SECURITY ISSUES AND THE PLACE OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION TOWARDS ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
Nigeria is faced with lots of significant security challenges, including issues such as the Boko Haram insurgency, terrorist attacks, kidnappings, herders and farmers conflict, assassinations, killings, robberies, ritualism, and activities of gunmen commonly referred to as bandits. These factors collectively contribute to an unsafe environment in the country. The pervasive insecurity has hampered comprehensive development across various sectors, encompassing social, economic, educational, religious, and political dimensions. Urgent attention is imperative to address these security concerns. This paper analyzes Nigeria's security situation and explores the role of social studies education. It delves into the objectives of social studies, aligning them with the national education policy and intending to shape citizens' behavior to discourage engagement in social vices. The paper recommended that for Nigeria to witness the desired development and sustainability, the government, in collaboration with local authorities, should put in place social schemes whereby the vulnerable youths can be educated, enlightened, empowered, and, if possible, taken care of in terms of their immediate basic needs; peace education should be promoted through the teaching of Social Studies; code of conduct should be accessible and interpreted in Nigerian languages to carry all citizens along; the introduction of Social Studies at Senior Secondary School level because they are at the vulnerable stage of been used as agents of insecurity; security agents should be equipped with the needed sophisticated security gadgets to combat insecurity in Nigeria.

Keywords: Security, Sustainable Development, Insecurity, Social Studies, Education

Introduction
The term 'security' has become a common topic of discussion in Nigeria, drawing the attention of not only the federal government, state and local authorities, religious and community but also leaders and citizens both within the country and abroad. In response to the pressing issue of insecurity, numerous seminars and conferences have been organized at international, national, and state levels (Mohammed, 2022). Currently, insecurity pervades all regions of Nigeria, instilling fear among its citizens. The concern transcends beyond the presence of criminals like hoodlums, bandits, and Boko Haram insurgents, as the security forces seem powerless against well-armed terrorists and bandits. This situation has led to the tragic loss of innocent lives, destruction of properties, and displacement of communities daily (Ohida & Olayinka, 2023). The impact of insecurity is evident as citizens are now apprehensive about freely traveling within the country. Recent security threats include activities by herders, kidnappings, and the killing of innocent people. These challenges have disrupted daily life, preventing farmers from working in their fields, worshippers from attending religious services, and citizens feeling secure in their homes (Verjee & Kwaja, 2021). They recognize the crucial role of peace and security in a nation's stability and sustainable development. Nigeria's current security issues are hindering economic growth. Foreigners are reluctant to invest and establish industries, fearing the

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adverse effects of insecurity.

Social studies education plays a pivotal role in shaping the perspectives and values of individuals, fostering a sense of civic responsibility, and promoting social cohesion (Omoleke & Omotara, 2023). The social studies curriculum encompasses a broad range of topics, including citizenship education, human rights, and conflict resolution, providing a platform to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary for active participation in society. Therefore, examining how social studies education can be leveraged to address specific security challenges becomes imperative (Muraina & Ajímátanraęję, 2022).

The potential impact of an improved social studies curriculum on security issues and sustainable development in Nigeria cannot be overstated (Muraina & Ajímátanraęję, 2022). Sustainable development serves as a guiding principle for simultaneously achieving human development objectives and preserving the capacity of natural systems to furnish essential resources and ecosystem services crucial for societal and economic well-being. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), established at the 2015 United Nations General Assembly, delineate a comprehensive agenda to tackle diverse social, economic, and environmental challenges and foster a more sustainable and equitable global landscape by 2030 (Ohida & Olayinka, 2023). These goals include poverty alleviation, hunger eradication, health improvement, education enhancement, gender equality, renewable energy affordability, decent employment, responsible consumption, climate mitigation, security, etc. Functioning as a collaborative framework, the SDGs aim to encourage international cooperation, promoting social inclusivity, economic advancement, and environmental safeguarding, with an overarching commitment to ensuring that no individual or community is left behind in pursuing a sustainable future. Sustainable development involves the balanced integration of economic, social, and environmental factors that can only be attained in a peaceful and coexistence society (UNDPA, 2017). By incorporating all mentioned subject matters into the social studies curriculum, educators can contribute to shaping a generation of informed and responsible citizens who actively contribute to sustaining development (Olapeju & Peter, 2021).

Therefore, integrating security issues into social studies curricula is a strategic approach to addressing the root causes of conflicts. By imparting knowledge on the historical, cultural, and economic factors contributing to insecurity, social studies education enables students to analyze and comprehend the complexities of security challenges critically. This, in turn, empowers them to actively participate in conflict resolution and create a secure environment conducive to sustainable development, thereby paving the way for a more secure and prosperous future (Ezemenaka, 2018). Given this backdrop, this paper aims to explore how social studies, as a subject, can contribute to addressing and mitigating security issues and enhancing and attaining sustainable development in Nigeria.

Concept of Social Studies
Etymologically, "Social Studies" is derived from two Latin words, "Socius" and "Studium"—social - which is a noun that means ally, associate, and companion (Muraina & Ajímátanraęję, 2022). Studies describe an act or behavior that takes an interest in something directed toward learning, seeking to become acquainted with or to understand a phenomenon, a state of circumstance, and a series of events (Madanaguli et al., 2021). In addition, Albarrán Periáñez (2022) advocated using social studies education to achieve inter-ethnic cooperation among Nigerians. Anthony et al. (2022) investigated the importance of Social Studies education in line with social studies' philosophical goals and objectives in the Nigerian educational system by promoting value orientation, good citizenship education, peaceful cohabitation and tolerance for suitable inter-ethnic comprehension, and promoting security.

It influences them against discrimination, tribalism, and injustice, most of which are the underlying causes of insecurities in Nigeria.

The National Policy on Education in Nigeria recognized the need for social studies education to foster the desired social orientation after independence, promote growth and national development, and meet the needs of Nigerian society. More so, it was introduced to inculcate the spirit of national consciousness, unity, and patriotism. Holland et al. (2022) asserted that social studies is more than a study. It is a way of life about how man influences his environment and how he is influenced by his physical, social, cultural, psychological, and religious environments. The authors further affirmed that any definition of Social Studies that fails to take cognizance of the fact that social studies is an academic discipline that brings the realities of everyday societal living to the learners with the desire to make them acquire the knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills required to be responsible and disciplined members of the society would be failing in its scope and relevance.

In other words, social studies aims to produce people who can solve some social problems related to man's physical and social environments. Ha et al. (2016) argue that Social Studies provides opportunities for important social and moral issues such as attitudes toward the needy, poverty, corruption, racialism and different types of governments, cruelty to animals and children, brutality, and injustice to be analyzed, internalized, and applied. In addition, Adeleke (2023) made it clear that social studies' major objective is to direct young Nigerians toward possessing the right behavior, knowledge, values, and skills to fight ethnicity, crime, and insecurity.

Concept of Security
Security is the assurance of peace that a citizen has or possesses while living in a place at a stipulated time and is guaranteed constitutionally. Merriam-Webster's Dictionary (2004) defines security as the state of being secured. Specifically, it is freedom from danger, risk, poverty, or apprehension. National security cannot be viewed in any other way but in the context of a societal system, and within that context is the entire society. The security of a nation is as important as having air to breathe to keep life going. The life that is not secured becomes venerable. Security may come in diverse forms. It could be in the economic, educational, political, social, and religious segments (Tsoy et al., 2021). Economic security occurs when the various economic institutions are benchmarked by common and stable rules, indexes, and variables that are recognized by international best practices. Educational security is when the standard and quality are stable, the sector is in order, and the system is running smoothly. Politically, when democratic principles and practices are in order, and the players' peaceful transition of governments and honest disposition enhances stability. It is also social when government institutions perform their various functions to enforce citizens' inalienable rights. It is religious when the three major religions (Traditional, Christianity, and Islam) coexist peacefully.

Concept of Sustainable Development
Sustainable development is a concept that refers to the process of presenting the existing structure to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It involves a balanced and integrated approach to economic, social, and environmental considerations. Sustainable development aims to create a harmonious and enduring system that addresses the challenges of the present without jeopardizing the well-being of future generations (Onkila & Sarna, 2022). Sustainable development seeks to find a balance between economic advancement, social progress, and environmental stewardship, acknowledging the interconnectedness of these elements for the well-being of current and future generations.

The Prevalence of Insecurity in Nigeria
The rate at which insecurity ravages our country beats the imagination of every right-thinking person

in the society. This has attracted the concern of various commentators to invite the attention of the concerned authorities to find possible solutions to the problem. Over the past decade, Nigeria has experienced an alarming and destabilizing surge in security challenges. The last 5-6 years, in particular, have witnessed a significant rise in incidents such as killings, armed robbery, kidnappings, banditry, Fulani herdsmen attacks, and ritual killings across the nation (Ani et al., 2023).

Despite these escalating issues, the leadership of the Nigerian government has been unable to tackle these security problems effectively. One of the most prominent security challenges is the militant Islamic group known as "Boko Haram." This group's activities have been ongoing since 2009, resulting in a substantial loss of lives, displacement of tens of thousands, and rendering more than two and a half million people homeless. Boko Haram has emerged as a destructive force in the northeast region, leading to a severe humanitarian crisis and chaos. The conflict instigated by Boko Haram has left approximately 7.7 million Nigerians in dire need of humanitarian assistance. Despite claims by the Federal Government, led by President Muhammadu Buhari, that the sect has been weakened, Boko Haram remains capable of causing significant security crises in the region, as evidenced by ongoing suicide bombings and kidnapping incidents (Otekunrin, 2022).

Another significant side of Nigeria's current security challenges revolves around the clashes between farmers and herders, with the middle belt region being particularly the worst hit. This has resulted in intense conflicts and tensions between farmers and Fulani cattle herders. At the core of these fierce battles and conflicts are disputes over land rights, ownership, and access to water supplies (Adeyanju et al., 2023). The encroachment of the Sahara desert inland has further disrupted cattle feeding and rearing patterns. While these conflicts are not entirely recent, the increase in incidents has been particularly pronounced since 2015, with a surge in both frequency and violence. The authors further stated that, in the year 2018 alone, the number of casualties from farmers and herders clashes exceeded two thousand (2000), surpassing the combined figures for killings in 2016 and 2017. The escalation of these conflicts adds another layer of complexity to Nigeria's current security landscape.

The conflict has resulted in an estimated six times more deaths than those directly caused by Boko Haram attacks. The crisis between farmers and herders has not only led to increased insecurity but has also fueled attacks on highways and institutions, involving frequent killings and kidnappings, as reported in the news. Originating in the northern region, these attacks have gradually spread to other parts of Nigeria. Unfortunately, these attacks have resulted in loss of lives destruction of properties, and brought sorrow to many families. For instance, in 2014, according to the Global Terrorism Index report cited in Usman & Arjiromanus (2019), herders were responsible for the deaths of 1,200 people. The mere presence of herders instills fear in communities due to their forceful occupation of farmlands, destruction of crops, and violence against those who resist or try to reclaim their lands. Women, regardless of marital status, have been subjected to rape, and farmers are abandoning their fields due to the threat posed by Fulani herders.

Ethno-religious conflict stands out as a major concern in the context of Nigeria's current security conditions. This type of conflict encompasses arguments, challenges, fights, competitions, or disputes among various ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria today. The deeply rooted symbolic values associated with different ethnic groups and religions make it challenging to reconcile these differences, given the postures of the involved groups and religions. The authors further stated that the lack of trust among Nigeria's Muslims, Christians, and different ethnic groups extends to the sharing of resources and everyday matters, whether they be religious, political, social, or economic. The existence of national security becomes questionable in an environment marked by distrust, hatred, and significant

hostilities among these diverse religious and ethnic groups. Ethnic and religious politics and a lack of trust among Nigerians have contributed to insecurities and clashes throughout the country. The implications of these conflicts on the overall security landscape of Nigeria are profound and require careful consideration. Kidnapping in Nigeria is now a pervasive issue, encompassing various dimensions, such as the socio-economic consequences and fluctuating trends over the years.

Recent reports (Verjee & Kwaja, 2021) highlight the persisting challenge of kidnappings in Nigeria, shedding light on various aspects of this alarming issue. An analysis of data from SBM reveals that the reported cases of kidnapped persons in Nigeria increased to 3,620 between June 2022 and July 2023, indicating a concerning trend nationwide. Abuja, the capital city, has faced a surge in kidnappings and is grappling with a rising crime rate. Within the last three years, the city recorded nearly 50 kidnap cases involving over 200 individuals, with 15 persons kidnapped in 2024 alone (Premium Times, January 11th, 2024). Government statistics for Abuja show 40 kidnapping cases involving 236 victims between January 2021 and June 2023 (Amata, 2023). While there is a decline in killings and abductions compared to the previous year, over 9,000 people were killed, and more than 4,600 were kidnapped in 2022 (HumAngle, 2023). In the past decade, nearly 20,000 Nigerians were kidnapped in 2,694 separate incidents, underlining the persistent and widespread nature of this security challenge (The Africa Report, August 21st, 2023).

Therefore, the reoccurring conflicts caused by religion, ethnicity, and politics have become a subject of major worry to the nation and the international community. To put it that all these challenges represent a menace and danger to our security and existence as a sovereign nation is to present it mildly and an understatement. The security of a country is key to its development, sustainability, and foreign policies (Dami, 2021); the inability of successive governments in Nigeria to handle situations of illiteracy, hunger, unemployment, religious and ethnic conflicts, and unequal distribution of resources among ethnic nationalities are the main causes of insecurities in Nigeria. Security is the fundamental factor and bedrock for development and the sustainability of such development. It attracts investment both within and outside the country, brings about peace and stability, and improves the people's overall standard and quality of living, thereby sustaining the general well-being of the populace (Dami, 2021).

Factors Responsible for the Ongoing Insecurity in Nigeria

There is bound to be insecurity when leaders use coercive measures to suppress the people's will. When leaders decide without articulating and aggregating enough opinions before making a crucial decision, people get disgruntled. When this happens, it generates vented anger on the part of the governed; the result is insecurity of life and property (Ani et al., 2023). As people are pushed to the wall, violence results in the process. This hampers investment and deters development. Ignoring the people's opinion is an act of insensitivity on the part of the government. A very good example is the issue of subsidy removal, privatization of NEPA, and closure of borders, to mention a few. People came out to protest the action because they were not carried along before the government implemented the policy, more so in a democratic system. This is a clear insensitivity on the part of the government. Much of the violence witnessed is not deeply rooted at the grassroots level. When the government implements policies that adversely affect people's income and disregard their grievances, it often produces a violent reaction. Leadership should recognize that contemporary societies can react strongly, causing instability that hampers development, investment, and societal peace. Transparency and accountability in governance are paramount (Dami, 2021);

Security and Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Security is paramount in every nation's development process. Ensuring security is a fundamental prerequisite for fostering sustainable development in Nigeria. The national security challenges, as outlined in a presentation by the National Planning Commission (2021), have significant implications for the country's economic growth. A stable and secure environment is essential for attracting domestic and foreign investments, which are crucial for sustainable development. Economic activities are being paralyzed as a result of the constant violence being unleashed in some parts of this country. This attracted the attention of the president to the effect that he declared a state of emergency in fifteen local government areas in the state of Borno, Niger, Plateau, and Yobe in response to the activities of terrorist groups. On January 6th, gunmen killed more than a dozen worshippers at a church in Jinefa Yola, Adamawa state, on December 31st, 2011. Take, for instance, the attack on worshippers in Owo on June 5th, 2022, where about 40 people were killed by unknown gunmen.

The Roles of Social Studies Education in Enhancing National Security in Nigeria

Chopra et al. (2023) state that social studies is a program of study that enables society to instill in students knowledge, skills, attitudes, and actions considered that are important concerning thein According to the above definition, it is clear that social studies as a program of studies makes man and his attendant problems the central focus.

Olushola & Adewumi (2021) highlighted the objectives derived from the national policy on education (2013) as a way to flesh up the importance of social studies education. These are:

➢ The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity.

➢ The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes is necessary for the survival of the individual and Nigerian society.

➢ The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around and

➢ The acquisition of appropriate skills and development of mental, physical, and social abilities and competencies are equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of society.

The four objectives summarize that while teaching social studies, social studies teachers should always lay more emphasis on the need to be a good citizen, develop a positive attitude towards their fellow human beings, environment and develop good interpersonal relationships, and show interest in working for the welfare of others and the entire society.

Furthermore, social studies education addresses security issues by promoting environmental sustainability. Nigeria faces various environmental challenges, including deforestation, desertification, and pollution, which exacerbate security concerns. Social studies education awareness is created about the importance of environmental conservation, sustainable resource management, and climate change mitigation by instilling in students a sense of environmental responsibility. The teaching of social studies education contributes to reducing conflicts arising from resource scarcity and environmental degradation. Security threats at the local, state and national levels are no doubt a prevalent or predominant problem in the country that needs more urgent attention (Muraina & Ajímátanraẹjẹ, 2022). Against this backdrop, social studies education is one of the antidotes to alleviating or reducing the prevailing problem of insecurity in our country. This is so that the youth are the strength and future of every nation, and those involved in insecurity are mostly the youth. This group needs proper education. This is not far from the truth in that all the evil perpetrators that are involved in all these criminal acts that threaten the security of the nation, such as armed robbery, hoodlums, kidnappers, ritualism, hiring assassins, and the most recent and deadly, suicide bombing are youth of the ages between 19-30 years. One can see that the youths are at the center of the social studies curriculum if it

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is well taught by social studies experts. The youth need to understand right away to respect elders those in positions of authority, and develop a sense of belonging to understand, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large and, more importantly, respect for human lives (Adeleke, 2023).

Conclusion

Insecurity hinders development and takes away the people's peace, progress, and general well-being. Social Studies Education helps to enhance national security as embedded in the national philosophy of education. Security issues pose significant challenges to Nigeria's sustainable development efforts. However, social studies education has the potential to address these issues by promoting civic engagement, peacebuilding, and environmental sustainability. The teaching of Social Studies Education will promote tolerance, social interaction, and mutual coexistence of the people within the country irrespective of their tribe, religion, and political affiliations. Equally, it will answer so many social problems ravaging our country in which insecurity plays a major role.

The way forward/Suggestion

Based on the study, the following suggestions were put forward:

1. In collaboration with local authorities, the government should implement social schemes whereby the vulnerable youths can be educated, enlightened, empowered, and, if possible, taken care of in terms of their immediate basic needs.
2. Peace education should be promoted through the teaching of Social Studies.
3. The government must make the code of conduct accessible and interpreted in Nigerian languages to carry all citizens along.
4. Social Studies curriculum should be extended to the Senior Secondary School level so that these categories of youths that fall within these vulnerable groups can benefit and correct their attitude and behavior through the content of Social Studies for personal and societal growth.
5. The Government should equip security agents with modern sophisticated security gadgets to combat the security challenges ravaging the country.

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