

## **THE EDUCATION ISSUES: A NATIONAL SECURITY CRISIS IN NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

This paper examined the issues of education and the national security crises in Nigeria. The critical security crises confronting Nigeria is identified with different names, such as: kidnapping; Boko Haran insurgency; socio-economic agitations; boundary disputes; cultism; corruption; robbery including pen robbery; looting of national treasury, election crises; Herdsmen brutality; including ethnic rivalry and religious pluralism. Failure of education poses distinct threats to national security. It is accepted that education helps the society in the development of a new attitude, values, knowledge, skill and techniques, but little is said about how these values are actually developed and changed within individuals; how values might be communicated; and how educational processes within formal and non-formal curriculum might promote such values development. It was concluded that teacher education is paramount and significantly associated with quality of values and ethics students acquire and this highlights the need for teacher training and retraining and courses to include ethical philosophy subject, and of course the restructuring of curriculum of all level of education to re-organise, strengthened and direct the delivery of functional, morals and values education in the broadest possible sense.

**Keywords: National security, Education, Teacher education, Curriculum, Moral attitude, Values**

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### **INTRODUCTION:**

Security basically refers to the totality of measures undertaken to ensure protection of lives and tangible assets such as landed property, and even protection of vital data of various organisations in the country including government establishments. In line with this explanation, Odekunle (2012) succinctly averred that security is a protection or defence of people against all kinds of victimization including protection from external militancy attack, economic want, poverty, illiteracy, disease or ill-health, political exclusion, social exploitation, criminality act, etcetera. In order words, security could be said to encompass the socio-economic wellbeing of the people which enables the co-existence in peace and harmony of all agents of development, and enhances the ability of each to function without hindrance. However, Oyegun (2012) described the security situation of Nigeria as a litany of unfulfilled dreams and disappointments. He observed cases of unrealized potentials, poverty in the mist of wealth, total lack of inspiration held for ransom by insecurity due to incessant crimes and abject poverty. Consequently, various symptoms of social disorganization and vices have become overt and easily noticeable with: prostitution in urban centres; drug use/abuse and associated ailments; direct and indirect child abuse; child trafficking; severance of disregards for community values; general indiscipline, absence of law-abiding culture; communal strife, violent disorder; and ethno-religious conflicts. All of these have generated into insecure environment and has called for the need to re-organise, strengthen and re-redirect the delivery of functional, morals and values education in the broadest possible sense in our education system in such a manner as to effect the younger generation positively to build their level of consciousness as they seek to make the choices that will determine their future. This is evidenced in Levine (2010) conception of education as a major communicator of ideal values, moral, attitudes, and norms.

On this note, therefore, it is pertinent to use education to reinforce positive nation's views or to discourage and even change negative ones. Ultimately, this process could concisely occur through the formal and non-formal programmes of school, as well as in the informal extra-curricular moments, which should be conveyed by both content and practice. Fundamentally, the major part of this practice is the restructuring of curriculum, and the status accorded to different fields of study. It is evident that in sovereign independent state, men and women are trained, sustained and nurtured through education to serve in its security and intelligence out fits. In Europe and America, for instance, such men and women are selected from the best and the brightest citizens, who are endowed with keen and subtle intellect, Esiemokhai (2005). The implication is that graduates with the best grades are deployed; not those who get ranks by the federal character formula. It also culminates into recruiting into their defense and military, intelligence outfits, due to scrupulous assessment of the recruit's educational background, intellectual sharpness, smartness and patriotism. Ultimately, nurturing critical thinking is a key component of education.

### **NATIONAL SECURITY CRISES:**

According to Ozoemena (2014), the critical security challenge confronting Nigeria is identified with different names such as kidnapping, Boko Haran, socio-economic agitations, boundary disputes, cultism, corruption, all manner of robbery including pen robbery, looting of the national treasury by some public officials, disorder and anarchy that go with the periodic elections, and aspects of organised criminality involving Herdsmen brutality. Furthermore, apart from ethnic

rivalry threatening the sustainable development, stable democracy and security of Nigeria, religious pluralism has also culminated in many crises and has shaken the country to its root. Notwithstanding, some of these crises always result in destruction and looting of properties worth billions of Naira and significant loss of lives as well as social dislocations among the affected population. Relative to this, Nwagboso (2012), averred that the linkage between national security and development can never be trivialized because sustainable development is a function of an enabling environment.

### **THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN NATIONAL SECURITY:**

Teaching and learning in schools are expected to be in line with the demands of curriculum innovation. On this note, Obanya (2003) explained that team building, teacher empowerment, delegation of authority, garnering of support for schools programmes, use of information and increased community participation in the provision of curriculum resources are parts of curriculum innovation process and could be seen as a process of influencing men and women to acquire the many physical, moral, social capabilities and the values of the community demanded of them by the society into which they are born and within which they must function.

The question that should be put across is “Why is national security an education issue?” It should be widely accepted that educational failures pose five distinct threats to national security: threats to, economic growth and competitiveness; Nigeria physical safety; intellectual property; Nigeria global awareness; Nigeria unity and cohesion. Therefore, national security today could be said to be closely linked with human capital; and the human capital of a nation could be said also to be as strong or as weak as its public schools.

Similarly, education is expected to help preserve and refine society so that it will be a congenial place for individual members to live and work happily in peace to ensure sustainable development, security, and stability of the nation. Thus, school is seen as means to familiarize members with physical features of the society together with the cultural patterns and practices, religious differences, political atonement, and also means to communicate the effect of these on individuals’ behaviour and competences. On this premise, it could be equally deduced that education helps the society in the development of the new attitudes, new values and new techniques demanded in the new order. Unfortunately, what most often is said about values in education often talks about a list of the desirable values in students that should be promoted, for instance, there is always phrases like “these are values to be taught”, and “values need to be inculcated”, but little is said about how these values actually develop and change within individuals, how values might be communicated, and how educational processes within formal and non-formal curriculum might promote such values development. In this regard, Mijah (2014), succinctly pointed out that teacher education is vehemently perceived as utmost crucial and has been globally accepted to be significantly associated with the quality of values and ethics students acquires. Simply because the educators (teachers) stand in the interface of the transmission of knowledge, skills and values, and, often regarded and accepted as the backbone of education system.

In addition, Igbokwe (2013) maintains that nationally and locally, education systems should insist on professional development opportunities for in-service teachers to enhance their skills and knowledge in relation to the desirable values the schools needs to inculcate in learners according to the contextual needs of emerging society. Esiemokhai (2010), attributed the historical attraction of many immigrants to the United States from around the world to the ‘United States opportunity of obtaining top-rate education’. In line with this contribution, it could be seen that a highly educated workforce increases economic productivity and growth. This growth is necessary, it could finance

everything else that guarantees a much better national security that could make a nation a desired place to live and a model for other countries.

### **EDUCATION ISSUES:**

The many education issues that have serious impacts on the national security and sustainable development of the nation include:

#### **The Problem of Relating the Curriculum to National Manpower Needs:**

The introduction of vocational and entrepreneurship programmes into the curriculum at various level of education in Nigeria is a welcome innovation. However, there is always constant rush to the academic grammar schools, while enrolment in vocational schools, agricultural institutes and trade centres is correspondingly poor. The fact remains that the grammar school continue to flourish because they are highly recognized and patronized, but, liberal education alone has failed to equip the recipient with requisite skills and attitudes for leaving a productive life. Consequently, graduates of our institutions of higher learning have been populating the crime world due to their inability to secure meaningful employment upon graduation. It therefore follows, by a simple logic, that if a nation bequeaths the right type of education to its citizens, the citizens will not turn against their father land. Relative to this, Daily Sun (2013) reported the former minister of education, Professor Ragayyatu Rufai as having identified reform of the education system as the solution to the security challenges confronting the nation; as she suggested a total overhaul of the curriculum at all levels of education with a view to providing its recipients broad based education in the development of the mind, soul and body; and in comprehending the environment, development of appropriate attitudes, skills, abilities and competences to co-exist with and contribute to the development of the society. However, this calls for a synergy between liberal education, vocational and entrepreneurship education and the intensification of the emphasis on vocational and entrepreneurial education to equip graduates with occupational survival skills. The present global economic crises and rising waves of unemployment have greatly emphasized the need for functional entrepreneurship and vocational education. The unfortunate scenario is that the mismatch between the jobs that students are preparing for and jobs that are available or projected to grow is increasing; this is the primary driver of the discrepancy and a challenge to national security.

#### **Issues of Standards for the Preparation of the Teachers:**

The questions that should be pointedly asked are:

- How do teacher education institutions prepare teachers to carry responsibility, exercise initiative to be leaders, and face professional and civic problems with courage?
- How do teacher education institutions really prepare teachers to think critically about important civic and national problems (security as well as about professional problem)
- How do teacher education institutions really educate teachers to a broad knowledge of nation/world problems?
- How do teacher education institutions really educate teachers to have a broad knowledge of national security challenges?

The summary of these questions begging for answers is, 'what manner of education do teachers receive and what retraining opportunities are available for them to equip them for the task assigned to them in the National Policy? The relationship between teacher education and the promotion of

security and national sustainable development must aim at integrating 'values, activities, and principles that are inherently linked to security and national sustainable development into all forms of education and learning. This aims in ushering a change in attitudes, behaviours, and values to ensure a more sustainable future in social, environmental, economic, peace and security. How are the standards of teachers developed to help them learn to focus attention on the values that underpin these outcomes, and develop strategies for making them manifest in their teaching?

If the national aspiration of using “education as an instrument per excellence for effecting national sustainable development and national security” is to be achieved, the basic form and structure of teacher education must be reviewed to accommodate all the training required for the teacher to be efficient in the promotion of national security and sustainable development through education practices in the school. This affirms Tahir (2016) comment, during the first public lecture by faculty of education of the National Open University (NOUN), Abuja; ‘the National Teachers Institute (NTI) failed in the massive training of teachers by sidelining the Universal Basic Education (UBE) reform policy launched in 1999 through Open Distance Learning’. At this juncture, he admonished the country to contend with the fatal policy collapse because teachers produced are not knowledgeable enough to deliver the restructured curriculum.

Unfortunately, Universities/Faculty of Educations have been guilty of contributing to the over production of teachers through their accrediting of dubious institutions and programmes; demonstrating more concern to increase income than with quality and professionalism.

### **The Issue of Poor State of Nation’s Economy and Financing of Educational System:**

The problem of educational development in Nigeria today is that of providing funds for the implementation of government policies on education and carrying out curriculum innovations in various disciplines and at various levels of education, for instances, many schools have not gotten adequate supply of equipment and personnel, particularly for the teaching of such subjects as introduction technology. Curriculum innovation has not gotten adequate attention and sponsorship by government because funds are not usually available for instance, to introduce new curriculum.

Dike (2014) remarked that it is not enough to produce curriculum, it is even more important to put in place machinery that will ensure that its ideals are realizable through effective classroom practices. For instance, even though the implementation of the Revised 9-Year UBEC has commenced systematically in Primary 1 and JSS 1, it is known (Abakpa, 2013; Akpan, 2012; Okpala, 2011) that the structures and appropriate activities that foster effective implementation of the curriculum are either inadequate or lacking in Nigerian schools. Foremost among the myriad of challenges of Basic Education in Nigeria are the issues of teacher quality and development, lack of enough specialist teachers; dearth of relevant support materials for teachers and inadequate supervision and mentoring of teachers. This is also affirmed by Omar (2004), who stresses that the success of any educational programmes depends to a large extent on effective implementation strategy, confirming also that the national objectives of education are laudable in Nigeria, but their realization is constrained by poor implementation strategy largely due to inadequate fund.

### **Issue of Political Interference:**

The political interference is largely responsible for misuse of human resource management in education. Political parties often use many teachers as their party staff and these teachers also participate willingly in politics, however, most teachers who become very close to political leaders have records of misconducts and unethical behaviours such as irregularity in class teaching,

becoming absent from the school without taking leave. Furthermore, political interference attempt to influence decision making regarding the recruitment and transfer of teachers, the resultant effects are favouritism, nepotism and bribery as major types of misconduct in teacher' appointment, posting and transfer. The implication is that the moral and ethical commitment of teachers gradually decreased and eroded over the years due to political interference. The most striking is the alarming lack of political education, this explains why electoral frauds pose a major challenge to democracy in Nigeria and by implication posing threat to security of the nation. Sequel to this, the election process itself has become usually taunted with observable manipulations and in some cases, heart-rending violence perpetrated by able-bodied youths' employed' as armed thugs.

### **Issue of Integrating National Security Concept into Curriculum Lifestyle:**

According to Levine (2005), values are infused only through those channels where it can be most effective in affecting behaviour. The viewpoint here is that the interface between the school and the child or young adult learner is organised at several levels so that there are pathways that lead into the learning life of the child at school. Each of these pathways, weather classified as curriculum, core curriculum, or extra-curricular, is capable of being developed into an effective enigma for promoting character and values. Such innovative curriculum could help build in learner an anti-corruption mindset at an early stage of life. Therefore, infusing civic mission throughout the curriculum offers an array of extra-curriculum activities; and structuring the school programme environment and climate so that students/participants are able to 'live what they learn'. This requires also the guidance of competent teachers. What the teachers know or the content mastery is a powerful determinant of how much and how well the students learn; hence teacher's recruitment and retention is very paramount. The role of teacher education in promoting national security and stability cannot be over emphasized, it is indeed significantly and positively correlated with students' learning outcome. Lumpkin (2008) pointed out that besides the intellectual development reinforced by the universal standardization, there should be a call for a moral progress which would help students become human beings capable of virtuous acts, and remain firm in various streams of modern pressures.

### **Issues of Enhancement and Participation of Disadvantaged Areas and Groups in Nigerian Education:**

Education has been accepted as the greatest force that can be used to forester national unity, self-reliance and socio-economic development, Nwagwu (2008). The disadvantaged group in this context include handicapped groups, discriminatory-target groups, neglected and even underdeveloped groups. Philosophy of education states that a 'society is a sub-community whose members are socially conscious of their modes of life and are united by a common set of norms and value', Okeke (2003). The above explanation shows that these set of people are members of the community but are functionally not members of the society because they do not know their right, duties and obligations as full members of the society. On this premise it could be said that as the country becomes more industrialized, modernized and urbanized, the number of orphans, destitute, beggars, and illiterates will increase, and unless the nation brings them into the mainstream of societal life through education, many might become deviants, and criminals in the society, hence the cause of security challenges today. Similarly, there are certain cultures and beliefs that militate against the full participation of certain categories of people in the education system; worse still, some of these groups prefer to live by begging for alms, roaming aimlessly along the streets and indulging in petty crimes and other deviant behaviours in preference to being restricted within the school walls where they erroneously imagine they might be treated like prisoners in school

environment. Even though, Nwagwu (2008), conceded that these groups have little or no excuse for failure to catch up with other groups in the country but their unequal educational opportunities and the resultant achievement gap have a direct impact on national security. It should be noted also that large, undereducated swaths of a population damage the ability of a nation to physically defend itself, protect its secure information, conduct diplomacy, and grow its economy. Unfortunately, with income inequality and an increase in poverty due to economic recession, young people born to poor parents are now less likely to perform well in school and graduate from schools than their better-off peers, and they are increasingly less likely to rise out of poverty. This trend not only causes a nation's dream to appear out of reach to more citizens but also breeds isolationism and fear. The unrelenting gap separating peers from peers also renders a nation's dream off limits to many young people, this inequality may have a long term effect also on nation's culture and on civil society with its attendant security crises.

#### **Issue of Wide Spread Absence of Teaching and Learning Culture:**

Onwuka (1996), pointed out that hidden curriculum of the school consist of norms and polices that collectively give form and meaning to a wide range of behaviours. This explains why the final component of moral functioning is moral action. Sometimes, students may possess the necessary sensitivity, judgement, and motivation to act rightly, but, they may not possess the needed skills and know-how to do so, for instance: resolving conflicts with others; challenging bias; taking initiative to start or even lead good works; are not easy tasks. All of these call for school governance structures, disciplinary procedures, allocation of rewards, and norms of teacher-student interaction, since all communicate morally laden values. Again issues of fairness, due process, equal opportunity, respect for differences, and equity in distribution of scarce resources and rewards permeate the education system; these factors should not be ignored.

#### **Lack of Appropriate Framework in Civic Education:**

One of the earliest goals of the first public schools was to create an active and engaged citizenry, however, too many private and public schools have stopped teaching civics and citizenship, thus, leaving students without knowledge of their own national history, traditions, and values. Schools have also largely failed to design appropriate framework to help students become aware of other cultures in Nigeria or the world (Daily Sun, 2011). This leaves most of them unable to describe how laws are passed, unfamiliar with landmark Supreme Court decisions, and unsure of the functions of the Nigerian Constitution or the Bill of Rights; all of these are threats to national security. Not only do Nigerian children know little about their own country, they also cannot understand or communicate with their peers within the country. Nevertheless, Orikpe, Ephraim and Azubike, (2013), noted that 'History is a light that illuminates the past, and a key that unlocks the door to the future'. Nigeria history becomes imperative even from early stage of child's education. As students get imbibed in other people culture in Nigeria, it could enable them have sense of believing in the possibility of a united Nigeria as they aspire for good statesmanship, patriotism and loyalty to the nation.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION:**

The simplest way to inculcate and establish moral conscience in the society is through institutional academic programmes at primary, secondary, colleges and universities levels. Other avenues include workshops, capacity building programmes as well as grassroots' orientation, publicly teaching. The advocacy of education is paradox; school is designed to use its curriculum as a major instrument to transmit skills, practical knowledge, important cultural values, norms, patriotism and loyalty, lesson of obedience, ambition, concern for others, internal behaviour disposition.

Consequently teachers' education is perceived paramount and has been globally accepted to be significantly associated with the quality of values and ethics students acquire. This has called for:

The need to ensure the continuity of innovation and total restructuring of curriculum to re-organise, strengthened and re-direct the delivery of morals and values education in the broadest possible sense in our education system and help teachers to learn to focus attention on the values that underpin these outcomes and develop strategies for making them manifest in their teaching.

Many successful models of teacher preparation and development that have been shown to boost teacher effectiveness and retention should not be ignored; workshops, in-service training and short courses should be designed to train teachers to enable them have the values and ethics students should acquire or that should be developed in learners. Again, teachers need be trained on how to bring, the content, the pedagogy and structure of teaching peaceful values, morals, citizenship and skills acquisition for the anticipated essential learning outcomes such as communication, problem-solving, aesthetic expression, technological competence, personal development and citizenship. Furthermore they should be trained on how to utilize low-cost materials in the immediate environment of the learners, and how to integrate information and communication technologies (ICT's) into pedagogy. These measures will help catch the attention of young learners and hence increase their capacity to create change in their environment.

Government policy should be premised on the rational pursuit of restoring the current educational arrangement to ensure that youths/adolescents legally have free and compulsory education up to the age of 18 years with good legislation made available to enforce its implementation and any other excellent provisions put in place, if possible, formulate a set of ethics or codes of conducts for parenting. Parents and homes have a major responsibility for the welfare of the child at such, the well-being of the child can best be served by a strong partnership between schools and the community resources (NGOs, clubs, religious organizations etc) which should be part of teacher education programmes within and outside the classroom to help in evolving viable options to the solution of education of the adolescents because early adolescence is a critical phase of development, a period of accelerated growth and change; a time of opportunity and risk. Hence, behaviour patterns adopted in these years can have lifelong consequences, both positive and negative such as: increased dropout rates; teen pregnancy and motherhood; substance use and abuse; and life-long violent behaviours.

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