HUMAN SECURITY IN NIGERIA: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL STUDIES
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Abstract

Over the last two decades, the notion of human security has transformed from a conventional interpretation of national security, which included substantial allocations of resources towards military preparedness and reaction, to a more comprehensive focus on the elements that guarantee the well-being of people. The human insecurity problem has presented Nigeria with a multitude of developmental challenges. Which pathways serve as means of escape? This article examines the conceptualization and areas of human security, the barriers to human security in Nigeria, and the capacity of Social Studies, a field focused on problem-solving, to tackle these issues. Research revealed, among other findings, that the government allocates less focus on the welfare and respect for the inherent worth of individuals. Hence, the human security challenges in Nigeria, including poverty, unemployment and food insecurity, environmental catastrophes, criminal activities and violence, and gender insensitivity, present serious risks to human security, and so, jeopardise national progress. Consequently, the research indicates that education, namely Social Studies

Education, which investigates human being and his boundless difficulties of existence, is essential for national security. Beyond the mere existence of a state or nation, this security encompasses the well-being and dignity of human.

Keywords: Human security, Human security challenges, Realms of human security, Social Studies.

Introduction

Regarding the economic aspect, Nigeria has seen a substantial surge in economic development in recent years. Nevertheless, there is no substantiated record indicating that the documented improvement in overall economic performance has led to an increase in human security (NHDR, 2015). The apparent progress at the domestic level is somewhat limited, since unemployment, poverty, violence, and other threats to everyday living seem to have either continued or intensified. Poverty, as a manifestation of economic insecurity, stands as a very significant and enduring threat to human security. The ability of a considerable portion of the population to withstand the depreciation of the Naira and the resulting surge in prices is significantly limited. The main risks to employment stability are the fear of job loss or unemployment, the inability to competitively contend in the labour market; an inadequate annuity to sustain one's post-retirement lifestyle. The situation in Nigeria clearly demonstrates this.

Regarding food security, Nigeria's situation in this field is very unstable and harmful (Ogunmodede, 2019). A substantial proportion of the Nigerian population experiences food poverty. Costs of staple foods like rice, yam, and beans are rapidly increasing beyond the financial means of the impoverished. Owing to the high poverty rate in the nation, individuals are unable to get a well-balanced diet essential for the functioning of the body system. Decreased local food production which is as a result of the abandonment of farm land is one of the threat to food security. This could be because of Boko Haram insurgency, farmers/herdsmen crisis and even rural-urban drift making many young farmers move

to metropolitan areas to take up other means of livelihood. The issue of food security in the third world countries especially, Nigeria needs an urgent attention due to scarcity, quality and quantity of available food stuffs in the country.

In the health domain, the health of individuals is likely to impact their productivity, ability to earn a decent income, and susceptibility to security hazards. It is imperative to underscore that the health condition in Nigeria is unfavourable. The cost-effectiveness of medical services presents a substantial risk to the general population. Children are the most susceptible, as a significant number of them are malnourished and suffer from environmental health-related illnesses. Additionally, the high incidence of maternal mortality is partially due to the low health status of women (Orhero, 2020). The rural populations are the most severely affected. These and other factors result in security hazards to human existence.

Moreover, human security and development can be either facilitated or impeded by the character of the physical environment. This comprehension has led to the serious consideration of the environment by successive Nigerian administrations, particularly in the formulation of policies and programmes, as well as the implementation of initiatives (Wahab, 2019). The environment sector continues to face a variety of challenges, including drought, desertification, rising temperatures, inundation and erosion, pollution, municipal refuse, open defecation, deforestation, environment-related health disorders, and a decrease in soil fertility, among others. The health burden associated with the absence of basic sanitation is a serious worry in Nigeria, since many persons participate in filthy activities such as open defecation, direct dumping of solid waste in open places (road routes, dividers, walk ways), waterways, and structures under construction. For the last 17 years, Nigeria has maintained its status as one of the top five nations in the world with relation to open defecation (Obinna, 2021). In a similar vein, the top ten most polluted cities in Africa include five Nigerian cities (Olawale, 2018).

Evidently, the three realms of personal, social, and political security are crucial for the general well-being of the nation and its

inhabitants, as well as for national progress. Unfortunately, these security areas in Nigeria are under escalating attacks. Crimes, physical and sexual violence, negative traditional practices, political repression, human rights violation, democratic limitations, and ethnic conflicts, among others, pose critical threats to the security of citizens (NHDR, 2015). The Boko Haram insurgency, armed robbery reports, kidnappings, ritual and political murders, domestic violence, rape and election violence are much more. The attainment of human security need the consideration of interconnectedness. Consequently, the distinctiveness of a multidisciplinary field – Social examination - is in its ability to analyze the human being as a whole, so ensuring complete security.

Social Studies is a fundamental subject in the Universal Basic Education (UBE) curriculum in Nigeria. It is offered right from basics 1-9 while effort is on in including it into the Senior Secondary (SS) curriculum. Its objectives are closely related to that of the educational and national objectives. The need for the subject arose in United States of America (USA) (pioneer country) as well as other countries in order to solve emerging national problems. Meaning that the subject is a problem-solving discipline with emphasis on human. Based on the foregoing, this paper examines the challenges of human security in Nigeria and how Social Studies can be used to solve the challenges.

The Concept and Realms of Human Security

The concept of human security originated from discussions made on collective security during the latter stages of the Cold War (National Human Development Report (NHDP, 2015). Collective security, in this contextualization, denotes a comprehensive and all-encompassing security that encompasses many aspects of human life, extending beyond the boundaries of state and national security. The fundamental objective of security policy or relevant object is to give priority to human life. Human security aims to elucidate the worldwide susceptibilities and analyse how poverty, environment, and social integration give rise to conflict and progressively endanger human existence (Orhero, 2020). Therefore, human

security pertains to the extent to which the well-being of persons is safeguarded and promoted.

Similarly, Toiskallio (2017) defines human security as "the essential factor in effectively addressing all the dangers that jeopardise the normal existence and dignity of individuals, and in enhancing the endeavours to counter these dangers." Although the Human Development Report (UNDP, 1994) offers a thorough list of challenges to human security, the majority can be categorised into seven primary categories: environmental, personal, community, and political security, as well as economic, nutritional, and health security. Economic security refers to the assurance of a certain earnings level for people, often obtained by gainful and financially satisfying job. Unemployment is a substantial factor in determining economic security. In addition, the vital macroeconomic indicators that impact economic security are the growth of real Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the progress of agriculture, industry, and service sectors, and the levels of employment and poverty. Food security necessitates universal and guaranteed physical and economic availability of fundamental food for all individuals at all times. It mandates universal availability of food, therefore ensuring that every individual has a fundamental right to get food, either through personal cultivation, purchasing, or utilising a public food distribution system.

The objective of health security is to ensure a basic level of protection against illnesses and bad lifestyles. Historically, infectious and parasitic illnesses were the primary causes of mortality in underdeveloped nations, whereas disorders of the circulatory system were the main killers in industrialised countries. According to the United Nations Developmental Programme (UNDP, 2014), health security risks are often more severe for impoverished individuals residing in rural regions, especially children, in both developing and industrial nations.

Environmental security refers to the safeguarding of individuals against both immediate and long-term harm inflicted by natural phenomena, as well as hazards arising from human actions and the deterioration of the natural environment. A healthy environment

is essential for human beings to sustain their livelihoods and general well-being. The Environmental Performance Index (EPI) is used to assess the overall level of environmental security across countries worldwide. This index provides a comprehensive evaluation of the environmental performance in each country. Impaired access to clean water resources, air pollution, deforestation, drought, flooding, global warming, and health diseases linked to the environment are among the environmental hazards that impact people's sense of security (NHDR, 2015).

The primary objective of personal security is to protect persons against physical aggression, whether perpetrated by nation-states or foreign governments, violent individuals and sub-state actors, domestic violence inside marriages, or predatory adults. Undeniably, the protection of individuals from physical aggression is the essential aspect of human security (Orhero, 2020). Community security aims to protect people against the potential breakdown of traditional relationships and values, as well as from sectarian and ethnic tensions. Interpersonal violence is prevalent in traditional communities, especially ethnic groups, and the proliferation of mass media has led to the demise of traditional languages and traditions, along with other related issues (NHDR, 2015). The idea of political security relates to the degree to which individuals animate in a society that preserves their fundamental social rights. The frequency of human rights violations is particularly prominent during times of political instability. In addition to suppressing people and groups, therefore restricting women's aspirations to participate in politics, governments may engage in efforts to exert authority over ideas and information.

Concern for Social Studies on Human Security in Nigeria

Education generally and Social Studies education in particular is the most powerful instrument through which an individual can be transformed for a better understanding and handling of issues in the environment. Education is one of the catalysts to security consciousness (Kate & Itodo, 2021). Through proper education,

individual develops into an educated personality capable of confronting existing challenges in human day-to-day life. Mezieobi and Ezegbe (2011) stated that Social Studies is an emergent discipline of studies in the education system of Nigeria fashioned to equip the learner with functional education to make him functionally active and responsive to societal challenges, progress and development. The societal challenges and problems could be termed the insecurity issues in the country. Nigeria is no doubt bedeviled by myriad of problems which inhibit her growth and development. One of such problems is insecurity especially, human insecurity. Thus, the problem of human security can be solved through effective teaching and learning of Social Studies, learners are made to participate actively in finding solution to a number of problems, especially, those ones threatening human security.

As Orhero (2020) notes, the protection of individuals from physical violence is the most critical aspect of human security. Peace and tranquil coexistence are then considered applicable. Societies continue to endure a variety of civil unrests, including boundary disputes, ethnic/tribal conflict, religious crisis, and political unrest, despite the significance of peace in the security and development of human society. These unrests have resulted in the destruction of properties, maiming, and the loss of life. This global menace has not spared Nigeria, a society that is multi-ethnic and multi-religious. Nigeria has faced significant peace and security challenges since its independence due to its religious and ethnic diversity (Enu, 2016). Consequently, it is essential to instill a culture of peace through education in order to foster a positive attitude and a high standard of civil coexistence among citizens.

The situational analysis of Nigerian society in recent times has demonstrated that the capacity of individuals to live moral lives is being eroded as a result of the widespread involvement of individuals in criminal/moral misconduct, including dishonesty, intolerance, stealing, armed robbery, ritual killings, kidnapping, and sexual assault, on a daily basis. Regrettably, these acts of moral misconduct are prevalent among the newer generation. What a catastrophe!

Adegbami and Adepoju (2017) have underlined that competent

governance is one of the most crucial components in the elimination of poverty, crises, and the promotion of development. To clarify the concept of good governance, Ogbozo (2018) examines its characteristics, which include: responsibility and openness; competency and productivity; responsiveness to the demands or risks of citizens; adherence to legal regulations; and inclusivity and involvement. The basic root of instability and poor levels of growth in any nation has long been seen as inadequate governance, as is apparent in Nigeria and several African countries. Specifically, the ineffective governance of Nigeria is widely seen as a primary factor contributing to the security issues posed by Boko Haram, terrorists in the Niger Delta, and Fulani herders. Furthermore, the absence of regard for the rule of law, injustice, human rights abuses, gender insensitivity, lack of transparency and accountability, and electoral instability, to mention a few, are signs of a deficient democratic administration, which in turn leads to political insecurity.

It has been argued that a leader who is an impoverished citizen is incapable of being a respectable leader (Mbah, 2013). Consequently, Nigerian pupils may be adequately prepared for life as democratic citizens via the instruction of Social Studies, which is an integrated topic in Nigerian schools. Democratic principles, including the rule of law, justice and equity, transparency, and accountability, are instilled and promoted in learners in order to foster active and responsible citizens who can contribute to the country's current development and manage its affairs in the future. In the postmodern era, the performance of governments and regimes is now assessed in terms of their dedication to the principles of democracy, rule of law, and accountability, which are deeply rooted in constitutionalism and defined in terms of responsible and ethical governance (Diamond, 1996).

As a subject that studies human and his unending challenges of life, the positive contributions of Social Studies in solving the problem of food security could be considered significant. One of the cogent determinants of food insecurity is that the people's attitude towards agricultural practices is poor. Many people believe that subsistence farming and rearing of animals are exclusively reserved for the poor

and those who cannot get a better work to do. Youths are trouping to urban centres scouting for non-existing white collar jobs, and leaving agriculture to aged people who cannot produce enough food needed by ever increasing population. Social Studies education as an attitude formation oriented subject can be used to develop in the students (younger generation) positive attitude towards agriculture/ food production through its enriched contents both at the primary and post primary school levels. For example, there is an aspect of the curricular which deals with "People and their physical environment where physical features such as soil, climate, rivers, lakes, rainfall, among others, and human activities" are taught. These can be used to teach children how people can make use of all these features in the environment to ensure food and economic security.

Another uniqueness of Social Studies amidst other school subjects in ensuring human security is that it is being exposed to children right from their formative age when learning is highly receptive. The subject catches them young by laying good and solid foundation which adulthood is built upon. According to Onuoha and Okam (2011), the main aim of Social Studies is to cultivate a socio-civic understanding and commitment among pupils towards the progress and advancement of their country. An exemplary citizen should not just have the requisite knowledge and abilities to live a purposeful life in society, but also adopt attitudinal behaviours that will enable him to interact and coexist peacefully with others, irrespective of their cultural, religious, or personal viewpoints. If properly taught by the teachers and internalized by pupils right from the primary school, children would learn to want to be their brothers' keepers and be willing to safeguard the peace and integrity of their nation. With this, robbery, ritual killings, theft, banditry, insurgency, assassination, and other vices would be minimised if not totally eradicated. This, thus, makes Social Studies highly important.

Conclusion

Existing research has shown that the conventional understanding of "security" as safeguarding nations from military dangers is in

conflict with the notion of human security and its aspects, which prioritise the well-being of people and communities. The concept of "safety" has been expanded to encompass a state that transcends mundane existence (survival) and encompasses a life that is worthwhile, thereby promoting the well-being and dignity of human beings. Hunger, poverty, maladies, grievous youth unemployment and underemployment, poor governance, political and economic exclusion, natural resource exploitation, environment-related problems, and crises pose grave security threats to the populace in Nigeria, surpassing even the severity of war.

Suggestions

The Social Studies Association of Nigeria (SOSAN), the authoritative body for the field, should continue its efforts to persuade the government to include Social Studies within the SSS curriculum. The curriculum assessors should reassess the Social Studies curriculum to clearly integrate the notion and aspects of human security into the learning material, particularly focusing on the human security problem in Nigeria. Conferences, seminars and workshops should be organized by Social Studies professional bodies on the relevance of Social Studies education in stimulating human security. Communiqué from such conference should be publicized. Social Studies teachers and other significant stakeholders should be encouraged to attend such conference, seminar or workshop.

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