

REPOSITIONING SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION TOWARDS SCHOOL SECURITY IN NIGERIA SCHOOLS

Edinyang, Sunday David Ph.D and Adie, Boniface Akwagiobe

Department of Social Science Education
University of Calabar

ABSTRACT: *Nigeria as a nation is beckoned with numerous national issues such as insecurity of life and property, robbery, kidnapping, cultism and insurgency. These problems have caused retro-aggressiveness to sustainable national development. Meaningful socio-economic and political development can only be realized in an atmosphere of peace and security where all agents of development co-exist in harmony. As a result of this existing situation, this paper try to examine how Social Studies Education can be repositioned and used as a veritable tool in solving the problem of school insecurity in Nigerian school. The purpose of this paper will assist significantly in tackling this social complex problem of national insecurity that hinders the development of human society. Several issues such as school insecurity, cultism and their corresponding recommendations such as adopting a people oriented programme in the country by our leaders and a new culture of living which make for tolerance and accommodation were made.*

KEYWORDS: Social Studies Education, Security and Nigerian Schools

INTRODUCTION

School security is the process and act of effective protection of lives and properties in the school. Meaningful socio-economic and political development can only be achieved in an atmosphere of peace and security. Security involves effective policing and careful watch against elements that can breach peace or any thing that can hamper the socio-economic, scientific, cultural, religious and even political development in Nigeria.

Section 14(1) of chapter 2 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria captures the significance of security when it states that security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government. Security is a social contract between the state and its citizens, in which the former is expected to protect, defend and provide for the later in the public area (Arisi, 2011).

In Nigeria, the security situation has deteriorated in the last 20 years, most specifically after the general election in 2011. Various people such as Okiro (2008), Etim (2009) and Odah (2009) have all observed the unpalatable state of security of the nation which is highly lamentable. The Nigerian schools are part and parcel of the challenges observed above.

Based on the prevailing situations observed above, this paper will attempt to capture the concepts of Social Studies Education, Nigeria school security and examine the role of Social Studies Education in ensuring school security and thereafter highlight recommendations in order to bring about security in Nigeria Schools bearing in mind the popular saying “what the nation want you put in the school”.

SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION

The five (5) main national education objectives of Nigeria as stated in the Second National Development Plan and endorsed for the National Policy on Education (2004) are the building of:-

- a) A free and democratic society
- b) A true and egalitarian society
- c) A united, strong and self-reliant nation
- d) A great and dynamic economy
- e) A land of bright of full opportunity for all citizens

In furtherance of the above statement, Social Studies Education is deemed as the only potent force capable of perpetually internalizing attitudinal values and behaviours patterns necessary for adequate character moulding especially the inner controls of man's character.

Edinyang (2015) sees Social Studies Education as good discipline through which one understands and appreciates his rights and responsibilities as a member of the society, learns to uphold the laws of the land, develops to be morally upright, honest, incorruptible, respectful, responsible, faithful and loyal, acquire functional skills and develop to be self-reliant.

According to a position statement prepared by the Social Studies Association of Nigeria (SOSSAN) task-force on revitalizing social studies education (SOSSAN, 2006) "Social Studies Education is as important today as at any time in our history and that as citizens in the 21st Century, we must be prepared to deal with rapid change; complex, local national and global issues; cultural and religions conflicts; peace and conflict resolution and national security".

Given the rapid pace of global transformation today, Enu (2011) opined that it is unclear if Social Studies have realigned their goals to prepare citizens to be competent, adjustable and comfortable in an era of global insecurity. Mezieobi, D. I. (2012) ascertained that social studies education places important responsibilities of connecting citizens with the dynamic world. Esu and Inyang-Abia (2004) pointed out that Social Studies Education ought citizens to develop competencies that will prepare them for rapid growth, peaceful living and mounting inequalities.

Denga (2004) opined that Social Studies Education posses a great potential to train miscellaneous manpower in the areas of security education, civil defense, legal education and tourism for which Nigeria is simply the leader. Serious sources of violence that currently hamper Nigeria's economic, socio-political and educational development and need to be dealt with include corruption, credible elections, social unrest, human rights education, religious intolerance and security constraints. These phenomena are appropriately with the ambit of social studies education to handle.

Social Studies Education as a problem-solving subject can play a vital role in bringing about sustainable peace and security not only in Nigeria schools but in Nigeria as a whole. UNESCO in its preamble to her 2009 publication stated that "since war begins in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men than defense of peace and security must be constructed. Social studies education as contemporary and environmentally focused field of study can play a vital role in changing the mind of the individual from evil to good, from conflict to resolution of conflict, from intolerance to tolerance and from war to peace maker thereby bringing about absolute security of lives and properties in Nigerian schools in particular and the nation in general.

MEANING AND DIMENSIONS OF SECURITY

Security according to Yusuf and Babatunde (2009) is the condition which enhances the ability of government, its agencies and its citizens to function with what hindrances. Section 14(1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria captures the significance of security when it states that security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government. Security is a social contract between the state and its citizens, in which the former is expected to protect, defend and provide for the later in the public area.

School security in a narrow sense implies the absence of threat to life and property of the people in school. A proper understanding of security is important for an adequate explanation of the remote causes of breach of peace and security whether religious, civil, ethnic, social and political that have contributed to the recurring conflicts which the nation has witness over the years. This has resulted in the wanton destruction and loss of lives and properties. Madukwe (2011) observed that certain factors tend to increase the vulnerability of people to insecurity. These include gender, class, age, status, ethnicity, religion and region.

Nigeria in recent times has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity, inter-ethnic classes, religious violence and bomb explosions leading to enormous loss of lives, properties and social tension to the people Kukah (2014) advised that government should institute totality of measures to protect the territorial integrity, the cherished value and interest of the people as well as guarantee the freedom of citizenry from threats to life, anxiety and their safety from natural or man-made disaster. These crises include kidnapping, terrorism, arm robbery, cultism, human right violation, chronic poverty and marginalization.

According to the Technical Committee on Security (2008), security is conceptualized as the actual freedom and safety from physical, political economic, socio-cultural or psychological danger or attack. It is the defense of the people against all kinds of victimization. From the time of Plato, it is said that “what the society wants, they put in the school”. For Nigeria to attain peace and security, the traces of any form of ethnic favouritism, nepotism and discrimination must be extinguished and re-placed with national interest, her leaders and the government must be resolute and sincere enough to address injustices and fight ethnic viruses amongst citizens, fairness and proffering in nutshell on concrete and pragmatic workable solutions, simplicity, directives, truth and true conscience as a guide.

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR INSECURITY IN NIGERIA.

Factors responsible for insecurity in Nigeria, there are summarized as follows:

- 1) **Crime:** crime, be it against the individual, society or government has great negative effects. These effects are trauma, emotion and psychological effects, loss of income, loss of life and properties and loss of security.
- 2) **Selfishness:** This is being concerned sometimes excessively or exclusively, for oneself or one's own advantage, pleasure or welfare, regardless of others.
- 3) **Chronic poverty:** Poverty in Nigeria is no longer imaginary. Everywhere you turn, you can see the yawning gulf of divide between the rich and the poor. The poor are getting

poorer, the rich are getting richer, no thanks to the scourge of greed that pervades the land among the ruling class.

- 4) **Disobedience:** This is the active, professed refusal to obey certain laws, demands and commands of government or of an occupying power. This can lead to rules and regulations been broken and the society becoming lawless. It can lead to anarchy.
- 5) **Favouritism:** Favouritism in Nigeria has been a prominent issue in recent times. This may lead to opportunities been given to the less-equipped or non-qualified person because of who he knows and not based on merit.
- 6) **Bad leadership:** Leaders without vision will fail. Leaders without vision cannot inspire citizens, motivate performance or create sustainable value. Bad leadership leads to bad followership.
- 7) **Massive youth unemployment:** Unemployment rate in Nigeria could double every year if proper care is not taken. Many youths graduate from institutions every year and they come out to be unemployed.
- 8) **Violation of human rights:** The foundation of any genuine democracy is embedded in the rule of law, a principle that demands devotion to moral values and source of individual freedom. It is not useful to talk of rights which lie only in the realms of human imagination.
- 9) **Marginalization:** This is the process whereby something or someone is pushed to the edge and accorded lesser importance. This is predominantly a social phenomenon by which a minority or sub-group is excluded and their needs or desires ignored.

REPOSITIONING SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION TOWARDS SCHOOL SECURITY IN NIGERIA SCHOOLS

School security has been defined to include the safety devices employed by the school for the safety of lives and properties in the school. It also includes developmental strategies put forward to actualize effective and conducive school environment that will bring about improvement in the quality of the people. To this extent, social studies education can play a pivotal role in ensuring that the school attains her security. The following are advocated as the most appropriate ways through which social studies education can be repositioned towards school security in Nigerian schools.

a) Emphasis on values Education

The heightened conflict, instability and general insecurity in Nigeria calls for active integration of values in Nigeria's Social Studies Curriculum. Meziobi, Meziobi, Ossai and Sampson (2012) asserted that the value education in social studies curricular in Nigeria schools are inadequate. The Nigeria social studies education curriculum ought to be improved and enriched with values to mitigate ethnicity, favouritism, intolerance among other vices that have debased our moral integrity, freedom and democratic existence as a dignified nation.

Against this background, Orisa (2012) contributed as follows:

“What needs to be changed socially is one general attitude to life. This will mean changing from our current intolerance life to life of love. We must take complete U-turn from our present undue attachment to moral decadence, false sense of value, situation of religions intolerance, social injustice to a new national reorientation that recognize excellence merit, dignity and the tolerance of human beings irrespective of his/her ethnic group as the basis of our values system”.

b) Promotion of Good Citizenship Education

Social Studies place much value on promoting good citizenship education. In social studies for instance, the affective domain deals with the evaluation of the attitude that are developed in the pupils after a course of study. The domain examines behavioural changes in pupils like respect for elders and other constituted authorities as parents, government etc. dignity of Calabar and other positive attitudes. Social Studies Education as a discipline if properly programmed and effectively taught, should help to solve social problems like kidnapping, raping, murder, corruption etc. and develop a sense of patriotism.

c) Emphasis on Peace, Safety and Security Education

It is a common knowledge that our society (Nigeria) today is being plagued by evils such as profit tearing, embezzlement, social unrest by the youths and other irresponsible behaviours. Social Studies Education if properly repositioned can help greatly to educate the youths on the importance of peace and security in our dear nation. This will help to promote co-operation and national pride by keeping to the rules and regulations of the country.

d) Promotion of Competence and Civic Education

Social Studies content should be redesigned to include work ethics, dedication, honesty, national ideas, decision making process and problem-solving. Social Studies Education should be made to address the issues that are today confronting the nation. These issues include terrorism, armed robbery, hostage taking, suicide bombing etc. In view of Yemi (2012) Social Studies should be made to give impetus to positive developmental trends in Nigeria.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on this study, a number of measures seems to suggest themselves in developing a frame work for conflict prevention management and ensuring adequate security in Nigerian Schools. These include:

- i) Using social studies education teaching to bring about an improved quality of governance in the country. Through Social Studies Education, the increasing responsibility of citizens can be addressed. Topics like political and religious tolerance; consensus building can be introduced in social studies education. This will solve the problem of political instability and insecurity in the country.

- ii) There should be need to adopt a more people oriented programme in the country by our leaders instead of selfish tendencies of our leaders.
- iii) There is need to evolve a new culture of living which make for tolerance and accommodation among the social class. This can be done through the teaching of social studies education in all our schools.
- iv) The security sector which comprises the military, the police, the intelligence agencies require some restructuring. These reforms include commitment to professionalism, welfare of officers etc. All security personnel and students in the country are to be exposed peace education.
- v) There should be prompt reporting of cause of planned unrest to security agents or constituted authority. This will lead to the avoidance of negative values that can negate the peaceful co-existence in our school in particular and nation in general.

CONCLUSION

Social Studies Education is a veritable tool for integration in Nigeria. Peace and security are fundamental prerequisites to the success and sustainable development and progress of any nation including Nigeria. Social Studies education makes immense contributions towards achieving school and national security in Nigeria.

The teaching of positive attitudes, appropriate value of hardwork, integrity, honesty, justice and togetherness which are necessary for peaceful living should start from the early education of the child. We must identify ourselves with the nation by upholding the ideas and values of the society and also place the nation's interest first before personal ones in order to ensure school and national security in our country, Nigeria.

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