FGN, 2004) gave some clarification on its objectives with respect to entire education system. As laudable as these policies seem, they are yet to adequately fulfill the original goals of technical education in Nigeria. The consequences are steering at our nation more than ever before particularly with regards to youth employment and its implications on our national security.

A lot of problems are facing technical education as well as continuing misperception of the technical education programme especially by the policy makers and the generality of Nigerians, improperly planned government policies on technical education as well as lack of follow up of implemented policies, inadequate funding, poor incentives for technical education teachers at all levels, inadequate and obsolete training facilities, inadequate skilled manpower, irrelevant or inappropriate curricular of technical education and inadequate training institutions as well as non-technical approach of available institution offering technical courses. In view of these identified problems, there is an urgent need to reform technical education in Nigeria in the face of security challenges. At this junction, I strongly recommend that the various governments and stakeholders should make concerted effort to adopt technical education as a tool for curbing terrorism in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendation

It has been established that terrorism is a big challenge which can be tackled by technical education and training. This is because one of the major causes of terrorism is unemployment and it has been shown that technical education is about training for skill acquisition necessary for employment. Hence, technical education is the right tool for curbing terrorism in Nigeria. Attempt has been made to open up a channel of interaction among all stakeholders on the need to embrace Technical education as a veritable tool for curbing terrorism in our country Nigeria. All stakeholders must live up to the challenges of the situation highlighted in this paper by collaborating together with appropriate government agencies in the design and implementation of appropriate programmes geared towards ensuring sound and functional Technical education which is the foundation for technological development and economic advancement. Therefore to curb terrorism in Nigeria, it is recommended that the nation must think technical education; talk technical education, trust technical education, try technical education and tap technical education. In fact we must make technical education a Nigerian way of life.

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