



The role of History Education in mitigating insecurity and COVID-19 challenges in Nigeria

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Abstract: History being the queen or mother of all courses especially in art and social sciences is always ready to offer a helping hand in solving difficult riddles and paradoxes bedeviling humanity such as insecurity, Covid 19 and all forms of pandemics notwithstanding! This study has as much as possible diagnosed the roles History education can play in mitigating insecurity and COVID-19 challenges in Nigeria by adopting survey research design where questionnaires were used in sampling opinions. Consequently, threat to food security, lost of lives, hunger and displacement of people are some of the discovered effects of insecurity. Meanwhile, unemployment, lack of good education, poverty etc were identified as some of the causes. However, strict adherence to government's directives on constant hand washing, use of face mask, social distancing, provision of jobs, security of people's lives and properties etc were recommended as possible solutions to the challenges of Covid 19 and insecurity.

Key terms; History Education, Insecurity, Covid 19.

Introduction

Human history is enveloped by tales of struggles, disasters, conflicts and violence. In any human relationship throughout history, conflict which is the root of insecurity is not just inevitable, sacrosanct but a necessity of societal existence. Because of its significance in reconstruction and reorganization of people's values, cultures, creeds etc, history as a vehicle brings the past to present and does everything possible to avoid the mistakes of the past while ensuring the fostering of a sustainable future. History, like the rock of Gibraltar has always been there to get the past records and accounts of events shrouded beneath the "five W" questions of, Who? What? When? Why? Where? And it stands tall to proffer solutions to challenges these questions may presents. The escalation of rampant cases or outbreaks of diseases or pandemics such as Ebola, HIV/Aids and especially the



brand novel Corona Virus and other forms of tragedies caused by pathogens, violence, wars, conflicts and more importantly insecurity are areas history refused to close her eyes to or sheer away from. Thus, as an information discipline, history always captures, records, stores and retrieves them all from initial stage, ab initio to the zenith whenever required.

In Nigeria today, the alarming rate of banditry, frequent cases of kidnappings, armed robbery, insurgency and acts of merciless terrorism have all metamorphosed into a total eclipse of insecurity ravaging across the length and breadth of the country from Abia to Zamfara (A-Z) rendering all forms of socioeconomic activities difficult and near impossible; the educational and agricultural sectors receiving the heaviest blow by an invincible sledge hammer due to the ugly menace. The ongoing cases of insecurity and the upsurge in violent attacks witnessed over the past year 2019-2020 in the country have deepened humanitarian needs. The Covid-19 pandemic further exacerbates the situation and risks, wreaking havoc on the most vulnerable population.

Security is peoples' relative feeling of being secured from economic, political, social, cultural and psychological fear. Insecurity is peoples' relative feeling of the presence of economic, political, social, cultural and psychological fear. Of these forms of insecurity, the one that is most common and triggers consciousness of other forms of insecurity is economic insecurity. Economic insecurity spawned other forms of insecurity into existence. In simple terms, economic insecurity is the absence of jobs, basic health care, accessible drinking water, education, life enhancing opportunities and creative policies that cater for short, medium and long term needs of the different cadre of the population. It is the absence of basic economic and social infrastructure that would avail citizens the opportunity to cater for their own welfare. The non-provision of these has created conditions of political, cultural and psychological exclusion detrimental to security (Booth, 2007).

For instance, in three most vulnerable states of the north eastern Nigeria, Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states, the food security situation has been worsening over the past three years, with about an additional million people facing food insecurity every year, since March 2020, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns interrupted food distributions in some Borno State Local Government Areas (LGAs) where populations are already in 'emergency' phase and one step away from 'famine'. With movement restrictions, supply chain disruptions and a steep increase in the food survival minimum expenditure basket, up to 4.3 million people could now be facing hunger, (Nigeria INGO forum, 2020). In general, hardly a day passes in Nigeria today without reports of violent attacks by unknown gunmen across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. Security personnel especially the police



and soldiers are fast becoming major targets losing their lives daily. Sensitive public structures such as courts, police stations, schools and prison yards are constantly being destroyed or raised down by fire through arson, internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps are springing up and the camps themselves are not secured, safe or spared. Everybody lives in a dare state of fear, fear of the unknown which may strike at any jiffy due to acts of banditry, kidnappings, insurgency etc, (Booth, 2007).

It is in the light of the above background that this paper intends to discuss/examine the role of history education in mitigating insecurity and Covid 19 challenges in Nigeria. Specifically, the paper was designed to x-ray;

1. The role history can play in redressing insecurity and Covid-19 pandemic
2. The historical approaches and lessons adopted by past generations in solving life threatening challenges
3. The impacts of stimulus packages and relief materials on cushioning the effects of Covid 19 and insecurity

Place of history education in mitigating challenges of humanity

As a society we cannot sheer away from how we used to live, history has it that we used to live a mutual life of cooperation, conciliation and reconciliation. In case of any differences, we used to address, iron out and resolved our differences amicably using age long historically laid down traditions, customs, creeds and moral beliefs. Following this trend, the rampant herder/farmer incessant and protracted crisis causing total insecurity, impunity and total breakdown of law and order was absent or curtailed to bearable minimum. Take turbulent places like Benue state of today as example, then, an average Fulani herder was a friend to a Tiv farmer, the popular word Munchi (we've eaten) is used to express free eating or killing of a Fulani cow by Tiv in the spirit of friendship and brotherhood. The government approved cattle routes were strictly maintained and respected by both parties. No Fulani would carelessly, negligently or deliberately trespass into a farmer's farm, consequently the rate of insecurity then was very low and moderately calm, allowing absolute peace in the horizon for all, leading to robust and bumper harvests and availability of uncountable head of cows to herders. The people lived peacefully with one another in tolerance without any form of feud, ill feeling, vengeance or segregation against one another. Of course; they were only emulating or following the footsteps of their forefathers; how they lived in such places as they were orally told from the historical facts collected by their past generations.

Throughout the history of human race and existence from prehistoric period cutting across all the stages of historical evolution of man, the world had experienced one plague or the other and successfully devised cures to such



pandemics. Diseases of larger or lesser frequencies like pandemics and the epidemics have always been a part of the human history, thus, the same remedies or therapies used in treating or overcoming such diseases learnt through the books of history some of whose symptoms were closely related or similar to covid-19 should be reproduced to combat the international infectious plague. It should be noted that the solution to every societal problem is rooted in the history of the people. Thus, it does appear that the headache of earlier generation is still the headaches of today's possibly with slight differences. This brings to the fore the idea of lessons of history which points that; history is the sense and memory of a nation. (Odeh, 2020). Though some historians scarcely agree with the idea that history teaches lessons or repeats itself, (Odeh, 2018). But it serves as a teacher for the future, because the rhythm of its changes may repeat itself in the sense that similar antecedents is bound to produce similar consequences. Collingwood as cited in Odeh, casts light on this. Thus: History has a value; its teachings are useful for human life; simply because the rhythms of its changes is likely to repeat itself, similar antecedents leading to similar consequences; the history of notable events is worth remembering in order to serve as a basis for prognostic judgments, not demonstrable but probable, laying down not what will happen but what will likely to happen, indicating the points of danger in rhythms now going on. (Odeh, 2018).

Furthermore, as the past, present and future projecting lens, history tries as much as possible to diagnose peoples, issues and other events source backgrounds. the popular adage, charity begins from home is an image assessment adage that gives ones background story based on one's family history, meaning you are addressed the way you dress, you are rated or evaluated according to your family background; pedigree, traits, composure, origin and history, hence, so many bandits, terrorist and other group of criminals are assumed to have succeeded or inherited their bad blood/ habits from the effects of bad home training or upbringing, consequently making them more or less products of bad history. Thus, knowing or learning, understanding or studying the histories of such undesirable elements can help in distancing the new generation from engaging in image denting activities such as the ones done by such criminals, making history a hero in guiding, navigating and showing humanity the path of good conscience, posterity and righteousness.

Relevance of history learning in curbing social challenges

History lessons allow people to appreciate various aspects of their heritage. History can inculcate in people a reverence for their past and thereby developing a sense of belonging to the nation. Learning history helps to develop in our younger generation good social and moral values which are so vital in a multi-tribal society



like Nigeria. Understanding the contributions of historical personalities and significant historical events will help to inculcate values such as loyalty, perseverance, propriety, people's welfare, religious toleration and harmony. History allows us also to learn and appreciate the nature of other societies, our cultures and politics. History makes us recognize the fact that the way people see and judge things is conditioned by the society within which they live.

To foster national feelings: An important objective of learning history is the emotional and national integration of Nigerians. Emotional integration is a feeling of oneness among the people of different cultures, religions, regions and languages. It is the sharing of certain common objectives, ideals and purposes and giving them high place over smaller and sectional loyalties. History can play a very important role in realizing this aim. To help resolve our contemporary social and individual problems: History helps in resolving our contemporary social and individual problems and developing mature judgments on immediate social issues, trends and prospects in the field of commerce, industry, international affairs, regional politics and other aspects of the contemporary society.

History teaches tolerance- tolerance with different faiths, different loyalties, different cultures, different ideas and ideals. For a society bedeviled by ethno-religious crises, regionalism etc learning the virtues of tolerance is golden. Thus, in turbulent times such as now, Nigeria as a country should as a matter of urgency, deeply fall in love and engage in an outright romance with history because it remains one of the few options opened to her in checking or ironing out her myriad of socioeconomic challenges especially in the mist of Covid -19 pandemic and insecurity challenges. The popular saying that experience is a good teacher is no doubt referring to history as the best teacher, because experience of today is definitely going to be the history of tomorrow!

COVID-19 and Nigerian economy/food security

In 2020, Nigerian economy was inevitably heading towards a recession and could contract by as much as 3.6 percent. The Federal Government has been proactive in introducing several measures to stem the adverse effects on the economy including the ₦15B to support the national COVID-19 response unit otherwise Presidential Task Force (PTF) and the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) as well as economic stimulus and social protection packages for its most vulnerable populations such as the People with Disabilities (PWD), IDPs etc. Additional public expenditure in terms of a possible fiscal stimulus and expenses related to fighting the Corona virus could overshoot expenditure targets by at least 20 percent resulting in a sharp increase in the budget deficit from the original



estimate of 1.5 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to 8.3 percent in 2020. While the lockdown will not stop the virus, it is a welcomed act of balancing non pharmaceutical interventions to reflect the local realities. But such balanced lockdowns will become increasingly expensive in time – particularly in the face of a dwindling fiscal space – as the number of those requiring economic packages will increase. In Lagos for instance, with as many as 78 percent of the population living in rented dwelling combined with 65 percent of the population relying on Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) as their only source of electricity, lockdowns will need to be supplemented with more than just food, (UNDP, 2020).

In vulnerable places like the north eastern parts of Nigeria, before the emergence of Covid-19, 35 percent of health facilities in the states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe were damaged as a result of some factors principally, activities of Boko Haram insurgency. There has also been significant disruption of vaccination campaigns and other essential health services for children and other vulnerable groups in inaccessible areas. In addition, funding has been a major challenge. In 2019, the health sector received only 25 percent of its funding requirements. This would mean a greater need to step up funding for addressing the twin effects of terrorism and covid-19 on the people in the mentioned states. Meanwhile, the Borno state Covid-19 readiness checklist reveals vast gaps implications of an outbreak on livelihood and food security. The impact of an outbreak of Covid-19 on the food security and nutrition situation in the north-east would likely be very tangible, affecting population layers that previously were not part of humanitarian caseloads, (UNDP, 2020).

In case of an enforced lockdown in cities and towns, it can be expected that due to the precarious nature of many livelihoods, up to two thirds of the population would only have a few days until their food stocks would be exhausted and severe coping mechanisms would become widespread, further undermining lockdown measures and public order. Initial estimates by the World Food Program Nigeria indicated that a Covid-19 outbreak in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states would impact the economic livelihoods of 7 million people resulting in an increase in the number of food insecure individuals by 3.4 million. Given the largely urban and semi-urban sources of livelihood in Borno, it is expected to hit the hardest with 62 percent of its population, or 3.6 million people, adversely impacted by a potential outbreak, (UNDP, 2020).

Meanwhile the more agriculture-based sources of livelihood that define Adamawa and Yobe will act to shield some of the impact, nonetheless, 3.4 million individuals are projected to be adversely impacted and could become food insecure in the two states, (UNDP, 2020). However, the case of the north eastern parts of



Nigeria is / was a very peculiar one, but the scenario is almost similar across the whole country, Nigeria.

Brief on Pandemics

In history, many past societies had experienced the outbreaks of life-threatening diseases, epidemics and pandemics that resulted in killing hundreds of thousands or millions number of people. Various strategies were employed in overcoming the local or international challenges such as vaccination, quarantining the victims, immunizations etc. In Nigeria, long before now, so many diseases such as river blindness, guinea worms, leprosy, polio etc were drastically put under control, and no longer there to threatened people's collective/common existence. All the methods both scientific and traditional that were employed in arresting the past pandemics are today's part of medical history; thus, history has now allowed us to take the same steps to tackle similar challenges. Just as people spread across the world, so have infectious diseases, Athenian plague of 430 BC, Antonine plague 541-542 AD, the Black death which originated from china 1884, Spanish flu, small pox 1520, HIV/AIDS pandemics 1980s, Spanish flu 1918, Ebola virus, 2014, Zika which originated in Uganda among monkeys and broke out in Brazil 2015, Corona virus 2019 etc. (LePan, 2020). Therefore, the existence of so many diseases known in history has given rise to the discovery of so many remedies to cure such diseases, but while we have gone to a deep slumber and forgot about such remedies, history on the other hand has not.

Pandemics have occurred throughout history. In the Middle Ages devastating plague pandemics raged over Europe. In the last 300 years, seven pandemic outbreaks have been observed. Three outbreaks have occurred in the 20th century: Spanish flu, 1918 with death cases: approximately 50 million. The Asian of flu, 1957 with death cases: of about 2 million and the Hong Kong flu of 1968 with death cases of about 1 million. (World Health Organization, 2021). With the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the sobering reality is that pandemics will become more frequent, in particular due to the increasing transmission of viral diseases by animals such as monkeys, bats etc, (Bose, 2020). Understanding this new reality will be the key to reducing the risk of future pandemics. As the world population swells, the number of outbreaks and the number of people affected is likely to increase. Trends like global travel, urbanization and climate change are driving the frequency of outbreaks even higher. There are ongoing scientific discussions about the future frequency of pandemic outbreaks. While pandemics have occurred every 30 to 40 years in past centuries, it seems reasonable to anticipate much shorter return periods in the



future. Experience over the last 20 years tells us that we should expect pandemic outbreaks to occur somewhat every 10-15 years in the future, (Bose, 2020).

The main risk for the population in a pandemic peak phase is from insufficient medical care due to capacity overload of the whole healthcare system (hospital care and outpatient care) and disturbances in public and private life with possible supply shortfall. All these risks materialized in the initial phase of the Covid-19 outbreak in some, even economically highly developed countries, the health system almost collapsed. This mismatch between the need for medical care and the existing medical infrastructure continued in the most severely affected countries. Within weeks, medical care was re-identified as part of the critical infrastructure and health security became a new national goal in many parts of the world, (World Health Organization, 2021).

Effects of Corona Virus and Insecurity in Nigeria

Depending on the angle where one stands, corona virus and insecurity are two dare devils that are not without so many ripple effects on the socioeconomic activities of Nigeria, such as on people's livelihoods, health, transportation, education, free movements as well as income/revenue to both government and private sectors etc. It should be noted without mincing of words that, many people in Nigeria depends largely on daily income, water, food, newspaper vendors, shoe shiners, petty traders, commercial vehicle drivers, tricycle riders and a lot more other artisans etc, means of income was severely affected by lockdown caused by Covid 19, consequently affecting their means of catering for the social needs of their families or dependants, resulting in poverty and hunger to such families. Lockdown due to corona has forced both private as well as public schools to be closed, rendering students to remain in houses and thus, increasing the possibilities of crimes and other forms of domestic violence by the students or on the students. More so, lockdown also has implications on social activities such as religious, other forms of gatherings at social and recreational centers etc due to strict adherence to social distancing protocols.

The strict sanctions on movement of people and goods from one destination, country, state to another has also caused a big cut/ slice to the revenue generation of countries particularly revenues from aviation sector, international waterways transportation, imports and exports causing unemployment and redundancy due to the lockdown. It also caused overstretching effects on health sector and pressure on medical facilities rendering people with other health related issues apart from corona virus unattended to due to inadequate health centers and enough medical personnel to carter for their problems. Furthermore, the effects of corona virus and



insecurity has further put up a massive blow on food production in Nigeria particularly in the major food production zones of the country example Adamawa, lake Chad basin areas of Borno state, the central parts of the country example Benue, Kaduna, Niger states as well as the whole parts of north western Nigeria with possible exception of Kano, and some parts of Jigawa and Kebbi states who experienced less catastrophes compared to the rest. Farmers no longer go deep into the interior to farm and this causes poverty. However, the problems of kidnapping, armed robbery on the other hand, has enveloped the whole of the country resulting in fear and scare throughout the width and breadth of the country. From Chibok in Borno state to Dapchi in Yobe state, crossing to Kankara in Katsina state as well as the most recent the Federal college of forestry, Afaka and Greenfield university both in Kaduna state, students no longer feel safe in their dormitories, they no longer sleep with their two eyes closed throughout the country due to fear of being kidnapped, harassed, terrorized, killed, maimed and raped due to insecurity.

The rate of insecurity has thus, affected the value chain of food supply across the country, consequently, rendering people to be afraid of moving about due to fear, they are afraid even in their own houses. Trade and commercial activities are not only truncated but dislocated hampering even development, religious and socioeconomic activities of the people.

Materials and Method

In an effort to dig out the role of History education in mitigating security and COVID-19 challenges in Nigeria, survey research design was used, because survey research design focuses mainly on people and their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations and behaviors. Also survey designs enable specific issues to be investigated through information gathering on people's opinions and beliefs. In addition, random sampling of opinions of 250 respondents in Hong local government area of Adamawa state was selected using 3 columns structured likert scale questionnaire of agreed, disagreed, and undecided. And simple percentage statistic is used in analyzing the results.

Result and discussion

Out of the 250 respondents interviewed, 230 of them strongly agreed that history and any form of moral nda rmation study can play significant vital roles in redressing insecurity and Covid-19 pandemic, 20 disagreed while 05 respondents were undecided on the question.

205 respondents strongly agreed that if we as a people will reversed back and adopts the old, past methods used to counter diseases and other social challenges of



similar origin with today's situations, no doubt the challenges of insecurity and pandemics such as Covid-19 can be nib in the bud or reduced to barest ebb in our society, though 30 respondents disagreed with this assertion, consequently, 15 questionnaires were returned undecided on the question.

Furthermore, 240 out of the total 250 respondents unanimously agreed in totality that stimulus packages in cash like money and relief materials such as foodstuff, building materials, farming inputs like seedlings, fertilizer, insecticide, pesticide etc as well as employment opportunities can go long way in ameliorating the crouching effects of Covid 19 and insecurity by government, nongovernmental organizations and other donor agencies 06 undecided and 04 not returned.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the indiscriminate activities of kidnappers, terrorists, and bandits as well as the effects of second wave of corona virus which is encroaching fast and wrecking serious havoc on countries especially places like India one of the populous nations not only in Asia but in the world and also Nigeria which happens to hold similar position as one of the most populated country in the whole of African continent, government should as a matter of urgency rise up to its responsibilities otherwise, if nothing fast is done to checkmate the further spread and rapid escalation of the violent insecurity and the deadly virus before its too late, Nigeria a country already sitting on the keg of gun powder may be consumed by the dangerous threats posed by twin disasters of insecurity and Covid 19.

Recommendations

The following observations are identified as some of the possible measures that will be taken in using historical lessons to ameliorate the scourge of Covid 19 and insecurity challenges in Nigeria.

1. Traditional moral values and other forms of moral education should be revisited to ensure peaceful coexistence in our society. Going back memory lane to review or revisits our inter group relationships and old ways of doing things especially positive aspects of our cultures, customs, creeds and moral values.
2. Government should ensure strong synergy and collaboration amongst security agencies, formations to ensure accessibility to vital information and good intelligent gatherings.
3. Employment opportunities should be adequately provided to hundreds of thousand unemployed teeming youths of Nigeria, job opportunities will help in taming them against all forms of restiveness, criminality and misused by selfish and overzealous politicians.

4. Strict adherence to the advices rendered by various government agencies such as PTF, NCDC on measures to curb contracting and subsequent spreading of diseases such as Covid 19 to the populace, like regular hand washing, observing social distancing, using facemasks especially in public places and surveillances by security personnel at the airports to ensure quarantining visitors etc

5. Releasing stimulus packages to the less privileged members of the society who were locked down due to Covid 19 or fled from their homes due to insecurity and in addition, granting soft loans to the farmers for greater food production and security for the nation

6. Protection of lives and properties of the citizens especially the farmers whose stored foods is facing serious threat of being looted and destroyed by the terrorists and bandits.

7. Government should as a matter of urgency invest and reinvest more in agricultural mechanization which will in a short time provide massive employment to her teaming unemployed solders of youths, because an ideal mind is a devils workshop which is always eager to fan the embers of trouble where there is none. There's no gain saying that, no security of lives and property means no farming. Therefore, government should recruit and give proper training to as many as possible youths of unquestionable character into all the security formations, such as the Army, Police, Navy, Air Force, Civil Defense, and DSS etc.

8. Furthermore, as we continually learning and adapting to Covid 19 challenges, we should continue adhering to simple non pharmaceutical advises such as ensuring and maintaining social distancing, wearing of face masks, regular washing of hands and maintaining good hygienic attitude, quarantining, improvement in public healthcare and proper communication, spread the good news and proper information not virus, information they says is power.

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