

School Unrest in Kenya: A Nation at a Crossroads

From the Coast to Central Kenya, from Nairobi to the Rift Valley, and across Eastern, Nyanza, Western, and North Eastern regions, cases of school unrest continue to dominate headlines. Dormitories are being torched, property destroyed, and learning disrupted. The trend is worrying and raises difficult questions: Is this a time bomb waiting to explode? Is it a moral and spiritual crisis? Or have we gradually weakened the foundations of our education system?

A wise saying warns that a nation does not need weapons to destroy itself; all it takes is a broken education system. Once education loses its moral compass, society slowly plunges into darkness. The current wave of unrest compels us to ask: What is eating up our children?

Interestingly, many of the grievances raised by learners are not about lack of teaching or poor academic instruction. Instead, complaints often revolve around social amenities, congestion in schools, entertainment, food, and disciplinary measures. While these concerns deserve attention, they also leave many Kenyans wondering whether deeper issues are at play.

Discipline is the backbone of every successful institution. A broken discipline system eventually produces a chaotic society. The Bible repeatedly emphasizes the importance of guiding and correcting children with love and wisdom. Proverbs 22:6 states, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Proverbs 13:24 further reminds us that "Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them." These verses do not promote cruelty but underscore the responsibility of parents, teachers, and society to provide firm guidance and moral direction.

At the same time, discipline must be balanced with listening. Learners need platforms where their concerns can be heard and addressed constructively before frustration turns into destruction. Dialogue remains a powerful tool in conflict resolution.

Could corruption also be contributing to this menace? When resources meant for schools are mismanaged, learners may experience poor facilities, overcrowding, and inadequate services. Such conditions can breed dissatisfaction and resentment.

The teaching profession itself faces significant challenges. Low morale, fear of disciplinary repercussions, heavy workloads, and increasing societal pressure may contribute to a growing culture of "teach and go home." Many teachers feel constrained in enforcing discipline due to legal and policy requirements designed to protect children's rights. While these rights are important and must be upheld, there is a need to strike a balance that allows teachers to guide learners effectively without fear.

The contrast is striking. When students engage in destruction, the police are expected to intervene, make arrests, and enforce the law. Yet the teacher, who interacts with the learner daily, must operate within increasingly restrictive boundaries. This situation calls for a national conversation on restoring discipline while safeguarding the rights and dignity of children.

Parents cannot be left out of this discussion. Discipline begins at home. The old saying that "charity begins at home" remains true today. If parents fail to correct and guide their children, society may eventually bear the consequences. As some have observed, a parent who cannot correct a child today

may find themselves hiring a lawyer to defend that same child tomorrow. While this statement may sound harsh, it highlights the importance of early intervention and responsible parenting.

Perhaps the most troubling question is: When did we lose our humanity? When did respect for authority, responsibility, integrity, and accountability become negotiable values?

The solution does not lie in blaming one group. Parents, teachers, school administrators, government agencies, religious organizations, and learners themselves must work together. The Church, in particular, has a critical role in nurturing moral values, mentoring young people, and supporting families. Faith-based organizations can partner with schools to provide guidance, counseling, and character formation.

The growing unrest in schools should serve as a wake-up call. We must listen to our children, address legitimate concerns, strengthen discipline, support teachers, empower parents, and restore moral values. If we fail to act collectively, we risk raising a generation disconnected from responsibility and accountability.

The future of Kenya sits in our classrooms today. Saving our children is not merely an educational duty; it is a national responsibility.