

# Effects of Insurgency and Sit-At-Home Syndrome on Quality Secondary School Administration in South East Nigeria

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## **Abstract**

*In recent times, one of the most devastating factors to Nigeria's development, which has also posed the biggest threat to national leadership and security, is the proliferation and criminal activities of multiple insurgent groups across the various geopolitical regions of the country. More than any other factor, insurgency and other forms of terrorism have caused a colossal damage to Nigeria's human, social, economic and infrastructural development. In the Northern parts of Nigeria, most of the schools have either been closed down or completely damaged. Hundreds of students have equally been abducted and are still in captivity. Many local government areas and communities have also been taken over and are under full control and administration of Boko Haram (which means western education is forbidden). This constitutes a threat to Nigeria's corporate political existence as well as a great challenge and setback for educational management and administration and therefore need reform. The paper is based on the fact that education is the life wire of every nation. In the absence of quality assurance in secondary education, this important provision of the national policy on education becomes jeopardized. This paper examined some key concepts in the discourse and the negative effects of these syndromes on education. Recommendations on measures that can restore or curb deficiencies arising from these effects are made. One of the recommendations is the extension of school time table to accommodate about 450 hours of lesson period and more than 135 topics of sub-topics of the scheme of work or curriculum which are either lost or not taught every school term in the various subjects of both the junior and senior secondary school classes.*

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**Keywords:** *Insurgency, Administration, Sit-at-Home. Education*

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## **Insurgency:**

Insurgency is a violent, armed rebellion against an established authority or government which creates a State of fear, anxiety and threat of life. Achonwa (2020) defines it as insurrection by a group whose ultimate long term goal includes session from the existing geopolitical configuration.

In view of this, insurgency is a threat to life and its effects on education cannot be overemphasized. In the case of Nigeria, insurgency began in July, 2009 when the Militant Islamist and Jihadist rebel group Boko Haram started armed rebellious against the government. (wikipedia). The violent and rebellious groups that were witnessed in the northern part of Nigeria gradually penetrated southern Nigeria and were identified or addressed as unknown gun men, bandits and terrorists. Insurgency is characterized by arson, destruction, abduction, kidnapping, killing and harassment of innocent citizens thereby creating fear, anxiety, restriction of movement and closure of schools in many parts of the country.

### **Sit-At-Home Syndrome.**

Sit-at-home order was given by a group known as Indigenous People of Biafra State headed by Nnamdi Kalu from Abia State who is currently being detained by the State Security Services by the directives of the Federal Government. The sit-at-home order is observed and enforced on three occasions. First, the order was made only for people in the South East and prohibited movements every monday of the week which shut down schools, markets, businesses and even gathering in public or open places.

Second, sit-at-home is also observed on the court sitting and appearance day of their leader Mazi Nnamdi Kalu to show respect and solidarity. Third, it is marked as memorial of their fallen heroes who died in the struggle for the actualization of Biafra. On many occasions, these sit-at-home orders are observed on school days. As a result, scheme of work are not completed and many hours are lost, thereby causing obstruction in teaching and learning.

### **Secondary School Education**

This is the education children receive after elementary school and before tertiary. The philosophy and goals of Nigerian Education as presented in the National Policy of Education (2013) aim to inculcate national consciousness and national unity in her citizens, cultivate in them the right type of values and attitude for the survival of the individuals and the Nigerian society: train the minds of Nigerians in understanding of the world and its mysteries, acquiring the appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competences that will enable them live and contribute meaningfully to the development of Nigeria.

Secondary Education in Nigeria is offered in two stages. The first segment is the three year education which the child receives immediately after primary school to complete the compulsory nine (9) year Basic Education. The second is the three year senior secondary which prepares students for tertiary education. Furthermore, secondary education provides the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship and advancement.

It is designed to develop patriotic young people equipped to contribute to social development and the performance of their civic responsibilities which will raise morally upright individuals capable of independent thinking, and who appreciate the dignity of labour. It is equally aimed to inspire national consciousness and harmonious co-existence irrespective of differences in endowment, religion, ethnic and socio-economic background.

A critical look at the provisions of Junior and Senior Secondary Schools reveal that if these objectives are achieved, there would be quality assurance, quality human development and quality products which will manifest in students performance in promotion and external examinations.

However, considering the challenges posed by the sit-at-home syndrome in Imo State and other South east States on school attendance, how can the new reality be integrated in Secondary education in order to achieve standards for quality teaching and learning in our schools?

According to Eze (2022), before the rise of insurgency and introduction of sit-at-home order, students were expected to come to school from Monday to Friday. Teaching and learning commenced at 8:00 am and end at 2pm daily. Scheme of work and selected topics were taught weekly and evaluation carried out on daily basis to assess and evaluate learners. The examination classes stayed back for extra lessons to prepare them and meet up with the syllabus in all the subjects.

Consequently, the reality of the moment now demands that for quality assurance to be achieved in Secondary level, educational planners and school administrators are required to introduce innovative strategies capable of transforming teaching and learning in line with the provisions of National policy on Education.

#### **Quality Administration in Secondary Schools:**

The needs for quality administration is very crucial in all levels of schooling and considering the present educational set back, methods cannot be used for today's teaching and learning and still expect the system to meet with the global best practices. Secondary Education under insurgency and sit-at-home has done a lot of damage in terms of quality assurance. There is therefore need for the system to re-create and fill the vacuum to meet the demands of the changing era (Eze 2022). Thus the goals of quality assurance as specified by the National Policy of Education must be re-emphasized.

1. Set, maintain and improve standards in all aspects of the school system.
2. Ensure minimum standards and quality assurance of instructional activities in schools through regular inspection and continuous supervision.
3. Disseminate on a regular basis, information on problems and difficulties of teachers and institutions and offer practical solutions to them.
4. Encourage dissemination of information on innovative and progressive educational principles and practices in the school system through publications, workshops, meetings, seminars and conferences etc.

It is therefore expected that quality assurance officers, school administrators, inspectors and supervisors of schools should articulate the nature of teaching and learning being offered in the school and give instructions on how improvements can be made to address such short comings on regular basis.

**Effects of Insurgency and Sit-at-Home Syndrome:** The effects of insurgency and sit-at-home include but not limited to the following:

1. Reduction in students' enrollment and poor average daily attendance. The reason for this is not far-fetched and students and even parents feel scared to come to school because of the fear of unknown gunmen especially in those communities and local government areas that witness constant attacks by insurgents and bandits.
2. Some teachers in urban areas relocate to rural areas to hide, as a result of fear, anxiety and extra judicial killings in the city. Unfortunately even the rural areas are no longer safe and the quest or applications for transfer to safer areas is still a matter of concern to most school staff.
3. The sit-at-home order given by Indigenous People of Biafra affects the examination classes. Students are now afraid to sit for the external examinations such as Senior Secondary Certificate Examination as a result of fear, anxiety and threats to life. For instance in 2021 unknown gunmen attacked and disrupted West African Examination Council examination in some secondary schools in Imo. Incidents like that can lead to poor result and performance.
4. Teachers also lose interest, and got frustrated when students are not responding to teaching and learning due to fear and tension because bandits can strike at any moment.
5. Insurgency and sit-at-home are associated with loss of man-hours for productive activities. In the educational sector, it keeps children and teachers at home and prevents the government and private agencies from opening new school, thereby increasing the chances of other related factors that keep children from enrolling or staying in school. In the case of south-east state secondary schools for example, it is estimated that average of 450 hours of lesson period or class work are lost and more than 135 topics or sub-topics of the curriculum in the various subjects are not taught per school term as a result of sit-at-home.
6. Like the islamic sect known as Boko Haram in northern Nigeria, the activities of Indigenous People of Biafra and other insurgent activities in parts of the south have increased the population of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). According to news and media report, many people have abandoned their homes in some local government areas due to the activities of unknown gunmen and armed groups, thereby forcing families to become refugees and children to drop out of school. This will add to over 13.5 million out-of-school children in Nigeria today. As a result, most of those out-of-school children and young people are either forced into child labour or early marriage and for families who earn less than one dollar a day, a twenty thousand naira cash gift from an insurgent group becomes a blessing which also demands loyalty in return as well as allegiance to terrorism (cable.ng 2021). On the long run this empowerment will neither produce citizens that can contribute meaningfully to the society or promote tolerance and respect for human rights and dignity.

### **Summary and Recommendations**

This paper discussed insurgency and sit-at-home as it affects education in South-East Nigeria. Insurgency and sit-at-home orders have now become a syndrome which has gradually been integrated as part of the social life of the people. Based on public perception that the government of the day cannot control the activities of insurgent groups who are collectively known as unknown gunmen, fundamental rights and freedom of the people have become restricted in obedience to their directives which are regarded as sacrosanct and respected as laws. Citizens have lost confidence in the ability of government and security agencies to protect their lives and properties and therefore adherence to the sit-at-home order is seen as the only guarantee for safety especially on Mondays.

Having examined the negative impacts of sit-at-home, insurgency and armed banditry on education system, the paper recommends the following measures to address the setbacks in teaching and learning in secondary schools.

1. There is need to reshuffle the school time table in order to cover those topics that appear on Mondays. This could be done by reducing each lesson period from 45 minutes to 35 minutes. The extra time can accommodate some of the topics in the scheme of work that would otherwise not be taught on Mondays and sit-at-home days.
2. The secondary education management board can apply to the Ministry of Education for extension of school time and activities from the usual 8am – 2pm to 7am – 3pm for the remaining four days of the week.
3. E-learning should be introduced in secondary schools. This has become necessary because learning has gone beyond the classroom. Before now, students learn mostly in the physical classroom, but now, they learn when and where it is convenient for them. The internet facilitates the ability of the teacher to extend the classroom community. Therefore internet platforms could be used to discuss homework, post assignments, and interact with students as they work on projects. In this way the teacher can impart knowledge outside the school periods which can equally go a long way in covering the scheme of work for Mondays and other sit-at-home days.
4. Application of modern technology and the internet search for information can be very helpful too, considering the fact that most students are Information and Communication Technology literate and have higher level of digital literacy than even their teachers and have the ability to utilize multiple media technologies. This is also in agreement with the view of Imsubeb (2021 p.3-5) that modern learners can perform more functions with mobile phones and computer devices which can equally enable them do what they need to do on sit-at-home days. This means that the main source of knowledge in the classroom is no longer the teacher or textbooks. More students now use multiple sources, including technology, to discover knowledge and information they need to become responsible citizens.
5. Finally, in view of the fact that the 21<sup>st</sup> century innovations have changed the society, teaching and learning has equally moved from something students did mostly by themselves to something they do together through peer collaboration. As a result, learning in secondary schools can now become more collaborative where students work together to discover information and construct meaning from them thereby exposing them to other areas of critical thinking and broad knowledge which would not have been covered by the teacher not only on sit-at-home days but also in the curriculum.

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