

UTILIZING COMMUNITY EDUCATION IN PROMOTING COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP INVOLVEMENT IN NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

Matthew Ayogu ALI

E-mail: alicayou@yahoo.com

James .O. EZEMA, Ph.D

Email: jamesoezema@gmail.com

Department of Adult and Continuing Education
Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Agbani, Enugu

and

Mauline Ifeoma OHUOHA

Email: maudly7ohuoha@yahoo.co.uk

Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam
Campus, Anambra State

Abstract

Community education usually takes place in community for the improvement of the community. Community education helps to promote a literate society where many citizens are involved in a learning process for the growth and development of the community. Through community education, leaders are cultured and nurtured to be good leaders for the development of the community. Community education breeds good morals, culture, customs and governance due to the training and skills which promote national security for the interest of all. The lingering Nigeria's security problems have remained the topmost priority of this present Government. This paper commenced with a comprehensive discussion of community education and leadership involvement in the National security. It also discussed the contributions of community education in promoting community leadership involvement in the National security. It showed that amongst the numerous leadership and security threats hunting Nigeria, the problems of kidnapping, herdsman killings, corruption, pervasive material inequalities, ethno-religious conflict, weak security system have all grown into amorphous bottlenecks militating against Nigeria's development. This paper suggested that leadership and security revolution and sustainable peace building across the nation using community education would reduce the security threats and create positive room for relatively unhampered national security building in Nigeria. The paper revealed great opportunities for individual development and social mobility for leadership involvement in national security building. There is the need for an emergency of a new generation of leaders who will do things differently and lead the Nigeria society in a different direction considering the complex security challenges facing the nation today. This paper x-rayed community

education mission as educating and empowering tool to generation of leaders who will help in effecting national security framework in Nigeria. It was concluded with some suggestions such as, embarking on a de-radicalization strategy that will aid the government to ensure security in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Community Education, Community Leadership Involvement and National Security*

Introduction

Education is a vital tool for individual and societal emancipation. It is a dynamic process that changes with the needs and aspiration of the people. Education is an integrative view of learning and development which emphasizes the connections and relationships between thinking, feeling and actions, rather than separating cognitive dimensions of education from effective or moral dimensions (Okebukola, 2014). Community education as an integral part of adult education recognizes the integration and promotion of community leaders and members to bring about desirable social change. Community education is for people's empowerment (leaders inclusive) through the involvement of members of the community, thus promoting orderliness, skill development, creativity among others. Charatimath (2006) stressed that creativity thrives when the environment allows people of all lifestyle, cultures and ethnicities to interact for the development of all and to promote holistic unity among citizens.

Community education safe-guards human rights and achieves social equality (Akanke, 2007). The attainment of various developmental strides recognizes the fact that Community education is multifaceted. It incorporates various learning programmes or

activities to improve the quality of lives of the community through the acquisition of knowledge and skills for self-independence. All over the world, community education is being embraced as the basic education for life in the society rather than education merely for livelihood and attitudes. It seeks to raise the standard of living of people and to encourage social efficiency in the community and national life. It is about creating a participatory learning culture that incorporates principles and practices of respect, mutual aid, inclusiveness, lifelong learning, skill building, self appreciation, entrepreneurship and leadership development - the puzzle pieces that make up community life, learning and national unity (Abiona, 2012).

It may be argued that a community without good leadership may not be equipped to mobilize resources or influence community development projects which promote unity and security for all. Local community cannot proceed successfully without having dynamic leaders that are willing and able to take initiatives (Aref and Ma'rof, 2009). Lack of capable community leaders is often mentioned as a barrier to community development and security of the citizens (Aref & Ma'rof, 2009). In community education, democracy is a way

of life which gives a sense of involvement and participation to all members of the community. Community leaders should be trained to embrace democratic values through the utilization of community education. Autocracy in community education means the leaders will impose their own will or wish on the community members. In other words, the community will be compelled to execute assumed needs instead of actual felt needs. The community leaders need to know and understand the importance of democratic values in a local environment so as to promote national security.

The primary responsibility of securing life and property of citizens is the purpose of statehood. The condition of fear and vulnerability for both weak and mighty gave rise to social contract between the State and citizenry. However, since the State is the formal entity for recognizing group of people (citizens) particularly in external relations (foreign relation) among comity of nations, hence the justification for securing the State using arms and troops. This realist preoccupation informed the pre-eminence of the State's approach to security (national security).

Insecurity in Nigeria today, exposes the country to continuous loss of lives and property which impacts negatively on her development drive. Primary and secondary schools, colleges, universities among others that are meant to be the threshold for human resources development which on the long run trigger socio-economic growth are increasingly becoming insecure. Physical structures in many institutions in Nigeria have collapsed due to terrorist attack, herdsmen killings, flooding and neglect by the authorities concerned. The causes of insecurity in Nigeria include herdsmen

clashes with farmers, kidnappers, Boko Haram, community militias, among others. Ujah and Eboh (2006) examined security as an important element of business environment across Nigerian States.

In Nigeria, national security is at cross-road as it is languishing under the yoke of numerous threats. The major threats to national security in Nigeria are essentially internal than external and they are essentially self-induced, due to greedy elites that are in the struggle and competition for power and scarce resources. The paradox of Nigeria's security is that instead of the State being the framework of lawful order and highest source of governing authority, it constitutes the greatest threat to herself. National security is perceived as a nightmare in Nigeria. Community education has promoted community leadership for national security, national co-existence and development (Ogbuokiri, 2010). This paper, therefore, discusses community education, community leadership and national security in Nigeria.

Community Education

Community education is about creating a participating learning culture that incorporates principles and practices of respect, mutual aid, inclusiveness, lifelong learning, self appreciation, entrepreneurship and leadership development – the puzzle pieces that make up community life and learning. Literacy is a great component of community education. In this wise, community education includes the act of reading, writing and numeracy. A literate society is better organized and stimulated for development. It is easier to communicate and decide on issues involving the community if members of such community are literate. Members of the community will be more exposed to the outside world and, therefore,

be enlightened on development elsewhere (Abiona, 2012).

Findsen (2006) observed that community education is an organized learning activity undertaken by either groups or individuals for personal, community, cultural or economic development. Ezimah (2004) observed that community education aimed at raising consciousness, spreading understanding and providing the necessary human skills, for the social, economic, political and cultural development. Akande (2007) stressed that community education safe-guards human rights and achieves social equality. The attainment of various development strides recognizes the fact that community education is multifaceted. It incorporates various learning programmes or activities to improve the quality of lives of the community through the acquisition of knowledge, values, skills, among others, for self-independence.

Community education is not necessarily imparting new knowledge but re-awakening of slumbering abilities in order to equip people for citizenship, socio-economic efficiency, political responsibility and social re-orientation. Community education has local relevance: With emphasis on the use of knowledge than on its mere acquisition. Community education stresses how the knowledge we have acquired helps to make citizenry progressive to work towards community development drive.

Community Leadership

Community without good leadership may not be equipped to mobilize resources or influence community development projects. Community, according to Aref and Ma'rof (2009), cannot proceed successfully without having dynamic leaders that are willing and able to take initiatives. Lack of capable community leaders is often a barrier to

community development (Aref and Ma'rof, 2009). Community development is regarded as a continuous process aimed at improving the quality of life in the community. It is all about continual improvement by the community members themselves to bring about change in their lives which is usually driven by the power structure. The ultimate goal of community education is to develop members' capabilities and potential to impact their well-being and quality of life through maximizing resources utilization to benefit them socially and economically. This could only be achieved through community education setting as well as having highly committed and enthusiastic leadership. Community leadership is the base-line to very successful community development projects to thrive.

A community leader should be able to influence and direct the people in order to achieve communal goals. His leadership style should confer on him, authority and power to recognize their felt-needs and means of satisfying such needs to improve living standard and unity among the members. It is necessary that community leaders be given training, using community education setting on leadership styles to create a right understanding between the people and their leaders. This approach to leadership recognizes that there exists an interaction between the group and the leader (Abiona, 2012). It supports the leadership theory that people tend to follow those in whom they perceive a means of accomplishing their goals. Community education teaches leaders to lead by example. Training community leaders using community education setting will make the communities identify their needs and proffer solutions to such needs. Community leaders should be trained through community

education to embrace democratic values so as to be involved in every community affairs which will enhance national unity, co-existence and security of life and property of the citizenry (Abiona, 2012).

Security

In the contemporary world, security issue has increasingly becoming a very important element for any form of development to take place in any country. This explains why nations like Nigeria today attach great importance to issues of national security. The entire idea centers on the need to preserve lives, protect properties, meet basic needs of the citizens and bring about development in the society.

In Nigeria, security of life and property is a fundamental human right guaranteed under the country's constitution. However, since the transition to democratic rule in May 1999, government at various levels in the country has failed to ensure security. This fact can be seen in the various armed robbery, bomb blasts, kidnapping, herdsmen and farmers conflict among others that have continued to rock the society (Malogo, 2009). This obnoxious situation has grown to the extent that many, especially, the government, are befuddled and at loss of insight of what meaningfully could be done to avert the menace of insecurity. Malogo (2009) stated that the government is primarily responsible for the security of lives and property of her citizens. Every day we wake up to the news of armed insurgency, herdsmen killings, terrorism, Boko Haram massacres and bombing in Abuja, Maiduguri, among others. In fact, insecurity has assumed a pervading form in the country. The cause of this insecurity, now sophisticated and seemingly intractable, has been attributed to the government's nonchalant attitude. Adejumo (2011)

observed this nonchalant attitude of the Nigeria government in the discharge of her primary responsibility of ensuring security over the years. Bankong-Obi (2012) attributed Nigeria's intractable security crises to government's apathy and inefficiency of the security agencies. This calls for a national security dialogue or conference in the country to solve these ugly situations threatening Nigeria co-existence.

National Security

Security is of great concern to all human societies. This is so because security is paramount to the survival of every human society (Imobighe, 2001). He went further to state that 'without security; individual within a State will find it hard to engage in productive activities'. Similarly, without security, a state is bound to experience great difficulty in harnessing its human and material resources towards the meaningful development and the promotion of the general well being of the people. Security is indispensable for states, for its absence means the demise of the state concerned. Thus, a high premium is always placed on the strategy through which States enhance and guarantee their national security. Jega (2007) observed the meaning of national security as consisting of the following concerns: 'protection and safe guarding of the country's territorial integrity, promotion of peaceful co-existence in the polity, eliminating threats to internal security, ensuring systemic stability, and bringing about sustainable and equitable socio-economic development'. Thus, national security in Nigeria refers to a guarantee of peace and stability determined by ethno-religious/communal harmony: peaceful co-existence, food security, democratic development among others. Also, accounting for security of nation is strengthening the

rule of law, creating a democratic/political culture, nurturing good governance, transparency and structural reforms amenable to democratization.

Ogbuokiri (2010) observed that national security should ideally be defined as the ability of the State to successfully pursue her national interest, being able to protect the values of the State and being able to maintain the same. National interest of the Nigerian State and protection as well as the maintenance of her national values becomes dynamic and meaningful, only if it results to progressive national development. Today, national security that is inclined towards external protectionism is gradually disappearing in many countries of the world, while the threats to domestic security are growing amongst nations (Both, 2003). Miller and Sutliff (2005) pointed out that the definition of national security should be concerned, not only with military threats, but with other problems that threaten directly to degrade the quality of life. National security is a collection of plans, actions and institutions built by a State in order to protect themselves from both internal and external attack. It is the act of promoting the core values of a State to enhance the protection of lives and properties of the citizenry.

Conditions Threatening National Security in Nigeria

It is pertinent to note the security threats which the Nigerian government has to grapple with if security is to be restored in Nigeria. The first security threat to Nigeria nation is the failure of security agencies. The failure of the intelligence services to contain the recurring security breaches is also a major threat to Nigeria's national development and security. These various

security agencies such as the armed forces, police and civil defense, among others appear incapable of matching the sophisticated weapons of these miscreants. They discharged their duty unprofessionally and unmotivated. It is hard for them to help the Nigerian government in restoring security to the country unless massive reforms are introduced into sector. At present, the security agencies are incapable of guaranteeing the security and safety of Nigerian people. This threat needs to be resolved since many Nigerians have become conditioned to the acts of carnage, looting, massacre and kidnappers, among others. Also, indecisiveness on issues bothering on insecurity from the part of the Nigerian government is a serious threat to national security. Leaders of this great nation need to cultivate strong political will to curtail these security threats.

Unemployment is a strong security threat to Nigerian government. Unemployment rate in Nigeria is so alarming. Many youths are not gainfully employed. These youths are frustrated by their unemployed status and as such, perpetrating crimes of various degrees. This situation has continually fanned the embers of insecurity in Nigeria to flames.

Lop-sided development of the country by past and present government is another serious threat to national security in Nigeria. The deliberate concentration of national fund to the development of a few cities in the name of federal and state capitals, culminating in the prevalence of a large population of rural and underdeveloped communities who travel to see the developing cities of Lagos, Kano, Enugu among others, as a different country has equally compounded the security challenges of this country (Nwadiakor, 2011). This

results in rural dwellers moving to the urban cities, causing urban slums and overcrowding or rise in urban population.

These terrorist groups have killed many Nigerians through various bomb explosions and serious mayhem experienced within the country in recent times. The sheer lawlessness and carnage carried out by these terrorist groups have heated up the nation's stability and made the country less secured (Bawa and Aminu, 2018).

The recent killings and kidnapping activities by the herdsmen in all parts of the country is another ugly threat to national security in Nigeria. Internal conflict caused by various ethnic groups contesting over the control of scarce resources is another major threat to national security. Those people deprived of their means of livelihood try to either protest or defend their interest and at end caused inter-ethnic conflicts, inter group wars or crisis in the society. These internal conflicts have caused damages to the political, economic, social and environmental order in Nigeria (Baw and Aminu, 2018). The Niger-Delta militancy/crisis has also set the tone for national insecurity. The Niger-Delta conflict is an oil-caused threat that has been around for a very long time. The condition in Niger-Delta is in two fronts: first is the action of expatriate and State elites that work against the interest and safe environment of the host communities. Second is the nature of militancy of Niger-Delta which now causes panic for other citizens in the region. These two fronts combine to create insecurity in the region and in Nigeria at large (Nwadiolor, 2011).

Prospect for Securing Nigeria Nation

The threshold of securing Nigerian nation reflects on competence, ability and commitment of government to deal with

major threats to national security. This is essentially about creating the legal, institutional and behavioural frameworks and contexts that can enable swift containment of threats to security in the country. It is noted that the threats include uninspiring leadership, paralyzed socio-economic and lack of political will to provide safety nets, entrench the rule of law and maintain law and order in the country (Bawa and Aminu, 2018).

Poverty is a major threat to peace, stability and security in the country. The advent of civilian regime since 1999 has not relieved the population from abject- poverty. This is traced to inability of the governments to provide adequate safety nets against the shocks of liberalized economy. Equally, the pro-poor policy and N-empower programme of the Federal Government have been operating on the principles of one-size-fits all frameworks. This principle rather than bring out those in poverty and unemployment trap, has allowed more Nigerian youths to drift into extreme poverty (Uwaise, 2017). The government of President Olusegun Obasanjo and subsequent ones (including the State governments) have initiated lots of programmes and even budgeted a lot of money for poverty reduction but to no avail because the extreme poor is not targeted and lack of leadership will for the purpose of implementing pro-poor and N-power programmes. It is worthy to note that efforts to address human security by virtue of the pro-poor and N-power programmes in Nigeria is more of instrument to settle political cronies thereby sidelining expected target groups. This lack of integrity of purpose and action has made most Nigerians today poor despite the country's rich endowment of natural and human resources.

Poverty and the worsening socio-economic condition of most Nigerians is, therefore, the most difficult threat facing the country and her citizens and the greatest obstacle to achieving national security.

The prospect of securing Nigerian nation begins with engaging Nigerians, especially, the unemployed youths in meaningful sources of livelihood. This will secure the poor citizens and the vulnerable to have a better living condition. Achieving food security for these groups will contribute in reducing their disposition to serve as tools for violent action and other associated risky actions that threaten national security in Nigeria today. Securing Nigeria nation revolves on imbuing the citizens, especially the leaders with the right values and attitude towards safeguarding life and property and applying national resources to providing the needs of the people. These involve the need to create and sustain requisite behavioural changes in the context of development of democratic culture which will engage leaders in leading by example. Community education also enhances the learning process where community leaders will be nurtured on the principle of working for the interest of communities' felt needs and also to solve their problems.

Achieving national security still depends on active strength and capability of the military, police and associated security operatives. These institutions concern with maintaining law and order in the Nigeria deserve strengthening through adequate equipment, better welfare packages and motivation to ensure better performance and commitment. This is desirable to surmount the condition of complicated and deep-rooted corruption. It is, therefore, apparent that without appreciable progress and success in the entrenchment of the rule of

law and due process by security personnel, the scope of insecurity will continuously constrain and block the attainment of national security.

Community Education and Leadership Involvement in National Security in Nigeria

National security can be achieved in Nigeria when leaders and followers embrace community education that helps to build citizens than the existing ethnic-citizens characterized by loyalty and attachment to ethnic nationals. In essence, efforts in this regard promote national peace, integration and harness diversity for peaceful co-existence.

Community education as an integral part of adult education recognizes the integration and promotion of community leaders and members to work as a team to bring about desirable social change. This community education is for people's empowerment through the involvement of community leaders and members of the community, thus promoting orderliness, skill development and knowledge among others. Community education safe-guards human rights and achieves social equality (Akande, 2007). It promotes civic learning where individuals (leaders, would be leaders and citizens) learn how to do something for the betterment of the community and at the end promote security. This shows that community education can empower leaders to rule well and citizens to obey people in seat of authority by incorporating civic education into community education setting. Through community education, threats like youth restiveness, poor leadership, poor security, poverty, unemployment, lack of community participation in decision – making processes for good leadership and adequate security will be solved holistically. This is because

under community education, necessary skills, attitude, knowledge, values and beliefs in both the leaders and the followers to re-think towards being people-oriented and relevance oriented in their leadership style and citizens being law abiding always will be taught. This will trigger development and ensure adequate security in the nation.

Community education is to encourage the development in each citizen of three things: an enquiring mind, an ability to learn from what others do, and basic confidence as a free and equal member of a society (Ani, 2010). This is an indication that community education impacts new skills, knowledge, attitudes and values into leaders with selfless mind, being people-centered in their leadership style or roles to bring respect and development which will trigger security in the society.

Conclusion

The importance of community leadership involvement in community development and security provision and protection in any nation cannot be debated. Community leadership is an important strategy enabling communities to respond to community development and protection of national security through active participation and taking charge of responsibilities. Community education is a veritable tool in equipping

men and women to participate actively in all sphere of human endeavour and contribute maximally to leadership development and ensuring efficient national security, to face any internal or external attack on the land. The action of herdsmen killing, terrorism, kidnapping, religious extremism among others will make government of Nigeria to develop, re-think, reform and adopt new strategies of solving insecurity threats when all leaders and poor citizens of this country embrace community education as a new viable roadmap to promote peace, national security so as to prevent the disintegration of the country.

Suggestions:

Community education should be made a compulsory course at all levels of education in Nigeria

Citizens should be encouraged to tolerate one another.

Nigerian security system should adhere to modern information and communication technology (ICT) networking and holistic police reform should be carried out by the present Government.

Nigeria Code of Conduct Bureau and Federal Character Commission Framework should be reformed to align with global reality.

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