

The causation issues of terrorism in Kenya and their effects on the provision of Education

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Abstract

Kenya has enjoyed rather successful education systems for many years. However in the recent past, the country's source of pride has met an uncommon enemy in terrorism. Terrorism has affected education in many areas, particularly in the North Eastern Region formerly the Northern Frontiers District (NFD). These terrorists are organized international criminal elements with obvious disdain for international law. Other regions in the pastoral communities have also had the threats to education through cattle rustling and cross border skirmishes. But the effects of these have been below the par, compared to the adverse effects of terrorist attacks on education in North Eastern Region.

Beginning the year 2012, the Islamic group Al Shabaab has carried out attacks in Kenya that have sought to destabilize the country. In their purported revenge against the presence of Kenyan troops in their country, the education sector has not been spared. They have attacked and killed teachers, students, destroyed schools among many other heinous crimes. These have had widespread profound effects on normal daily activities of the citizens. Their most recent brazen and heinous attacks led to the deaths of one hundred and forty two students at Garissa University College leading to the eventual closure of the college. The government has come up with measures to ensure that security remains tight around the country. Some of these have been effective but not entirely sufficient or reliable. There is need for better and sustainable measures to ensure the education sector in such areas recovers from the frequent terrorists' attacks.

Keywords: Causation, Education, terrorism, Al Shabaab, schools, North Eastern

1. Introduction

Terrorism refers to the use of violent means so as to frighten people from an area and achieve a goal. The objective may be political, religious, economic or ideological. The violent acts may lead to death or severe injuries to the victims. The aim of the perpetrators is usually to communicate to the authorities indirectly. Many terrorists are always radicalized along a given ideology or religion (O'Kane, 2007) ^[4].

Terrorism usually has devastating effects on the regions and people against which it is perpetrated. There is usually massive loss of life as well as destruction of property and infrastructure. The paper seeks to evaluate the effects of various terrorist activities in Kenya on the education sector. It spells out the attacks and their general impact on education. The paper also offers solutions to the problems in the education sector that have come about as result of terrorism.

1.1 Background to Terrorism in Kenya

Kenya has had a history of diverse terrorist attacks. Back in 1980, Kenya became a victim of terrorist attack from an Arab group. It was reportedly revenging on the country for offering support to the Israeli airplanes that were from a rescue mission in Entebbe. The bombing of the Israeli owned Norfolk Hotel led to twenty fatalities and over eight injuries. The other well-known terrorist attack on Kenya was the 1998 bombing of the US embassy in Nairobi. The Al-Qaida was responsible for the attack that led to the deaths of over two hundred people. In 2002, there was also the Kikambala attack on the Israeli interests at the Coast. Thirteen people died from the attack with several injuries including the Israeli tourists who were evacuated by their country's jets to safety.

The most significant phase of terrorist attacks in Kenya began in the year 2011 when the Kenyan troops entered Somalia. The move was necessitated by the constant cross border attacks from the Al Shabaab terrorist group. The group had been responsible for constant kidnappings of tourists from the Coastal region of Kenya. Such activities were meant to raise finances for them to carry out their activities. The actions were in the process hurting the tourism sector on which the Kenyan economy depends. The Kenyan government formally released its soldiers to hunt down the Somali extremists in October 2011 in the 'Operation Linda Nchi'. The move to destabilize the Islamist group has attracted constant retaliation and attacks that has left Kenya more insecure and affected its economy greatly.

1.2 Terrorism in other parts of the world

The impact of terrorism on education is a widely researched area. Being a relatively new phenomenon in Kenya, little research into the area is available. This paper will carry out comparison based on studies carried out in parts of the world that have been under terrorist attacks for years. It will focus on Pakistan and Nigeria.

1.3 Pakistan

Available statistics indicate that between 1970 and 2014, there were a total of 3400 attacks by terrorists on learning institutions. Out of these, 2.7% were in Pakistan. The leading countries in number of attacks were Pakistan, Thailand, Afghanistan and Iraq. Some of these attacks were aimed at the educational infrastructures and had few fatalities. The Taliban Islamist group has been responsible for most of the attacks on education facilities (O'Malley & Unesco, 2010) ^[5]. Taliban is

the Islamic insurgent group that has been seeking to topple the government for many years. In the process it has caused much instability in the country.

In 2009, the number of attacks on education facilities was 188. In 2010 there were 129 attacks. The following year the attacks reached 142 being the highest at that time. The motivating factors for such attacks are diverse. The Islamists view girl education as being 'unislamic' and so targeted the schools to hinder the learning process. The schools also acted as bases for the security apparatus that were used by the government to deal with the insurgency. As a result, they attacked the schools to thwart such operations against them. The schools are also the nearest symbol of the government against which they were at war. They target the government property to destabilize and discredit it (Abbas, 2014) ^[1]. They have demanded that the schools drop the western style of uniforms. They prefer to have the ladies wear the full 'hijab'. In regions that are in their control, the schools have an order not to fly the government flags or sing the National anthem.

The schools have been targeted with bombs that have destroyed the infrastructure and killed many people. Many parents have opted to keep their children at home in fear of their security. It has led to lower levels of literacy. The international schools that offered the international curriculum stopped in the process due to insecurity. Teachers and lecturers in the unstable areas have resigned en masse in favor of other jobs with the government. Premature retirements and long leaves have been the other options for teachers that are not able to survive the hostility in Taliban controlled areas (O'Malley & Unesco, 2010) ^[5]. In some instances, convoys of vehicles carrying exams to schools have come under attack thus disrupting the process.

The government of Pakistan has had a problem reconstructing the areas destroyed from the war. These have been in fear of more destruction. The quality of education in such areas continues to suffer with very minimal enrollment rates. The levels of literacy remain low as a result of such threats.

1.4 Nigeria

The Islamist group Boko Haram is clearly against any form of Western education. It claims that it defiles the children and advocates pure Islamic education. The group has also carried out concerted attacks against the government departments including the police and schools. The group has had the headquarters of its operations in North East town of Maiduguri. Education has been seriously hampered in the entire region (Mark, 2015) ^[3].

In 2014, the group burnt down fourteen schools. As a result, over seven thousand school children were locked out of schools. Their most outrageous act was the abduction of over two hundred school girls in Chibok town, Borno State. They were to hold them as slaves and later marry them off. The incident attracted widespread condemnation especially as the government was unable to rescue the girls (Mark, 2015) ^[3]. The school got closed as a result. In another heinous act, the group attacked a boarding school in Yobe State killing 29 males and then sent the girls away with instructions to get married.

Such acts have undermined the process of education. They have served to reduce the enrollment rates as well as discouraging the teachers from work. Several infrastructures

have been destroyed thus hindering the process of educating the students.

1.5 Chronology of Attacks in Kenya

The flood of attacks began to flow in early 2012. On March 10th 2012, six people were killed and over sixty injured when four grenades were thrown into the Machakos bus terminus in Nairobi. In April the same year, there was an attack on a church in Ngara estate in Nairobi in which one person was killed and other eleven injured.

In Garissa, there were sporadic attacks in which both a Catholic and an AIC church fell to the hands of the Islamists. The attack resulted in the deaths of seventeen people including the church guards. Another attack in the region targeted the Sunday school kids, many of whom were injured. In November the same year, another attack against a bus in Eastleigh estate of Nairobi led to the loss of ten lives. Twenty five people got injured.

One of the most widely reported terrorist attacks took place in the heart of the Nairobi City. It laid bare the inadequacy of the security apparatus in dealing with the terrorists. The attack on Westgate on 21st September 2013 left close to seventy people dead according to the government figures (O'Malley & Unesco, 2010) ^[5]. The attack on the shopping mall took over two days for the security personnel to rescue the building from the hands of the terrorists. Close to two hundred people were injured with the president also losing close family members.

The regions that remain most severely affected by the terrorist activities are Garissa, Mandera and Wajir counties. In a very daring attack in June, 2014, the terrorists attacked a police station, hotels and government offices in Mpeketoni. Forty eight people were killed and many more injured. Another attack targeting the region happened in Mandera. A bus that was transporting government workers to Nairobi got attacked by the Al-Shabaab militants. Twenty eight people were killed. The non-Muslims were separated from the rest and then were executed in cold blood. Many victims were teachers and other civil servants going for the December holidays.

The most recent and direct attack on the education fraternity involved the Garissa University College. Four gunmen entered the University and opened fire on the students in that early morning attack. In the siege that took over fifteen hours, 147 people got killed, most of them students. Seventy nine people got injured while over five hundred students managed to escape. The very traumatic attack resulted into the indefinite closure of the University (Justice, 2015) ^[1]. The surviving students were taken to other campuses to continue with their studies.

1.6 Impact on Education

The impact of terrorism on education in Kenya has been immense. In evaluating this, it is important to subdivide the effects in three categories. The first will consider the teachers and the process of teaching. The second discussion will focus on students and the learning process while the third will investigate its impact on the management of education.

1.7 Teachers and Teaching

Several teachers have died in many of the attacks. In the Mandera bus tragedy alone, twenty two teachers got butchered by the attackers. Over eight hundred teachers declined to report to work in North Eastern fearing for their lives. Even the

national parliament demanded the transfer of teachers from Mandera citing security concerns. At the opening of the year, several teachers from the region refused to report to work and camped at the TSC offices for over two months demanding transfers. The ministry was adamant and employed others to fill their vacancies. They missed their salaries as result of the boycott.

Mandera County alone has experienced a shortage of over 600 teachers. The situation has gotten worse with the killing of the remaining teachers. For example in Mandera Secondary School, over half of the non-native teachers refused to report to school this year, 2015. Some students do not have a qualified teacher in a given subject like Physics. They have to rely on previous students to handle the subject. Needless to say, their level of competence is highly questionable. It greatly affects the preparation of the candidates for the national examinations that are important to qualify for places in the public universities.

Many teachers have demanded for transfer from the region. The employer's regulations demand that a teacher spends at least five years in a station before transferring. Some who were unable to bear with that have got resignations with others staying but under great anxiety. The teacher unions KNUT and KUPPET formally asked their members to leave the region due to insecurity. The KNUT leader reportedly told the government to turn the University College into a military camp before the attack. The teachers are not able to spend quality time with the students thus affecting the delivery and learning process.

2. Distraction and Dissuasion

The state of in security in the North Eastern region as well as other areas such as Kapedo and Lamu dampens the teachers' spirit. Those who are willing to remain in the area have more important thing to worry about that is their security. The government has been unable to guarantee their security even after several processes. In many instances, there have been assurances of enhanced security only for a more serious attack to happen. They are no longer able to believe the assurances from the governments.

Consequently, the teachers spend less time researching so as to be better prepared to teach their lessons. The attendance to classes has never been regular with several classes going unattended. All these have served to lower the quality of education in the schools and the region. Many have to commute to Nairobi in an effort to process their transfers leaving students with no one (Woldeslase, 2013) [6].

The death of teachers at the hands of the terrorist has been a traumatic event even to the students and fellow teachers. For instance, Mandera Academy lost four teachers in the bus attack. The remaining colleagues could not teach as normal. Even the students resent the prospect of becoming teachers if such can be the fate of a teacher. Few would want to train for the profession if there are better alternatives. It even affects the future prospect of education in the area.

Several institutions have had to close due to the insecurity scare. The Garissa University College is the most publicized. The students had to go to the Moi University and other campuses to progress with their studies. Some however got too traumatized and did not report. Possibly, they have deferred their studies at the fear of a prospective attack like the one they escaped. The KMTC Garissa branch also closed due to security

fears. The students were advised to apply to other branches for admission since the government could not guarantee security. Over three hundred students were affected by the closure. Another college had closed in fear of security just before the University attack.

The trend of closure of education institutions hinders the process of learning for a region that has been lagging behind in terms of adult literacy. The private schools have also been affected by the wave of insecurity. However, some of their teachers remain in the area because of higher pay. Several mobile schools that were helpful in the area have had to close due to insecurity.

2.1 Terrorism and Learning

Students have also been victims of the insecurity caused by terrorists. The fears of attacks have driven down the enrollment levels in the region. The parents fear to send their children to schools in the region preferring to keep them alive even though uneducated. The wealthy parents opt to send their children to Nairobi to learn in a safer environment. On the other hand, the poor have to be content with the minimal education standard they have already attained. The closure of schools has also left even the willing students without any chance for better education.

Some students have had to endure the painful memories of their dead teachers. The Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD, comes with such experiences and hinders their ability to learn. They require counseling and psychological support that is not available them. This leaves them at the mercy of nature for their survival. Poor performance is inevitable in such circumstances even for the most brilliant brains.

Terrorists have at times targeted infrastructure that aid in the process of learning. The Mpeketoni attack for example led to the burning of schools and buildings. Delays in the reconstruction leave the schools with no room to teach the students. Some have to learn under trees with all the distractions of an open environment.

2.2 Management of Education

The management of education in several regions of Kenya has been under serious threat due to terrorism. Experienced education administrators have died due to such attacks leaving a gap in the management. Many years of expertise and experience have been lost at the hands of terrorism. Some managers and head teachers have opted to resign or take lower positions in safer regions.

There have losses of important education records from terrorist attacks. Destruction of such crucial information systems has been a major source of setback in terms of continuity of their programs. The exam processes have been under attack (O'Malley & Unesco, 2010) [5]. A vehicle ferrying exam papers came under attack leading to destruction of materials and loss of lives. The continuity of education in such regions has been heavily reliant on support from Non-Governmental Organizations.

They have run programs to supplement government effort in offering feeding, health and other programs. Due to insecurity, they have had to withdraw their staff from such areas and stop any funding. Such moves make it more difficult for the continuity of education in the areas. Several education-related programs have had to be cancelled in fear of such attacks. These areas that have lagged behind in education appear

destined for more time in the dark unless the government acts to end insecurity.

2.3 Recommendations

The measures to reduce the impact of terrorism on education can be classified in two categories. There have to be measures to prevent attacks as well as the impact of the attacks. In the first place, the government has to beef up security in the educational facilities. Each school should have at least a police post to grant the staff and students a sense of security in addition to scaring away prospective attackers (Woldeslase, 2013) [6]. The move will be expensive in the short run, but ultimately it will help to raise the standards of education in the area.

Another immediate short term measure is to ensure that the government offers better terms of work for the teachers and other government workers that offer to work in the area. As in any other business venture in the world, the higher the risk, the greater should be the reward. In addition the better security, many people can offer to work in the area for better remuneration.

It may be helpful for the government to encourage the natives of North Eastern province and other insecure areas to work in their home places. The logic is that they are more able to withstand the pressure than strangers. They have to be at the fore front in developing their areas rather than leave others to do it for them.

In the event of a terrorist attack, the government has to be proactive in reconstructing the necessary facilities to assist in the learning process. Schools and other infratructures that get destroyed should get replaced the soonest to avoid inconveniences (Woldeslase, 2013) [6]. The teachers will also be motivated to see a government that is responsive to their needs.

The government has to invest in social programs to reduce poverty and economic disparities. Many youths that get recruited by the Al Shabaab are poor and with promise of better life they accept to embrace their lie. They easily get radicalized and carry out attacks against Kenya. Meaningful education to counteract the extremists' propaganda will ensure that the country remains secure.

3. Conclusion

The education sector is reeling from the constant attack of terrorists. Deaths of students and teachers as destruction of educational facilities are just some of the impacts. In the most affected countries of Mandera, Wajir and Garissa the level of enrolment has dropped down significantly. Many teachers that were working in the area have left their work stations. Some opted to resign, seek transfer yet those left work under trauma and anxiety. The few rich parents have managed to send their children to Nairobi for education. The others remain to study under difficult conditions.

The government has to carry out immediate and extensive measures to restore the level of security so as to ensure continuity of education programs. Securing every single school is important in giving the school fraternity a sense of security as well as courage. The government has to do that and more to ensure the students reenroll and teachers get motivated to work in the area.

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