

## SECURITY EDUCATION PROGRAMME: PANACEA FOR CRIME REDUCTION IN RURAL COMMUNITIES IN NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

*'Security issues' in rural communities in Nigeria is diverse and complex, ranging from raping, kidnapping, ritual killings, and suicide bombing to other forms of criminal activities with alarming dimensions and consequences. The purpose of this paper is to explore the use of security education programme in the reduction of crime in rural communities in Nigeria. Security education programme for rural community members is a means of educating, informing, reawakening, and re-orienting community members on security matters in their various communities, why they must be security conscious, what they need to do when there are security breaches how to communicate with the formal policing structure when there is a break of law and order in the community among others. Based on the study, a security education programme must be introduced to rural community members as it projects to help in the reduction of crimes in rural communities. It was recommended that a security education programme should be introduced to rural community members in promoting peace and reduction of crimes in rural communities also, there is a need to train community members in security education programme for effective security in their various communities by security experts.*

**Keywords:** *Security, Education, Programme, Rural Communities*

### **Introduction**

Nigeria a country with over 213 million population with a projected GDP expected to reach 440.00 USD billion dollars by the end of 2023 has been battling with the issue of insecurity for more than two decades. The issue of insecurity in Nigeria can be traced back to the civil war which started in 1967 and ended in 1970. Many Nigerians lost their lives, properties and valuables to this avoidable incident. After the civil war, much of the ammunition in circulation were not retrieved and this further spike an increase in the level of criminal activities in the country. In the time past, Nigeria was

regarded as a land flowing with milk and honey but what we have in today's Nigeria is a land flowing with the blood of innocent citizens.

In the year 2000 a sect of Islamic groups called 'Boko Haram' sprung up in the Northern Eastern part of Nigeria with an agitation which negates Western education and they, therefore, tagged Western education as been evil. The sect has invaded many communities, villages, farms, churches, mosques, government offices, hospitals, and schools among others leaving citizens with pain, agony injury and lots more. The Boko Haram sect has also been involved in killings, suicide bombing, kidnapping, and raping of women and young girls in rural communities in Nigeria. According to Garba (2018), the activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria especially in the North East happen to be one of the greatest nightmares in the history that happens to Nigeria as a country.

Many efforts have been made by the previous and present governments in seeing to bring down this sect but it is as if they are been empowered on a daily basis as they continue to launch more deadly attacks on people, farmlands, homes and rural communities. Zainab (2017) reported that Nigeria however, had lost over 200 billion dollars within the space of 20 years as a result of the activities of this sect which has rendered so many business activities grounded in the North Eastern part of the country. Apart from the deadly Boko Haram group, there are other notorious groups scattered all over other parts of the country which include Bandits, herdsmen, kidnappers, armed robbers, and ritualists among others (Zainab, 2017).

Rural communities in Nigeria are known for their peaceful coexistence in time past, where a majority of the community members are farmers. This however, for many years had contributed much to the economic development of the country. Members of many rural communities in Nigeria can no longer sleep with their two eyes closed based on the fact that the level of insecurity in their community is nothing to write home about. Many cases of insecurity are reported in rural communities all over the country, leaving rural dwellers in a state of fear (Obiezu, 2023). Due to many occurrences

in rural communities, rural farmers live in fear of going to farms, women in fear of going to the streams, and children in fear of going to schools. According to an eyewitness report in Owan community in Ovia North East local government area of Edo state on August 29<sup>th</sup> 2019, Ten (10) peasant farmers which include men, women and children were slaughtered in a day by unknown gunmen that invaded the community farms with their cows and guns. This incident leave a state of fear in the members of the community as many of the farmers who managed to escape the evil attack vowed on relocating and stopping farming activities. Many farmers who remain in the community decided to stay away from their farms for a long period. Omolayo (2019), reported that community members are aware of the state of insecurity in the country but do not have formal training on what to do to prevent issues of criminality in their communities. Hence the need for a security education programme. A security education programme is therefore, the process whereby community members are exposed to the knowledge, values, skills and experiences included in the concepts of security of their community which are necessary for citizens to achieve comprehensive national security.

### **Conceptualizing Security, Security Education and Security Education Programme**

#### **Security**

Security is derived from the Latin word *Securus*, which means “to be safe,” “to be devoid of anxiety or fear,” “to be emotionally secure,” and “to provide grounds for confidence.” It is described as the transmission or sensation of safety from injury or danger. Defending, protecting, and upholding essential values, as well as the lack of threats to acquired values (David, 2006). According to Yusuf and Babatunde (2009), security is the condition which enhances the ability of the government, its agencies and its citizens to function without hindrances. Security is the degree of protection to safeguard a nation, the union of nations, persons or persons against danger, damage, loss and crime (Udin 2014). It is the guarantee that people enjoy under a nation or state in terms of comfortability and operation without fear or threat (Salau, 2012).

Security is defined as a state of society of tranquility and it has two components: emotional security which is the individual and the community’s feeling of the need for security, and procedural security which is the regulatory efforts to achieve or restore security (Carter, 2002). So, security is

the sense of reassurance that is felt by the individual, whether because of the absence of threats to his or her existence, or as a result of having the means to confront such threats as they arise (Henry, Merten, Plunkett, & Sands, 2018). Studies, such as Cheung (2018) and Al-Qudah (2013), confirm that the individual who feels safe feels happy in his or her work, and then produces and lives his or her natural life. So the concept of security has an important status for humans as they need to live in peace and be free from threats, stress and anxiety, and to feel loved among others. Other forms of security include human security, food security, political security, economic security and environmental security.

According to The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2022) report, new threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene, shows that people's sense of safety and security is at a low in almost every country, including the richest countries, despite years of upwards development success. Those benefiting from some of the highest levels of good health, wealth, and education outcomes are reporting even greater anxiety than 10 years ago. Chukuma (2021) reported that the states of chronic dangers like starvation, sickness, and repression can be included in the definition of human security. Human Security is the ability to avoid harmful disturbances to the routines of daily life in one's home, workplace, or community. Wehmeier and Ashby (2019), describe human security as the means of safeguarding against potential future harm or as the action taken to defend a nation, or a person from dangers. In essence, human security must be connected to the presence of peace, safety, happiness, and the absence of crises and other risks to human safety.

Food security on the other hand is a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO, 2021). Wen & Elliot (2018), identified some dimensions of food security which include: Availability of food produced locally and imported from abroad, accessibility which refers to if the food can reach the consumer (transportation infrastructure) and the latter has enough money for purchase. To such physical and economic accessibility is added socio-cultural access to ensure that the food is culturally acceptable and that social protection nets exist to help the less fortunate and utilization which refers to how

individuals are able to eat adequate amounts both in quantity and quality to live a healthy and full life to realize his or her potential. Food and water must be safe and clean, and thus adequate water and sanitation are also involved at this level.

Political security refers to safeguarding society's safety against illegitimate internal dangers as well as pressures or threats from the outside world. National, homeland, and law enforcement are all involved while economic security deals with protecting the economy's ability to feed the populace is simply one aspect of economic security; another is the degree of freedom enjoyed by the populace and the government in making financial and economic decisions. The capacity to defend a country's wealth and economic independence from external threats and coercion is also a must. Thus, it includes monetary policy, a few law enforcement organizations, as well as global trade, finance, and commerce agreements. It has recently been interpreted by some in the perspective of human security to entail reducing income inequality and poverty.

Security education, which is yet to gain a wider definition from various scholars on the other hand, has been a newly introduced element of religious and national values subject. In 2011, the Presidential Summit on Education presented an opportunity to integrate security education. One of the results was the 2013 6th Edition of the National Policy on Education, which reorganized the curricula for basic and post-basic education. However, it may be used interchangeably with "security awareness" or security consciousness". In a simple form, security education may be seen as everything and anything one learns about security. It is a type of education designed to promote the level of security consciousness among the citizenry of a particular country for that to be able to protect their immediate environment, nation and the world at large. Security education teaches more about how to protect oneself, immediate environment, the nation and the world at large (Okunola, 2010). It enriches the knowledge against any form of threatening actions to lives and properties be it at home, school, place of work, community or the country. The concepts of security education have reached an advanced stage in various countries. The aim of security education is to acquire and develop knowledge and skills on counteracting various threats as well as to create appropriate attitudes and values. It prepares individuals and societies for living and working in contemporary environment

(Pieczywok, 2012). Teaching on security and safety may apply to different stages of education led in public, or private institutions. For instance, in Poland, security education is a separate subject at secondary schools and universities. Other educational systems usually assume cross-curricular teaching to convey the security and safety issues. Regardless the systems, in order to acquire or develop specific competencies (understood as knowledge, skills, and attitude together with personal qualities) in this field, educators strive to use more advanced tools to achieve didactic goals (Xu, Madison, Flinn, & Kwok, 2014). The use of new and emerging technologies seems to be a real challenge in security education. It is vital to mention that the concept of new technologies is identified with information and communication technologies (ICTs) which are claimed to open up new possibilities for didactics and promise an added value in terms of efficacy and quality enhancement (Trentin, 2010). This particular type of education is defined as “the teaching and learning of the security concepts and experiences necessary to achieve national security” (AlSakran, 2018). It is also defined as a set of methods, activities, experiences and preventive measures that lead to protection from falling into a crime of all kinds (Al-Basheer, 2015). A further definition is that it is the strengthening of national belonging and national identity and establishing the principle of social responsibility and the ability to test, compare, and contrast ideas (Al-Ayed, 2009).

Digeser (2016) described security as a ‘neglected concept’. Literature shows that there are four perspectives of security: The military or national security perspective, the cooperative or inter-national security perspective, the worldwide security perspective, and thus the great or human security perspective. During the conflict years, the term security was defined from the military perspective where it had been seen because of the method and act of effective protection of lives and property during a rustic. In other words, security was seen from the attitude of national security and was defined as a protective condition which statesmen either plan to acquire or preserve, so on protecting the numerous components of their polities from either external or internal threats (Baldwin, 2017). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2016) defined national security as the security of territory from external aggression, protection of national interests in policy, or global security from the threat of nuclear holocaust. This has been mentioned because of the classical

formulation which sees security as how states use force to manage threats to their territorial integrity, their autonomy, and their domestic political order, primarily from other states. Hence, Baldwin's (2017) notion that security studies during now were composed mostly of scholars interested in military statecraft. With the highest of the conflict, the concept of security came under increasing scrutiny from scholars and practitioners alike. There has, therefore, be an extension of this military notion of security to include other notions of security. Nolan (2009) introduced the notion of cooperative security which emphasizes the interdependence of a cluster of nations to protect themselves from the threat from either a nation or a group of nations. Bajpai (2020) faulted these notions as being restricted to the protection and welfare of the state. In his opinion, what is central or should be central is the protection and welfare of the individual citizen or person. To him, a conception of security that is centred especially on the sanctity of the individual could be called human security.

Unlike security, the conceptualization of education has received considerable attention within the scholarly literature. According to Adaramoye (2018), education is the mixture of all the processes employed in which an individual develops the ability, skill, and other kinds of behaviour that are useful within the society he lives. Dave and Rajput (2016) defined education as a process of human enlightenment and empowerment for the achievement of a much better and better quality of life. To Aigbomian and Iyamu (2001), it is the method through which an individual is taught what is desirable within society. Obanya (2004) defined education as the inter-generational transmission of cultural heritage. Therefore, security education can be viewed as the process by which society generates and transmits the knowledge required for its sustenance and survival.

Hence, the aim of security education is the formation of citizens' consciences for the benefit of society through the preparation of an aware and educated generation of security immunity (Al-Sultan, 2009). It seeks to consolidate the prevailing community values that call for the protection of young people (Al-Maliki, 2006), so the importance of security education lies in the protection of individuals and communities to fight against crimes and accidents and fortify community members

from deviant ideas which affect the different social, psychological, economic and cultural aspects (Al-Shahri, 2010).

### **Security Education Programme and the Need for Security Education in Rural Communities**

Several internal conflicts are leading to insecurity in so many parts of Nigeria. There is no region exempted from insecurity as of today. The various conflicts/issues of insecurity in the nation include the Niger Delta struggle for resource control, the Jos crisis, numerous inter and intra-communal crises, youth restiveness, various political crises, farmers-Fulani herdsman crises which are becoming more rampant in our communities today, Boko Haram insurgency which tends to be the greatest security challenge some years back has been overtaken by unnamed group regarded as Bandits and they are causing great havoc on daily basis to both lives and properties in the country. The security situation is made worse by armed banditry, different dimensions of violence, terrorism, hostage-taking, cultism, and the like.

According to Iyamu and Edozie (2015), the effect of insecurity on the national economy has been grave as lives have been lost, public utilities are destroyed, serious economic losses by individuals, corporate organizations, and government; decline in the spate of foreign investments, destruction of property, shutting down or relocation of businesses, human capital flight, and parts of the country. Iyamu and Edozie (2015) further opined that in several countries, youths play a prominent role or are used to perpetrate crises. Often, with little or no information, they are misled into triggering, escalating, and sustaining these crises. Citizens of many countries are also ill-prepared to manage security situations. It is in this light that the United Nations dedicated 2001 to 2010 as the decade for the promotion of peace and nonviolence for children and young adults of the world. As Benavot (2002) noted, education has become a universal cure-all, an elixir that, if taken in regular doses according to standardized prescriptions, is hoped to solve a multitude of national woes and societal challenges. For international educational organizations, national ministries of education, policy analysts, and educational experts, schooling has come to be seen as the preferred solution for a host of social problems. The innovation of security education is a veritable strategy to prepare individuals and



communities to manage themselves and their immediate environment in times of insecurity and to identify threats to security.

Edozie (2014), sees a security education programme as a cooperative, dynamic, and lifelong process through which society generates knowledge, values, and skills for its survival, sustenance, enlightenment, and empowerment against all kinds of danger and threats to its well-being and coexistence. To Adegoke (2018), security education is an aspect of an adult education programme that can either be a formal or informal way of impacting alertness to individuals, or groups of persons to see futuristic threats that could come their way and ways to come against them. A security education programme is therefore an organized method of exposing citizens/learners to the knowledge, values, skills, technical know-how, and experiences included within the concepts of security that are necessary for individuals or citizens to be abreast of. There are two major keywords within the conceptualization of the Security Education programme and these are security and education. Clarifications of these words are very important for an easy understanding of the concept of the security education programme. CISCO Security Center (2013) defined a security education programme as essentially an inside marketing campaign to spice up awareness about security risks and promote corresponding good practices across the organization. Following different episodes of shooting in schools within the US and parts of Europe, a security awareness training programme was emphasized in schools and in various rural communities rather than a transparent curriculum, especially in the school. Within the United States of America, Homeland Security has been mounted as a programme in some universities at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Aside from the formal establishment, its content could even be learned personally, or given by different institutions of society and thus the neighbourhood.

Aborisade (2018), study the role of mass media in community policing in Ondo state reported that programmes geared towards security awareness (security education) on the radio have helped to avert so many criminal activities in rural communities and also, strengthen the involvement of community members in community policing. He also found that programmes based on security matters aired on radio had promote community peace, by engaging in conflict resolution within and

outside the community. According to the findings of Abiloye (2023), security education programme improved citizens attitudes' and participation in community policing in areas of paying of security bills, knowing of their next neighbor, watching their neighbors back and reporting of crimes or any act of criminal activities to the appropriate quarters. Also Mustapha (2016), who examined the effect security education and community members participation in communities ravaged by the Boko Haram Insurgency group in north eastern part of Nigeria. The researcher submitted that, security education programme has indeed exposed community members to know what to do in other to keep themselves and community save which include, right attitude towards the police force and the military, reporting all suspected criminals to the authority concern as at when due, having neighbours numbers and also have a call card especially at night, constituting of vigilante groups, paying of security bills timely, having regularly security meetings in the communities among others.

It is crystal clear that the issue of security can no longer be left in the hands of the government but rather everyone's business. Security is a fundamental need for individuals, communities, businesses and governments. Security of life and freedom from harm of all kinds are fundamental rights of all. Rural community members deserve to understand what potentially could lead to crime, violence and breakdown of law and order as well as human rights abuses in their community. Community members should be taught how to avoid unlawful and/or abusive behaviours, and to seek non-violent measures to resolve problems in their community. Some community members do not know what constitute security threats and opportunity for victimization or criminalization that need to be eliminated. Rural communities in Nigeria are presently exposed to attacks from different sects of criminal activities and therefore need to have the technical know-how on how to combat the reoccurrence of crime in their communities tactically. They deserve basic security education to equip them for participation in their security both at home, marketplace, religious houses, farms, and schools among others. If a community security education programme is organized for rural dwellers, it would make a whole lot of difference to what we have presently in the level of insecurity in rural communities. They would know what security is all about; why they should be aware of their surroundings; know their neighbours, visitors, and tenants and what they say or do that could lead

to a security breach and how to report same and to whom; and adhere to simple security rules and regulations; what crime prevention and loss prevention are; types of adversaries and risks/threats; neighborhood watch, target hardening and basic prevention measures necessary to contain them would also be known and social decay would be solved. Doing this will therefore imbibe the culture of being proactive in the minds of rural community members and this will help in the reduction of crimes.

### **Conclusion**

Insecurity in Nigeria especially in rural communities is of great concern. Efforts have been made by different tiers of government to see that there is a reduction in the rate of crime in various communities. Security education has been seen as a veritable tool used in different parts of the world in exposing community members to the issue of insecurity in their various communities. In Nigeria, Security education which seems to be a new area in education is of high importance as it is now a tool in helping rural community members to know more about the issue of security and how to go about reducing crimes in their communities. Based on the highlighted importance and usefulness of a security education programme, the following recommendations were made:

Firstly, there are needs for more security education programme on mass media such as the radio and the television programmes in other to promote peace and reduce crime in rural communities.

Secondly, there is a need for continuous training of community members with a security education programme for effective security in their various communities by security experts and this could be done through landlord meetings, market women association, religious bodies and youths.

Lastly, the government, security experts, Non-governmental organizations should give more attention to rural communities where there are more reported cases of insecurity by organizing security trainings for religious leaders, community leaders, youth leaders, market women among others.

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