

# SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION

**ODUNEWU Kehinde Adewusi & WOJUADE James Idowu**

*Department of Social Studies, Emmanuel Alayande College Of Education, Oyo.*

## **Abstract**

*Nearly all geo-political zones in Nigeria have evidences of threats to national security and profound challenges to addressing the issue. Security challenges in Nigeria and roles of Social Studies education in addressing the menace are examined in this paper. It is contention of the study that Nigeria is agog with a number of problem escalating security threat such as ethno-religions crisis, bad governance, corruption, political instability, poverty and other social vices. The said problem can be surmounted through inculcation of Social Studies ideals in the children at early stage. It was therefore recommended that curriculum planners, educational policy maker and government should take it upon themselves to ensure that the cognitive, psychomotive and affective objectives of Social Studies are fully implemented in the school system right from elementary school level to the tertiary institutions.*

## **Introduction**

The seriousness attached to security, not only as a major contemporary issue but also as a basic problem which have permeated every sector of Nigerian society to the extent that almost every Nigerian, all over the world is taken as a prime suspect has made it imperative that all hands must be on deck to combat the crime. Moreso, little or no progress could be recorded by any nation that is devoid of peace and tranquility. Every nation in the world desires to achieve various forms of security including food, political, cultural and economic. Today, it is unfortunate that Nigeria is bedeviled with numbers of social vices such as assassination, bomb-blast, suicide bombing, mass murder, armed robbery, cultism, rape, kidnappings and communal violence (Mofikoya, 2015). Decades ago, Nigerian felt they were safe, and would not face security problems in the country, but the story is different today as crises looms everywhere. This in most cases, is associated with loss of lives and properties. Thus, people could no longer sleep with both eyes closed. Hence, nobody feels safe in the

country. As a result of unemployment, Nigerian youths are involved in various crimes which as a result of inadequate vocational and entrepreneurship education while in school to enable them become self-employed without relying on white collar jobs that are not there. However, people would want to exist in a guaranteed safety for both their lives and property. Ironically, the basic determinant of crime and criminality is man inhumanity to human beings as crime starts with man, from man, and ends up with man. He plans and executes crimes and he ends up being the victims of his criminal activities.

The citizens of a society are naturally concerned with crime for two reasons. First, if left unchecked crime destroys the stability necessary for the maintenance of an orderly society. Second, the citizens are the potential victims of criminal activities. Man, crime and delinquency constitute a subject of great concern and special interest to Social Studies educators. The constant opportunity of daily dealing with large numbers of children, teenagers and adults alike of varied categories and backgrounds are regularly

involved in committing criminal acts. For instance, Transparency International has twice rated Nigeria as the second most crime rated country. Similarly, the London Times was quoted by Sunday Tribune (April 16, 2000) that “the greatest looting in world history was carried out in Nigeria between 1988 and 1993” (Adegbite, 2010). Therefore, discussion on the security challenges in Nigeria will be incomplete without mentioning the implications for Social Studies educators.

### **Concept of Security**

Adebayo (2013) seen, security as the activities involved in protecting a country, building or person against attack, danger, etc, or protection against something bad that might happen in the future; or the state of feeling happy and safe from danger or worry. The word, security implies protection, peaceful existence, freedom from fear and anxiety. A secured nation could be described as one that is peaceful, with happy citizen living in a living that is well-secured free from external threats and has bright hope that is full of equal opportunities for all the citizen (Adebayo, 2013). Igbuzor (2011) posited that security is the condition of feeling of safety from harm or danger, the defence, protection and the absence of threats to acquire values (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013).

Security in an objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquire values while in subjective sense, it measures the absence of fear that such values will be attacked (Wolfers, 1996). Security deals with the freedom from danger or with threats to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its values and legitimate interests and promote the well-being of its people. While the term is seen from various perspectives, its understanding shows clearly that security is absolutely necessary for national cohesion, peace and sustainable development. Therefore, security is critical in the life of any nation as it attracts and

propels development (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013).

### **Forms of Security Challenges in Nigeria**

Nigeria in the present dispensation is faced with a lot of security challenges. Prominent here include the herdsmen/farmers clashes. Boko haram imbroglio, the Niger Delta Avenger, ethnic clashes etc. All these keep in threatening the security of the nation at large.

**Political Security:** This deals with the safety of the numbers of the society in context of the democratic political system of the country. It is concerned with protecting the society against any form of political oppression that involves harassing of basic human rights (Adebayo, 2013). Political security has to do with democratic stability of a nation-state, avoid of political oppression no matter the political affiliation. It may give freedom of action which enables one to pursue the goals that are essential to defend the external threats to act in the nation's politics. Hence, Nigeria as a nation – state that experiences different kinds of political crisis like political assassination, boko haram insurgency, judiciary instability in some cases, police brutality, cultism, election malpractices and irregularity and minority oppression by the rich politicians.

**Economic Security:** It depends on national or state resources of income either by the government or an individual in the society. If income is irregular to come either lead to unemployment of labour and inability of industries to produce at maximum capacity it may result to recession. Adebayo (2013) in Mofikoya (2015) opined that unemployment exists when the labour force wish to work but cannot get job insecurity rises with unemployment and poverty. Rirby (2011) stressed further that since unemployment leads to loss of income which affects people's ability to pay their bills and provide basic necessities for their

## ***Security Challenges in Nigeria and its Implications for Social Studies Education***

house-holds and others relatives. In western nations, dependants are well taken care of, and to prevent them from engaging in social and criminal activities.

**Cultural Security:** It consists of the norms, values, customs and art noted for a particular groups of people. Odunewu (2005) viewed culture as a way of life peculiar to norms of a particular groups. Every group has its own culture which needs to be protected. Adebayo (2013) buttressed that leaders of the society have the obligations of ensuring that the policies and practices put in place as a way of living in that society are intact Nigeria-Nation has lost its cultural values by promoting foreign culture and negate their background culture through religion and communication technologies by abandon of traditional traditions which stand as a threaten to Nigeria nation.

**Food Security:** Arowolo (2013) viewed food as the fuel that energizes the body for effective routine performance and the lack of food makes an individual lethargic, indolent, cheeky and haughty. In Nigeria one of the major threats is hunger which may lead people to commit offences such as stealing, armed robbery, kidnapping etc for survival Nigeria government must ensure food security for her citizens.

**Information Communication and Technology Security:** Internet is most versatile and has revolutionized information and communication system all over the world; it is unfortunate that some Nigerians use it to the detriment of other members of the society. It involves such as viewing naked pictures on the internet and fraudulent activities (Owolabi, 2010).

### **Major Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria**

Among the major causes of insecurity in Nigeria is ethnic, communal and religious conflicts. Nigeria is having more than 120 ethnic groups that are

different in culture, language and customs yet living together as a nation that are well integrated since 1914 amalgamation. Ethnic violence was not in existence in Nasarawa state before June 12, 2001 but there was a storm of ethnic violence in the state when traditional rulers of Azare in Awe local government and the special adviser to the State Governor on special duties were murdered, Plateau state had its share of ethnic religious conflicts in the year 2001, 2004, 2005 and 2008 which led to the suspension of Governor Joshua Dariye and declaration of state of emergency Olatunji and Adebimpe (2002), in Ojebode (2010), opined that there is virtually no geo-political zone of the country that has not had its share of either sectarian or ethnic-religious and political crisis. For instance, in the south-west, there were several cases of Odua people's congress (OPC) clashing with Ijaws, Hausa or Igbo traders in Lagos, among other places.

In the Niger-Delta the militant had virtually taken over the reign of governance, oil workers taken in hostage is no longer new, while in the south east, the Bakassi boys and Massob's activities are too numerous to mention. Ecological changes in some parts of Nigeria is also a case in points that contributed to insecurity, nomadic Fulanis search for green pasture in other parts of the country to feed their herds. This is unacceptable to the farmers in those parts due to destruction of farm land that the herdsmen caused to them and this eventually led to conflicts.

Unemployment has also contributed to the rising cases of violent conflict in Nigeria. International Labour Organization view unemployment as the number of the economically activities population who are without work but available for and seeking work, including people who have voluntarily left work (World Bank, 1998). These are major problems Nigerians are facing despite that people readily to work with both intelligence and energetic but no work. As such, they could be easily lured

into criminal activities since a free hand is the devil's workshop.

### **The Role of Social Studies in National Security**

Social studies as a discipline was conceived not only at instilling experience in the Nigerian society but also to create a path to peace and harmony through inter-ethnic interaction, good governance, stability and economic progress. Also, as a catalyst to innovation and change, social studies invariably becomes a very useful instrument in enhancing national security especially in a democratic dispensation. Being a subject that studies man holistically in his environment and in his unending challenges of life, social studies was conceived as a subject to help in "healing the wounds of the civil war, eliminating ethnicity and promoting unity, cooperation and good citizenship using the school as a tool.

The wide gulf created by the inability of social studies to be taught at the senior secondary school level has not allowed this lofty idea to make any impact, thus, constituting a sort of regicidal. However, the role of social studies to national security will provide the magic wand in the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes through the robust aims and objectives of social studies curriculum. The right type of values and attitudes referred here are co-operation, justice, fair play, tolerance, moral, honesty and patience. To this end, social studies as a programme of study has some major tasks towards enhancing national security, namely, the study of how man influences his environment, the study of how environment influences man and an integrated holistic study of man-environment interrelationship.

It is evident that these concerns revolve around human beings and their value system. The emphasis is now directed towards the security of human beings, the objective of which is to safeguard the vital core of human lives, which also is conceived as the summation of seven distinct

dimension of security, namely, economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political. Social studies education with its wider aims and objectives has the capacity of inculcating cultural values and political values in pupils and students who also have the whims and caprices to sustain the challenges eminent in national security in a democratic dispensation. The robust goals of social studies took root from the National Policy on Education (2004).

A juxtaposition of Social Studies objectives at all level of education and the national objectives from where the national aims and goals of education emanated is a clear indication that the subject has gone a long way in achieving the national objectives as contained in the various editions of the national policy on education right from that of 1977 to the current 2013 edition.

The corollary of the above is that social studies' relevance to the nation at large is being show-cased here as one of the core subjects of the 9-year Basic Education in Nigeria. This of course is additional responsibilities for social studies teachers to be versatile and resourceful so as to be able to contribute significantly to the waves of security challenges pervading the society.

It is based on the goals that the philosophy of social studies was derived as Okobia (1984), Ezegebe (1988), and Mezieobi (1992), in Allwell (2010), have shown. The overall aim of social studies is to make children become patriotic, socially responsible and good citizens by understanding the social milieu they are operating from. The objective of social studies, if specifically inculcated in children, and as future leaders having imbibed the positive cultural and political values of the society will be able to see a shift in emphasis of national security from territory security and regime survival to that of the human security within the territory.

## ***Security Challenges in Nigeria and its Implications for Social Studies Education***

### **Implication of Security Challenges in Nigeria for Social Studies Education**

The security challenges in Nigeria also affect the social studies teachers since the teachers are members of the society and they also live within the people in the society. The security challenges are capable of destabilizing the social studies teachers in the process of performing their duties. The growing domestic terrorism is capable of instilling fear into the social studies teachers and this could prevent them from doing their work as expected. Cultism which was initially prevalent in the society has found its way in tertiary institutions. Similarly, Niger Delta Imbroglio global environmental threats leading to natural and manmade disaster as well as severe environmental damage communal violence, maritime security and transnational crime, murder and food shortage, have untold effects on Social Studies teacher's productivity.

It is therefore obvious that little or no progress could be made by Social Studies educators in the society that is devoid of peace. Even, the Social Studies teachers that are the direct beneficiary of the teachers' work are also affected by the insecurity in the nation. Social Studies educators could only work when there are students to teach. This calls for conducive learning environment.

### **Conclusion**

The paper posits that national security would be best achieved in the context of a sustainable process of democratic development, infused with serious people oriented efforts to redress the worsening socio-economic condition of the majority of Nigerians in particular targeted to arrest and reverse the impact of widespread poverty. If the objectives of social studies education are well inculcated in our children early enough and the subject

introduced in the senior secondary curriculum it will reduce the ethno-religious crises eminent in our society today.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made:

- Every level of government should be involved in combating threats to national security by providing necessary infrastructure.
- The existing threats and crises should be curtailed and their spread prevented by all stakeholders.
- Trafficking of children and goods within the country should be prevented by all stakeholders.
- International relations should be developed to improve international stability through international organizations such as Ecowas, African Union.
- Social studies educators should furnish the government with information on the result of their research on security through submission of communiqué to the appropriate quarters.
- Agricultural research should be promoted to improve crop production in face of threats of food shortage through provision of modern equipment, such as harvester, tractors etc. that aid agriculture.
- The political leaders should be transparent in governance and accountability to the people by providing quarterly reports of their activities and empowerment programmes.
- The leaders of the society should ensure that our cultural values and practices are preserved and protected through promotion of things like cultural festivals, ceremonies and the likes.

## REFERENCES

- Adebayo, O.A. (2013). National security and climate: Issues, challenges and implication for science and technology education. National security and climatic changes: Issues, challenges and implications for Science and Technology – Book of readings of School of Science, Federal College of Education. Abeokuta pp. 21-45.
- Adegbite, A.O. (2010). Toward combating corruption in Nigeria: A mandate of Social Studies in the humanities and contemporary issue in the society. Oyo: Odumatt Press.
- Allwell, A.O. (2010). National security in a democratic dispensation: The role of social studies education in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Studies*. 1 & 4.
- Arowolo, T.A. (2013). National security and climatic changes: Issues, challenge and implication for Science and Technology in national security and climatic changes: Issues challenges and implication for science and technology book of readings of School of Science, Federal College of Education, Abeokuta.
- Danladi, A. (2010). Citizenship indigenship contestation in Nigeria and national security: Implication for social studies educator in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Studies*. 1 & 2.
- Ezegbe, O. (2011). The problems and challenges of insecurity in Nigeria. <http://uzochukwumike.hubpages.com>.
- Igbuzor, A.E. (1999). Religion and stability in Nigeria since independence, Ibadan: Heineman Educational book.
- Mezieobi, A. (1992). The challenges to peace in Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Studies Education*, 3.8.
- Mofikoya, A.I. (2015). Security challenges in Nigeria: Implications for chemistry educators in science education and physical fitness in the information and technological age. Ibadan: International Services.
- Nwanegbo, J. and Odigbo, J. (2013). Security and national development in Nigeria: The threat of book haram. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3.4.
- Odunewu, K.A. (2005). Socio-economic background of students' determine academic performance in social studies education. An unpublished B.Sc Project, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State.
- Ojebode, P. (2010). Ethnic religious crisis in Nigeria: The way forward in the humanities and contemporary issues in the society. Oyo: Odumatt Press.

***Security Challenges in Nigeria and its Implications for Social Studies Education***

Owolabi, K.S. (2010). Pragmatic computer studies book two. Lagos. Pragmatic Educational Press. Pp. 111-112.

Rirby, J.O. (2011). A keynote address at the induction course and workshop at Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, between 23rd and 26th August.

Wolfers, A. (1996). National security as an ambiguous symbol in Walfer, A. Discord and collaboration. Essay on International Politics. Baltimore John Hopkins University Press.

World Bank (1998). World development indicators. Washington, D.C. World Bank.