

Social Studies Education as a Panacea for National Security in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable economic development could be achieved in area of peace, security and good governance. Nigeria as a nation is besieged with several multifarious issues such as corruption, bribery, drug addition, robbery, religion insurgency, kidnapping etc. these problems brought setback to sustainable national development. Against this backdrop, this paper tries to examine how social studies education could be used as tool in ameliorating national insecurity in Nigeria. The purpose of this paper therefore is to examine the roles social studies education could play in enhancing good citizens in Nigeria, and how it's could assist in tackling this social problem of national insecurity. This paper also examines the responsibilities of citizens in promoting national security in Nigeria. The paper proffers recommendation for governments and citizens on how to solve the problems of national insecurity in the country.

Key Words: *Social Studies, Education, Panacea and National Security.*

Introduction

Nigeria is one of the relatively secured nations and endowed nations in Africa. In recent times, the nation is beclouded with the problem of insecurity such as bombing, hostage taking, corruption, cold – blooded killings, ethno-religions conflicts, armed robbery traceable to militant groups with conflicting ideological, political and religious agenda. All these have contributed to the security problems being witnessed in Nigeria. The resultant effects of this state of insecurity is that, loss of lives and properties, rising budgetary spending for security and destruction of valuable government polities portend devastating consequences for sustainable economic development in the country, also the country is left to drift about, suffering from a lot of brain drains of intellectuals to other more peaceful and secured countries.

Section 14 (1) of chapter 2, of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria captures the importance 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.

The peace and security situation has deteriorated in Nigeria in the last two decades, the emergence of military in Nigeria fueled ethno – religious crises in Jos, Vandalisation of oil installations in the South – South, Massive robbery on South – West, kidnapping in the South – East and hernous killing/bombing of innocent Nigerians in Northern Nigeria (Daily independent online, 2010). Okiro (2008); Etim (2009); Adelagba and Ujomu (2009) and Odah (2009) have all observed the unpalatable state of security of the Nigeria Nation which is highly lamentable. In addition, Yusuf and Babatunde (2008) noted that violence has been observed in the Niger Delta region, where upward of one hundred thousand barrels of oil per day is stolen costing the country about one billion dollars loss of revenue. The foreign oil workers are being kidnapped on daily basis, setting fire to offshore oil. Against this background this paper will try to examine the concepts of social studies education and national security, the role of social studies education in ensuring sustainable peace and security and recommendations will be made in order to maintain national security in the country.

The concept of social studies

Social studies cover a broad area of study dealing with man. It is a subject that is closely related to the social science subjects like sociology, Geography, Economics, Government, Political Science and History. Its area of focus is therefore very wide. As an emerging subject, social studies was introduced into the school curriculum like other subjects (especially the social science subjects) had firmly taken root and were well known.

Consequently, the social scientists and other interested educationist and scholars have been in the forefront of the development of the subject across the world. In view of this, social studies have attracted a multitude of definitions from those who helped to propagate the subject. According to Adaralegbe (1980) social studies is a study of how man influences and is in turn influenced by his physical, social, political, religion, economic, psychological, cultural, scientific and technological environments. On the other hand, Okobiah (1984) states that social studies is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of human beings in group interrelations with both their social & physical environment.

In a similar vein, Kissock (1981) defined social studies as a programme of study which a society uses or instill in the students the knowledge, skills, attitudes and actions it considers important concerning the relationships human beings have with each other, their world and themselves

In consonance with the above, Fabusuyi (1981) conceptualized social studies as the study of man in his physical, social environment of the world in which he lives. She went further, to say that social studies is an integration of all the social sciences each of which deals with an aspect of human behaviour and experience a reason why the contents of the social studies curriculum is drain from the social sciences Osakwe and Itedgere (2009) noted that social studies is a contemporary and environmentally formed field of study and therefore provides the learner with requisite knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and

competencies to contribute meaningfully to Nigeria's national development.

One theme that runs through the various concepts of social studies is the fact that it deals with the interaction of man within a given community and the relationships that exist between him and his various environment.

Conceptualizing National Security

Security can be said to be the activities involved in the protection of life, properties and territorial integrity of a community against threat, mishap and other forms of destructive tendencies either from within or from outside the community. However, Babangida (2012) viewed national security as the physical protection and defense of our citizens and our territorial integrity of which it is a part but also the promotion of the economic well being and prosperity of Nigerians in a safe and secured environment that promote the attainment of our national interests and those of our foreign partners.

Furthermore, Yusuf and Babatunde (2009) asserted that security is the condition which enhances the ability of government, its agencies and its citizens to function without hindrances. Section 14 (1) of chapter of the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria captures the importance of security when it states that security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government. Seen this way, "security is a social contract between the state and its citizens in when the former is expected to protect, defend and provide for the latter in the public area.

On the other hand, Otto and Ukpere (2012) opined that security means protection from hidden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life in homes, offices or communities. Security must be related to the presence of peace, safety, happiness and the protection of human and physical resources or the absence of crisis, threats to human injury among others.

National security in a broad sense implies the absence of threat to life, property and socio-economic well being of the people. A proper

understanding of security is important for an adequate explanation of the remote causes of breach of peace and security, whether historical, religions, civil, ethnic, economic, social, political etc. that have contributed to reoccurring conflicts, which Nigeria has witnessed over the years, resulting in wanton destruction and loss of live and property. These institutions: the police military, state security agencies, immigration and prison services are charged with the responsibility for the protection of life and property and well being of the people which is the primary purpose of government. In line with Khan (1987) nation security is taken to mean the totality of measures instituted by government to protect the territorial integrity and the cherished values and interest of the people as well as guarantee the freedom of the citizenry from anxiety, threats to life, and property and their safety from natural or man made disasters.

In addition, the dimensions of security to include: economic security, food security, Health security, Environmental Security, personal Security, Community Security and Political Security. (ibid) Odedele and Egotancoa (2010) posited that National Security means the process and act of effective protection of lives and property in a country. National security involves effective policing and careful watch against elements that could breach peace or anything that can jeopardize the social economic or political development in the country.

National security from the various definitions provide above is non-negotiable phenomenon in human society. It has become more encompassing involving social, political, economic and other forms of the security calculation culminating in the concern of human security and improvement in the quality of the people.

The role of social studies education

Social studies education as a problem solving subject can play a vital role in ensuring that the nation attains her national security and sustainable peace. Nigeria in recent times has witnessed frequent kidnapping and loss of lives in the South – South and South – East, heinous killing

of innocent Nigerians in Northern Nigeria. Social studies as a contemporary and environmentally focused field of study that provides the learners with prerequisite knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and competencies to contribute meaningfully to Nigeria's national development can play a crucial role in the changing the mind of the individual to good.

Akinlaye (1997) opines that social studies would offer medication and provide for need reforms or changes in society as well as catering for its survival by removing barriers between groups and classes, within society as a result of birth, occupation, language, record religion and even between generation and tribe man and countrymen. And also the schooled and unschooled, the literate and the illiterate he reiterates that social studies education would help to promote peace, co-operation, security and national pride. In line with Akinlaye (1997), social studies as a discipline afford the pupils, student teachers and members of the public the opportunity to know about the positive aspects of our socio – economic and political aspects, factors promoting unity and solidarity among the numerous ethnic groups making up Nigeria.

Social studies education from its inception has tailored towards ensuring good citizenship education, skills and spirit of co-operation in Nigeria. Considering these objectives of social studies skill, knowledge, abilities, attitude, positive behaviour, competencies, can be inculcated into Nigerian citizen through classroom instruction process of social studies education in primary, secondary, and tertiary level.

The National Policy of Education (2007) cited attitudes and values which are considered desirable and a good action as stated in the national aims of education. These include comradeship and togetherness, co-operation, honesty, integrity, hard work and fairness. These could be achieved through the teaching of social studies, however, the teaching of these desirable attitudes and positive behaviour will contribute effectively to the national security and sustainable peace in the country. Also, the teaching of this discipline will help to produce well and desirable citizens and ends insurgent in Nigeria.

Social studies as a discipline if properly and effectively taught will help to solve social problems facing developing countries like Nigeria where the old norms are fast losing their grips and no effective substitutes to replace them. No nation is self-sufficient or can produce all her needs. It is therefore necessary to understand the relationships existing between one society and another. Various topics concerning safety and national security are designed to produce good citizens that will promote national and international security. It inculcates in students international understanding by emphasizing the essential oneness of the human race to realize the growing interdependence of nation and people.

The teaching of social studies will enhance desirable attitude, patriotism at all levels of education will also produce good citizens who will identify themselves with the country as their own, work for peace and harmony for the progress of the country. It involves placing the national interest first before personal ones. If the citizens should place the national interest first before personal one and have the nation in mind, the country will be secured. The teaching of positive attitudes and appropriate values of integrity, hard – work honesty, justice, fairness and togetherness which are necessary for national development should start from their early education. Social studies education will help citizens to develop positive behaviour, attitude, abilities, skill, comradeship and togetherness towards the country which will help to enhance national security

Conclusion

Social studies education can play a crucial role in integrating national development. It can make immense contributions towards achieving national security in Nigeria through its effective teaching. The inculcation of positive attitudes, appropriate values of honesty, integrity hard-work, fairness, justice and togetherness which are necessary for national development, should start early stage of child education. When youths are adequately informed, educated and have acquired basic social skills and attitude in the society, it will

promote national security and sustenance peace and development in the country.

The citizens must all identify themselves with the nation by upholding the ideas and values of the society and also place nation's interest first before personal ones this will ensure national security in Nigeria. Also for country to be secured, the citizens through social studies education are given the right education, values, social skills and attitudes this would promote national integration and sustainable peace in the country. Social studies education has respect and value for cultures hence it does not relegate any ethnic group and her culture as exemplified by the principle of cultural relativism.

Recommendations

From the foregoing discussion, the following recommendations were made to prevent occurrence of conflicts and insurgency and also ensuring national security in Nigeria. These include:

- i. The citizens should develop a sense of patriotism that is to put the country above any selfish interest capable of destroying peace and harmony in the country.
- ii. The teaching of social studies education in all our schools should facilitate new culture of politics which make for tolerance, and political accommodation among the political class. This would enhance the survival of democracy in the country.
- iii. Citizens should pay their taxes regularly to enable the government generate the needed revenue to finance national security
- iv. Cases of planned unrest or mutiny be reported to appropriate security agents.
- v. Workshop, seminars and conferences should be organized for security agents which comprises of the police, military and intelligence agencies on how to maintain and combat various crimes in the country.
- vi. Political players should be encouraged to avoid the politics of bitterness.

- vii. Our religious leaders should try to preach sermons that will promote peaceful co existence among country men in their worshiping places.
- viii. Political leaders should avoid the use of incitive languages that can cause inter or intra ethnic crisis.
- ix. Poverty and unemployment should be reduced to the bearest minimum
- x. .Officers and men of the security outfits should have access to training and retraining programmes to update their knowledge towards combating insurgency and aggressions.

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