

Educational Approach to Resolving the Dilemma of an Emerging Generation of Stigmatized, Unwelcomed Citizens: Nigerian Experience

Gabriel O. Olaniyan Ph D

Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomosho, Faculty of Education, Department Of Teacher Education

Abstract

The paper attempts to provide answers to the question; what could be the possible educational approach to resolving the dilemma of integrating an emerging generation of stigmatized and unwelcomed citizens into the Nigerian society. These citizens are the children who emerged out of the forced sexual relationship which Boko Haram fighters had with women and girls they captured. To solve the problem of the study, an instrument was designed and subjected to a test and re-test method of affirming reliability of instrument and a result of 6.98 was obtained which indicates its being reliable. One hundred and twenty citizens were randomly selected in Ogbomosho city to serve as respondents and their responses were subjected to statistical analysis; the mean scores were used to rank responses. Results show respondents believe that these group of children needs prayers most; this result has a mean score of 3.37; but they also constitute danger to society, a response that had 3.33 mean score. The biggest challenge which these children may be exposed to is the fear by society that they will take after their father-murderers and become stigmatized. Both items had 3.50 and 3.47 mean scores respectively. With regard to the challenges that these children and their mothers can pose to the society; unlearning their bitter experiences and assisting them to heal their wounds of molestation had the highest mean scores. The items scored 3.83 and 3.67 respectively. The paper recommends a programme of Identification and record keeping of Boko Haram children; development of an education curriculum for persons that emerged in circumstances peculiar with Boko Haram experiences; monitoring and mentoring for the children and their mothers.

Keywords: Educational approach, Resolving, Dilemma, Emerging Generation, Stigmatized Unwelcomed Citizens.

1. Introduction

It is not news again that the violent Nigerian Islamic sect Boko Haram (BH) sometimes denied as Islamic but tagged “terrorist” has done much evil to the Nigerian society and people. Among the evil it has done is that, “since 2009 the sect subjected women and girls to severe abuses, including sexual slavery, sexual violence, forced marriages, forced pregnancies and forced conversions,” it abducted women, girls, children and killed innocent citizens (Human Rights Council, 29 September, 2015). It has caused citizens to become Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in their homeland and record shows that in one of the camps organized for such persons, there are over 200 pregnant women involuntarily but forcefully made so by BH fighters (Dalun, <http://www.nytimes.com>. ; Elbagir, <http://edition.cnn>).

It was news however, when the first of the abducted Chibok secondary school girls who turned 19 years was rescued with her baby at the outskirts of the Sambisa forest (Agbambu, 19/5/2016). Views expressed concerning the rescue include those who see it as raising the hope that other Chibok girls might be alive and chances exist for them to be rescued. Some see in the incidence the gallantry of the Nigerian Soldiers and destruction of the myth behind the BH fighters’ invincibility. This paper argues that, the emergence of children born to BH fighters is a dilemma because it involves the salvaging and at the same time destruction of human lives. The circumstances that surround the emergence of the children ignore respect for human dignity and rights of individuality. The question that may arise is, should the children be allowed to live or eliminated? A casual observation from religious and cultural views teach that human life is sacred and should not be terminated without any just course (Exodus 20: 13; 21: 12-14) and the right to live should be guaranteed by every responsible institution of governance among human-beings; but where a group constitutes danger to society; should the status quo be maintained?

Even though, BH phenomenon is still around, this paper attempts to find answers to the question; how should Nigerians prepare educationally for handling the stigmatization and other associated problems which children born to BH fighters may experience now or in the future? The position of this paper is that, children born to BH fighters evolved in an environment saturated with hatred, wickedness, blood-letting and generally unacceptable ideological convictions and practices. Such experiences are likely to become replicated in the children as they become adults in societies that hate and disapprove the process of their emergence. This category of children can constitute dangers to the society therefore, proactive steps should be taken educationally to prevent any anticipated danger.

The paper adapted the *Ex-post facto* approach to research which studies the effects of a past event that is impossible to alter or manipulate with the intention of preventing a possible reoccurrence or ameliorating the pains

caused (Ogundare, 2008). In this paper, educational approach means the application of methods of educational process to solving problems and challenges at hand; dilemma means a situation that constitutes difficulty with respect to choice of action between unsatisfactory alternatives. Stigmatization is an attribute, reputation or behavior which makes the individual to be different, unwelcomed and generally unacceptable within a social setting. Resolving refers to the ability of Nigerians to distinguish clearly the way out of the implications which children who emerged from forced BH fighter's sexual relationship with abducted women and girls have on society. Emerging generation of stigmatized, unwelcomed citizens refers to all the children born to BH fighters who begin to appear after their rescue by Nigerian soldiers from camps where they were held as captives. They are emerging because not all of them have been fully identified and many are very young to understand the circumstances surrounding their birth and existence. The paper proceeds with the findings and the discussions.

2. Methodology

In carrying out this research, the paper sampled the opinion of randomly selected one hundred and twenty (120) Nigerians. The sample was constituted of fifty five (55) male and sixty five (65) female respondents; seventy among them are married while fifty are not. Thirty three (33) of them have the senior secondary school certificate or its equivalent as highest educational qualification; seventy two (72) of them have acquired first university degrees or equivalent while, fifteen (15) of them possess post graduate degrees. Amongst them are market traders, secondary school teachers, students attending higher educational institutions, lecturers and artisans. Only fifty of them have practical experiences of what it looks like when BH fighters attack unsuspecting victims; but they escaped with their lives.

Opinions of sample was sought on; children born to BH (BH) fighters through involuntary pregnancies forced on captured women and girls; the possible challenges that BH children may be confronted with either now or in the future and challenges for the Nigerian society with regard to the emergence of BH children. The responses were subjected to descriptive statistical analyses and the mean scores were used to rank them. The objective of the entire exercise is to sensitize the society on the need to be proactive in responses to an emerging generation of Nigerians out of unusual circumstances.

3. Findings

For the findings, three research questions were administered on sample population and their responses were collated and analyzed statistically. The analyses are presented in tabular form.

Research Question 1: What is your opinion about children that emerged out of forced sexual relationship which BH Fighters had with captured girls and women? Table 1 presents the analysis of responses to the research question.

Table 1: Respondent's opinion on children born to BH fighters through involuntary pregnancies.

No	Item	No	Ex	X	Position
1.	Cannot be happy beginning from point of awareness	120	360	3	4 th
2.	Can constitute danger to community in future	120	400	3.33	2 nd
3.	Can be rejected and eliminated by cultures that detest them	120	340	2.83	5 th
4.	Religious institutions should pray for them	120	404	3.37	1 st
5.	They are gifts from God and thus, should be accepted	120	380	3.17	3 rd
6.	They cannot constitute any danger to society	120	280	2.33	6 th
7.	They are special breed of citizens	120	160	1.33	7 th
	Total	120	2320	19.33	

With respect to opinions which respondents hold about BH children; table 1 shows that prayers being offered by religious institutions is the greatest need for this category of children. The option came first by recording the highest mean score of 3.37. Second is the opinion that this category of children can constitute danger to the community in future; it recorded a 3.33 mean score. Third with 3.17 mean score is the opinion that these children are gifts from God and thus should be accepted with gratitude. Fourth with 3 mean score is the opinion that, this category of children cannot be happy beginning from the point of being aware of their identity. Fifth with mean score of 2.83 is the opinion that this category of children is most likely to be rejected and eliminated by cultures that detest the process of their emergence. Sixth with mean score of 2.33 is the opinion that BH children cannot constitute any danger to society and seventh with a mean score of 1.33 is the opinion that they are special breed of children.

Research Question 2: What in your opinion are the possible challenges that BH children may be confronted with either now or in the future? Table 2 presents the analyses of responses to the research question.

Table 2: - Respondent's opinion on possible challenges which BH children may face either now or in the future.

No	Item	No	Ex	X	Posit.
1.	Most of them are not likely to be sure of their paternity	120	340	2.83	5 th
2.	They are born by mothers forced in conditions of hatred	120	338	2.82	6 th
3.	Shedding human blood can be seen as normal part of life	120	320	2.67	7 th
4.	They are likely to be stigmatized in larger society	120	416	3.47	2 nd
5.	Can form a community of like-minds and retaliate violently	120	374	3.12	4 th
6.	They can suffer myth of taking after their father murderers	120	420	3.50	1 st
7.	Most can't grow in decent homes for lack of fatherly presence	120	390	3.25	3 rd
	Total	120	2600	19.33	

With regard to possible challenges which may confront BH children either now or in the future, table 2 shows that the myth of BH taking after their father-murderers rank highest in the opinion of respondents; it recorded a mean score of 3.50. Second with a mean score of 3.47 is the opinion that they will be stigmatized in the larger society. Third with a mean score of 3.25 is the opinion that most of them would not grow in decent homes for lack of fatherly presence coupled with hostile environment. Fourth with a mean score of 3.12 is the opinion that they can come together and form a community of like-minds and think of possibly retaliating violently for the marginalization they might have suffered. Fifth with a mean score of 2.83 is the opinion that most of them are not likely to be sure of their paternity because of the gang raping that some of the mothers are reported to have experienced. Sixth with a mean score of 2.82 is the opinion that their mothers gave birth to them in unwilling conditions of hatred and seventh with a mean score of 2.67 is the opinion that the children could have imagined shedding of human blood is normal thing in life as their experiences in camps indicate.

Research Question 3: What in your opinion are the possible challenges for the Nigerian society with regard to BH children? Table 3 presents the analyses of responses to the research question.

Table 3: Possible challenges for the Nigerian society with regard to BH children

No	Item	No	Ex	X	Posit.
1.	Coping with children or adult unwelcomed by society	120	340	2.83	5 th
2.	Planning for a special curriculum for educating the BH children	120	300	2.50	6 th
3.	Financing the training of teachers to facilitate BH children	120	360	3.00	4 th
4.	Setting programme for monitoring, counseling and mentoring	120	380	3.17	3 rd
5.	Assist mothers and relatives to heal the wounds of molestation	120	440	3.67	2 nd
6.	Assist victims unlearn their bitter experiences	120	460	3.83	1 st
	Total	120	2280	19	

Considering the possible challenges that may possibly face the Nigerian society with regard to BH children; table 3 shows that assisting victims to unlearn their bitter experiences rank first with 3.82 mean score. Second with a mean score of 3.67 is the opinion that mothers and relatives of the children are to be assisted to heal their wounds of molestation. Third with a mean score of 3.17 is the opinion that a programme of monitoring, counseling and mentoring of the children should be put in place. Fourth with a mean score of 3.00 is the opinion that finance should be set aside specifically for training of teachers who will facilitate the education of BH children. Fifth with a mean score of 2.83 is the opinion that coping with children or adult unwelcomed by society constitutes challenge. Sixth with a mean score of 2.50 is planning for a special curriculum for educating BH children.

It is observed that analyses of responses to all the factors presented to respondents under research questions 2 and 3 recorded above 2.50 mean score value. This indicates the acceptance of all the items by respondents as valid. In the case of research question 1, only two items recorded less than 2.50 mean score from the analyses made. One recorded 2.33 and the other 1.33 while five of them recorded above 2.50. This also indicates a general acceptance of the items listed as valid by respondents.

4. Discussions

Beginning with the opinion which sample expressed about children that emerged out of forced sexual relationship between captured women and girls and BH fighters; opinions are divided between seeing the children as gifts from God who should be prayed for and seeing them as unwelcome guests who can constitute dangers to the community. This division is reflected in the mean scores of the responses. Praying for them scored the highest mean of 3.37 while perceiving them as constituting danger came second with 3.33 mean score. There is no doubt that religious leaders and organizations have roles to play in making the society have a positive look at BH children. However, it has been rightly observed that many of these leaders cannot be said to be perfect examples of justice and incorruptibility. Furthermore, many of them have "lost their roles in and capacity for mobilizing support for 'desired' change in regard to enhancing accountability, openness and adherence to the rule of law" (Ayegboyin, 2005:109). It is a fact that, there is the suspicion of these children taking after their father-murderers whose blood run in their veins. Chances are that many of them may not be able to establish their real paternity especially of

their fathers because of the multiple sex partners which their mothers were subjected to according to testimonies of some of the freed mothers (Victor, 2016). These children may not be aware of the conditions under which they were given birth to until they reach the age of awareness, probably between 3-5 years. This awareness would now lead them to realize their true identity as they begin to experience discriminations in their host communities.

Views reported to have been expressed by women and girls forced to mother children for BH fighters include hatred for the men who forcefully raped them repeatedly and consequently impregnated them as a strategy to create a new generation of Islamist militants in Nigeria (Dalun <http://www.mytimes.com>; Dixon, www.latimes.com). Some love the children yet others hate both the children and their fathers. There are those who considered the option of abortion for fear that the child to be born will take after his father. Some are of the view that, children fathered by BH fighters should not be allowed to live; they belong to the enemy and are “hyenas and dogs” and “baby snakes” (Hadiza Ali Unicef Report <http://mytimes.com>. 18/5/2016).

With regard to the opinion about possible challenges that may face BH children; fear of the myth that, since the blood of the fathers runs through the veins of the children, the likely-hood of following after their fathers is very high. This view ranked highest with a mean score of 3.50 and closely following with a mean score of 3.47 is stigmatization. Searcey (18/5/2016) rightly said, there appears to be deep suspicion against anyone who has lived among BH group. The fear is high that they might be used as suicide bombers even after their rescue. Again, horrible stories are reported of how girls and women have been forced to kill captured men by slicing their throats with knives just to train them to become merciless. Some were stoned or burnt to death for refusing to change their religious affiliations or carry out instructions they are not uncomfortable with (Dixon, www.latimes.com). It is unfortunate that children that lived in the BH camps witness horrible happenings and probably assume these activities are normal things to do in life. The question arises, would this kind of children not constitute problem to society in the nearest future? Answer to this question is a matter of guess.

Stigmatization has taken different theoretical forms and discussed by scholars. Stigma particularly when it is social in nature makes a victim unacceptable and seen as different and unwelcomed (<https://en.wikipedia.org>). Such persons are usually discredited, rejected and sometimes punished for their attribute (Falk, 2001; Durkheim, 1982 & Goffman, 1963). Stigma can be “existential” when the individual involved is not a causative factor and has no control over the condition that stigmatizes but it can also be “achieved” when the individual involved contributed to attaining the stigma status (Falk, 2001). Stigma creates gaps in social categorization among people in societies and constitutes discrepancy in estimation of individual’s worth. It involves dehumanization, threats, aversion and increase or decrease in personal subjective sense of well-being even though it is an experience that is “situation specific, dynamic, complex, non-pathological” yet obvious (Heatherton, Kleck, Hebl & Hull, 2000; Jones, Farima, Hastorf, Markus, Miller & Scott, 1984). With reference to BH children most of them fall under the category of “existential” stigmatization because they had no control over the situation that stigmatized them.

Stigmatization on victims can be a painful experience because in almost every case the individual is ostracized, devalued, rejected, scorned and shunned. Victims experience discriminations, insults, attacks, psychological distress to the point of being contemptuous of their personality while, some even commit murder (Heatherton, Kleck, Hebl & Hull, 2000). Stigmatization takes tolls on individuals’ self-esteem, academic achievement, social integration and with BH activities; exclusion from independent religious practices. The combined effects of the factors above may result into isolation, inferiority complex, anxiety and internalized prejudice with consequent health related problems. The ability of victims to get and keep jobs can be hampered, so is the opportunity to find safe places to live and relate without being molested. It can even be difficult to make good friends and participate in social activities (<http://www.mendthe mind.ca/stigma/what-are-effectsimpacts-stigma>). Stigmatization can result into anger, violent behaviours upon conclusion that the society is not ready to fully accept the victim as a proper member of the community.

There are women and girls who prefer to abscond to places where they were not known as a way of escape from the stigma attached to being mothers to children of people (BH fighters) who destroyed their towns and means of livelihood of their relatives. These injured individuals are not ready to forgive or forget their experiences (Elbagir, <http://edition.cnn>). Culturally some people groups do not welcome children born to individuals that killed their members, burn their properties and made them destitute for no reason or fault of theirs. The bitter experiences they were subjected to will form historical themes that would be orally and in written form transmitted from one generation to another. Having children of perpetrators of such wickedness living among them can generate a desire for vengeance on descendants of perpetrators of the evils directed at them. Again, some religious teachings do not support having children in the form that BK members had it. It is not a legal or acceptable practice to neglect the consent of persons in acts that demand their participation (<http://reliefweb.int>).

With regard to the challenges which BH children may have for the Nigerian society, assisting victims to unlearn their bitter experiences ranked the highest with a mean score of 3.83 and closely following with a mean score of 3.67 is the need to assist mothers and relatives to heal the wounds of molestation. These challenges call for the active participation of all stake holders particularly the Church of God. This writer has observed that the Church of God universal has always drag her foot in responding theologically and decisively to issues of social

importance particularly those that touches on faith practices of believers. Over many issues the failure to be proactive and decisive has resulted in mockery of the Church by those who are opposed to her approaches especially when issues involved are not directly addressed in biblical passages. This is one issue very important. Pastors have important roles to play in the community (Imasogie, 2005) serving as public conscience and God's mouth piece to inform the people on behalf of God and represent people before God. Their position demands that they become current about what goes on in the community.

4.1 Educational Approach to Resolving Dilemma of Boko Haram Children

Educational approach suggested in this work is a package that includes, identification and record keeping of BH children; monitoring and mentoring, rehabilitation, development of educational curriculum that focuses on integration of persons that emerged in circumstances peculiar with BH experiences and educational guidance and counseling.

Identification and record keeping of Boko Haram children: - although this may be a difficult task to accomplish in view of the fact that many of these children have dispersed and are hidden among people by their mothers who for fear of shame and stigma decides to hide their identity. In spite of the difficulties that may be encountered, it is a good starting point to identify the target audience, their size and demographic characteristics for good planning. Starting with those in the rehabilitation camps, educational approach to integration should be tried out. Government security agents would be involved as well as social workers and traditional rulers. It should be a policy matter and Olaniyan (2014) suggested that for relevance, such policy document should show harmonization and integration of its diverse components to avoid gap between policy and performance.

Monitoring and Mentoring: - it is not enough to identify and keep a record of these children but proceed further to set machinery for monitoring their growth and development in the places they reside and assigning people to mentor them. Mentoring include showing them love which is a basic need and when provided can transform situations and clearing the sense of insecurity that can damage social and psychological development of a child (Caldwell, 1985; Castle, 1979).

Rehabilitation: as opposed to sharing food and cleaning materials with complaints of insufficient supply currently going on in the rehabilitation camps; mothers of the children should be empowered to begin small scale trading, the children should be given free education, while the men are equally assisted financially to return to main stream of social existence in the land. It should also include assisting identified converts to unlearn those ideological concepts that do not rightly represent ideal Islamic religious teachings about how to propagate the religion and relate with people having different religious convictions. Deliberate efforts should be made to avoid manipulation of facts by language use which can heighten tension and crisis (Bello, 2005).

Development of education curriculum for persons that emerged in circumstances peculiar with Boko Haram experiences: - Experts with practical experience in curriculum development should be assigned to produce a curriculum that will address stigmatization and assist in unlearning of bitter experiences in BH camps. Provision should be made for training of teachers with specialty in handling children with such unique conditions and mobilization of society for the purpose of awareness on the need to forgive, accept, love and extending care to the children who contributed nothing to being who they find themselves to be.

Educational Guidance and Counselling: - it is important that counselors become convinced that any kind of maladjustment is psychological human problem and is curable with application of effective counseling procedures (Olawale, 2001; Akinboye, 1984; Makinde, 1983). Both mothers and children of BH should be given proper and adequate counseling on matters of educational development, social integration and spiritual soundness. When from infancy children are treated with love, they are more likely to possess the capacity to love and retain the teaching they received from childhood (Olaniyan, 2012).

5. Conclusion

BH group has been and is still responsible for the destruction of lives and properties of many Nigerians. It has separated homes, made out of families' widows, widowers, and orphans and caused several people to become internally displaced persons (IDPs) in their own native land without any fault of theirs; except for deciding to exercise their religious freedom of choice in refusing to join the sect's activities. This paper reported views of the citizenry on the emerging BH children, and there is no doubt that these children are stigmatized as having root in evil people who ordinarily would not have obtained the consent of sane persons to be their wives. "Pregnant women and girls who gave birth whilst in captivity or shortly after rescue, are particularly stigmatized, together with their children (Human Rights Council, 2015). It is anticipated that these children would someday grow and attempt to repel or avenge the discriminations they suffer through legal or illegal means that may be peaceful or violent. The paper offered some educational approaches towards preventing retaliation by BH children in future.

It is appreciated that attempts have been made by the Nigerian government to forestall peace and eradicate the violence and destruction which BH activities have caused the nation and stem the fears of spread of their activities to other parts of the country. But like Okene (2005) observed, the seed of ethno-religious conflict sown

by the British colonial masters of the country through their “divide and rule” style of administration is what is currently being reaped as “socio-political whirlwind.” There is therefore the need to uproot this seed and replace it with seeds of unity and nationalism.

Attempts at forestalling peace have resulted into unwarranted wastages of resources that would have been useful for improving on the living standards of the citizens. Scarce foreign reserves, human military personnel and equipments have been lost so is the image problem gravitating. Suspicion is rife as to government’s sincerity of her avowed commitment to eradicating BH. Furthermore, in different sections of the country new ethnic militant groups are emerging claiming to defend the interest of their people and this is not a good development for a country that desires development through peaceful co-existence. All citizens must strive to keep the country together

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