Relevance of the Security Education Contents of the Basic Education Curriculum to Contemporary Security Challenges in Nigeria

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Abstract
Security, as we all know is everybody's business. There is the need to catch the children young in order for them to be fully prepared to overcome any security challenge they may encounter in future. In view of this, the paper examines the relevance of the security education contents of the Basic Education Curriculum to contemporary security challenges in Nigeria. The paper suggests the duties and responsibilities of a child in relation to personal security, among others. The paper goes further to provide viable suggestions that could further enhance security awareness based on the rising security challenges in the country.

Introduction

Security can be defined as the absence of danger. It can be said to be synonymous with safety. Security of lives and properties of citizens is one of the primary objectives of government. The maximization of children's potentials as well as their development in all spheres is hinged to a large extent on the peace and security of their environment. It is important that the home environment and the society at large are safe and conducive for any meaningful learning to take place. The social, economic and political upheavals in Nigeria have underscored the need for the provision of Security Education.

The country desires closer cooperation, improvement in the quality of life, respect for the rule of law and human rights and peaceful co-existence among communities. The overall philosophy of the nation includes living in 'unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom, equality and justice'.

In line with this, the National Policy on Education (NPE) provides the following as one of the objectives of Basic Education:

> "ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, communicative and life skills, as well as the

> ethical, moral, security and civic values needed for the laying of a solid foundation for life-long learning", (Section 2, 11e).

According to Ekhomu (2009):

> 'The point is that individuals, companies and government agencies are all responsible for providing security at various levels, using various approaches and strategies. The first step to getting secured is not about knowing the academic definitions of the word 'security' but to acquire a state of consciousness known as security consciousness and a state of awareness known as security awareness" (Pg xiv).

The recent incidences of bombing, kidnappings, abductions, rape, armed robbery attacks and militancy across the country are evidence of the security challenges facing the country. Other sources of danger and insecurity are shootings, murder, human trafficking, cultism, civil disturbances, chemical attacks, arson, fire outbreaks, accidents, piracy, terrorism, burglary, theft, assault, political thuggery, violence and internet fraud.

There are many factors that could be responsible for insecurity in the country; one of such is drug abuse. According to Umunnakwe et al (2014), some of the causes of insecurity challenges could be linked to: communication breakdown between parents and children, lack of parental care, peer group influence, low self-esteem, poverty, influence of broken homes, corruption and other environmental factors.

However, in order to deal with this menace, the government of Nigeria was able to put a lot of things together to militate against insecurity in the country. A lot of Security outfits and organizations were established. Some of these are: The Nigeria Police, National Drug Law enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), State Security Service (SSS), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission (ICPC). In addition to this, to catch the children young, and prevent the immediate and remote causes of insecurity in the county, the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) in collaboration with NERDC, infused some core values into the Basic and Senior Secondary Education through the Religion and Nation values curriculum in 2012 with Security Education as one of its core themes.

Issues/activities that corrode integrity, like indiscipline, lack of the fear of God,

materialism (when members of society praise and envy rich people and look down on the poor), fraud, inconsistency in behaviour, stealing, disobedience, etc were highlighted in the curriculum. All these efforts made by government are meant to ensure that young learners are imbibed with good character and behaviour that would prevent them from all these acts of indiscipline that could constitute a threat to security of lives and properties.

To further actualize this assertion, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) developed the National Values curriculum in 2012 which has Security Education as one of its core themes. But the question is how relevant are the contents of the Security Education curriculum to the current needs of the society in terms of the contemporary security challenges facing the country? This paper tends to focus its searchlight on the contents of Security Education as presented in the current Basic Education Curriculum.

Security Education Contents at the Basic Education Level

Education is an important instrument for building a culture of peace, safety and tolerance among members of any given society. Through education, the desired improvement in the quality of life, respect for the rule of law and human rights and peaceful coexistence can be achieved. The recent unprecedented spate of insecurity in the nation calls for an appraisal of the Security education contents. This is with a view to making suggestions that would improve these contents and make the objectives of Basic Education curriculum; especially as far as security education is concerned, achievable. Amendments could thereafter be carried out in order to respond to current security challenges and realities.

The objectives of security education as given by the Federal Ministry of Education (2012) are, among others:

- Create awareness and understanding of security situations (assets protection and loss prevention) and develop the capability for avoiding it;
- Acquire the knowledge about security agents and their roles, causes and effects of crimes and criminal behaviour, and the understanding of personal security;
- Inculcate in the learners the skills of observation and reporting security risk situations in their immediate community;
- Inculcate in the learners the skills to identify security risk situations and then take appropriate measures to avoid them;
- Develop the attitudes and values of cooperation, tolerance and creativity for solving security challenges without violence;

- Acquire the necessary skills required to take precautionary measures to avoid impending danger/insecurity, to ensure assets protection and loss prevention; and1.
- Develop consciousness towards personal security and the security of others. (Pg 2)

Table 1 provides some of the key contents in Security Education which span across Basic Education classes. The contents are spirally organised from simple to complex and concrete to abstract.

Table 1: Security Education Contents in Basic Education Curriculum

Class	Content
Primary 1	i. Safe and unsafe places in your environment ii. Dangerous spots in the environment iii. Who to call during an emergency
Primary 2	i. Sources of danger and insecurity ii. Security agencies and their Primary duties iii. Safety Tips on Roads
Primary 3	i. Security agencies and their Primary duties ii. Identification of criminal behaviours iii. Meaning, causes, effects of flood iv. Ways to prevent flood
Primary 4	i. Meaning of neighbourhood watch. ii. Ways of reporting suspicious movements in the neighbourhood iii. Consequences of failure to observe suspicious movements and people in the neighbourhood: iv. Different emergency phone numbers and their uses
Primary 5.	i. Meaning of personal security -Precautionary measures on personal security. ii. Duties and Responsibilities of a child in relation to personal security
Primary 6	i. Meaning of personal security management ii. Punishment for various crimes: theft, rape, forgery, examination malpractices, food fraud (preparing and selling bad food), and fake drugs, etc. iii. Acting appropriately: Response to emergency situations such as fire outbreaks, etc. iv. How to raise alarm in different emergency situations. v. What to do when a crime occurs

(Source: Federal Ministry of Education (2012): 9-year Basic Education Curriculum, Religion & National Values, Pry 1-3, 4-6 & JSS 1-3) Lagos: NERDC Press.

Basically, according to Ekhomu, (2009), one needs security for the following reasons:

- Life Safety;
- Injury avoidance;
- Loss Avoidance;
- Promotion of productivity;
- Promotion of safety;
- Promotion of public safety;
- Reduction of victimization; and
- Police assistance.

The question is how far has the curriculum captured these security needs, especially now that the country is neck deep in new security challenges? In other words, can the current curriculum reduce or out rightly remove the incidences of insecurity in the country?

Relevance of the Content of Security Education at the Basic Education Level to the Contemporary Challenges in Nigeria

The content of Security Education at the level under discussion has attempted to consider majority of the security challenges bothering the nation. Issues and topics in the curriculum which are to be taught are, among others: dangerous spots; sources of danger and insecurity; safety tips; identification of dangerous people e.g. kidnappers, robbers, rapists etc; duties and responsibilities of a child in relation to personal security; punishment for various crimes: theft, rape, forgery, examination malpractices, food fraud (preparing and selling bad food) and fake drugs, etc; how to raise alarm in different emergency situations; common crimes and associated punishments; causes and effects of common crimes and crime prevention. It is believed that children taught with the curriculum would be able to identify what constitute security. They should be able to have a good knowledge of what constitutes living in a peaceful

environment, appreciate a peaceful environment and even become ambassadors of peace. Moreover, they would be able to advise, educate and help their peers, siblings, parents and even their community on security issues, thereby promoting security consciousness in the society. Knowledge of the essence of security in the community could motivate learners to pick a career in security related professions, such as the Police force, Civil Defence Corps etc., thereby strengthening the security force in the country.

However, it is pertinent to note that there are other emerging security issues that are yet to be considered in the current curriculum. Examples of such are **financial frauds** and **internet frauds** which became prominent at the emergence of the use of Information Technology which includes Global System for Mobile (GSM) Communication, Handsets, and the Internet. Human Trafficking or Trafficking in Persons (TIP) (where children, young boys and girls are either forced or coerced to go to other countries to be sex slaves or domestic servants) is another serious security challenge in the country. This issue is yet to be captured in the current curriculum contents. These two critical issues would need to be looked into by curriculum developers in order to create awareness and minimise these challenges.

Suggestions

In view of the above, and to reduce the level of insecurity in the country, it is suggested that:

- The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) should include in the curriculum emerging security issues, such as the ones highlighted and any other ones that are yet to be in the curriculum contents.
- Teachers at the Basic Education level should be trained on Security Education Curriculum.
- Security Education should be included in the Nigerian Certificate of Education minimum standard to ensure effective implementation of the curriculum.
- NERDC to include emerging security issues, such as, internet fraud and human trafficking in the curriculum. They should constantly organise Security Education seminars/workshops involving stakeholders to further create awareness and enhance reduction of security challenges in the country.
- There should be constant public enlightenment campaigns against all social vices in the society.

- Values that promote peaceful coexistence like, humility, tolerance, humaneness, self- control and forgiveness should be promoted, emphasised and be infused in the curriculum.

Conclusion

The paper has made attempts to provide the importance of security to societal peaceful coexistence. The contents of Security Education at the Basic Education level were highlighted. However, in order to achieve the objectives of the curriculum of Security Education, it is important that teachers are well trained, essential teaching learning materials are to be harnessed and used. It is also necessary that all emerging security challenges should be included in the curriculum.

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