

THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE SECURITY AND SAFETY IN NIGERIA

By

Mustapha Ya'u

Primary Education Studies Department, Federal College of Education (Technical), Gombe.

08144043623 imustapha334@gmail.com

Abstract

The paper reviews the role of religious education towards sustainable security and Safety in Nigeria. The paper dwelled on the concepts and components of religious education, sustainable security, sustainable safety, characteristics of sustainable security and safety as well as the roles of religious education in ensuring security and safety in Nigeria. Safety, security and sustainability were the priorities for all living things and are associated with development outcomes. It also includes the prevention of violent conflict, accountable and effective states economic growth and service delivery. Security, safety and justice were the major teachings of religious education, as well as peace, stability and democratic governance. Therefore, in order to achieve the goals of sustainable development and enable a quick return to this path in Nigeria, it is necessary to take actions in the field of education for safety that will contribute to improving the awareness and concentration of the organization's stakeholders on economic, social and environmental goals. In addition, educational activities lead to the development of knowledge and key skills of students, but also affect their character and building their social attitudes. Finally, the paper present and discussed the key factors for improving the security and safety towards religious education in the context of sustainability. The paper recommends that, the federal government of Nigeria should provide and protect lives of each and every citizen especially in places of worship and public gathering.

Keywords: Religious Education; Security; Safety; Sustainability

Introduction

There is no gain saying that security system of Nigeria today is in a sorry state. There is no any part of Nigerian nation that is not experiencing one particular security challenges or the other. In the hierarchy of needs developed by Maslow, safety occupied the second position of importance out of man's needs (Alhamdu, 2001). Insecurity has done a lot of damage to the Nigerian economic system today. It has pushed back some of the investors that are willing to invest in Nigeria. Instead, most of them have relocated to the neighbouring African countries like Ghana, republic of Benin, Cameroon and other neighbouring nations. This has generated circles of crisis of unemployment, poverty, economic stagnation and other economic problems in Nigerian.

To come out of this, there is need to revisit our value-based education so as to get it revitalized for efficient value demands of our society today. Christian Religious Education is value-oriented education which taught at every sectors of our society both at home, church, school, and through the mass media. This makes it so effective as a medium of teaching moral values that are lacking in the Nigerian society today. In the same way, the value that is taught by the Christian Education is universalistic in nature. The values promote by Christian Religious Education is also in tune with the values propagated by Aristotle cited by Khajapeer (2013) that, "moral values consist in the rational control of the irrational desires and appetite of the soul. These virtues according to Aristotle consist in courage, temperance, justice, self-respect, liberty, etc. are practice (taught until they are established as a habit.

Religious education differs from Western style of education, even though they maintain remnants of the Islamic educational institutions. Islamic education has been decentralized and its practice has varied. It was reduced to religious education in different regions at different times. This transformation occurred when Islamic philosophy and pedagogy were separated and when strict public moral codes were imposed on females, rendering their public appearance taboo. Thus, Islamic education is the process of shaping character within the Islamic worldview that requires the Muslim family to expose its children and adults to all knowledge as a means of understanding the parameters set in the Qur'an for a 57 constructive relationship with God, other humans, and nature.

Education is the first duty of a Muslim, male or female. Knowledge of God is equated with the process of learning and teaching.⁵⁷ Some might assume that Islamic education might be shorthand for teaching hatred of "the Western styles". While some people were on the opinion that Islamic education omits secular knowledge in favour of religious beliefs, and may be equated with the dissemination of ignorance. Islamic education is certainly part of a historical tradition, but it is not the polar opposite of modernity, democracy or Western values. Therefore, there is no religion on the face of earth that openly talks about security, safety, justice and brotherhood than Islam. The final prophet "Muhammad" peace be upon him" when migrated to Madina as the messenger of Allah (God) at the same time head of state, provides security and safety to both Muslim and non-Muslim in the state. Because, the Almighty Lord made it incumbent upon every Muslim leader to provides and protect the life and property of each individual within his territory.

Although Safety and Security in religious education focus on different problems, causes and consequences, it is no longer possible to be truly Safe without also being Secure. However, the challenge is to not only address safety and security issues, but to get

the most from the ability to connect systems and share information conducive to effective and efficient decision making.

History of Religious Education in Nigeria

To understand and appreciate the impact of Christian education on the peace and security of Nigerians, there is need to trace the history of Christian religious education in Nigerian educational sector briefly. As a matter of fact, religious education was introduced into Nigerian the Nigeria school programme through the activities of the missionary which first came to Nigeria in 19th century (Falade, 2016). Precisely, the year 1515 marked the beginning of studying religious education in Nigeria school when Catholic missionaries who visited Oba of Benin set up what can be regarded as school in Oba's palace for his sons and sons of his chiefs who were converted to Christianity during this period (Ilori, 2002).

In the same vein, by 1571, another school was established by the same Catholic missionaries in Warri. The kind of education the school offered the pupils in the school was Christian-oriented which specifically establishes its basis on the scriptures (Ilori, 2002). Although part of the objective of educating Africans during that time was to train African to become lawyers, engineers, doctors and other professionals, but the primary objective was to gain converts among Africans to Christianity. To this extent, according to Fafunwa (2004), the major preoccupation of the missionaries during the period was to gain converts and train them. Importantly, Bible Knowledge, Christian hymns and catechism were taught to the pupils to make them have a strong Christian and moral base. The bible was the master- textbook and every subject, no matter how remote it was, had to be connected in some way to the scripture (Ilori, 2004) Mr. and Mrs. de Graft of Methodist Mission were the people that established the first primary school in 1843 while the first Christian secondary school (CMS Grammar School) was established in 1876 in Lagos (Fafunwa, 2004). One of the important subjects that were offered by the students was

Christian religious education. According to Falade (2016), “since then Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK) has been one of the school subjects in Nigeria. With the establishment of CMS Grammar School, it marked the beginning of increment of missionary schools”.

Oni (2013) reiterated that from 1960, when Nigeria gained her independence from her colonial masters, Britain, up to 1973, there were many missionary schools at the primary and secondary school levels; in which they offered Christian Religious education essentially. Even till date, Christian Religious Education still remains compulsory subject for students in primary and junior secondary schools. This is meant to develop the students’ values such as humility, respect, love, kindness, justice, fair play, forgiveness, orderly behaviour and selfless service to God and humanity (Oni, 2013).

Reasons why Nigeria Experiences Insecurity

There are several reasons why insecurity is experienced in every part of Nigeria today. One of them is porous border. Nigeria shares border with many African countries like Cameroon, Niger, Republic of Benin, Mali and other places. Nigeria borders with these countries has been serving as conducts for illicit trade of small arms, light weapon and drugs, movement of weapons easily passes through this border. Besides, it has been established that most of the terrorist plaguing the North east, the armed bandits and kidnappers tormenting part of the north west and other parts of the nation and cattle herders unleashing mayhem in the north central and southern Nigeria has been confirmed to have had free movement into Nigeria through the porous borders of Nigeria.

Added to this is the rate of unemployment. The rate of unemployment has been consistently high in the country every year. Majority of youths turned out in the Nigerian higher institutions in the country are unemployed. Few who are employed are underemployed. According to the statistic of

unemployment, in the year 2020, Nigeria employment experienced one of the worst records of 27.1 percent in the second quarter of 2010. Unemployment is also projected in Nigeria to trend around 32.50 percent in 2021 and 2022 accordingly. Since symbiotic relationship exists between employment and insecurity, Nigeria should not expect the level of insecurity to become lesser except drastic measures are taken against unemployment (Trading Economic, 2020).

The level of drug using is very high in Nigeria; this also contributes to the high insecurity level in the country. According to United Nations (2018) on the prevalence use of drug in Nigerian, which is based on the geo-political zones of Nigerian, North-west zone 12%, north-central zone 10%, south-west, 22.4%, south-south zone 16.6%, south-east zone 13.8%, north-east zone 13.6%. The types of drugs that this people are addicted to ranges from cannabis to opioids, tranquilizers, amphetamines, sedation and others in Nigeria, United Nations Record of 2018 showed that 10.6 million Nigerians are addicted to cannabis, 4.6 million also used pharmaceutical opioids, 238 thousand also used amphetamines and several others.

In the same vein, Nigeria nation is under policed. Nigeria has more than 370, 000 police officers of police ratio of 1 to 400 people. But majority of the policemen, instead of the guiding the masses, majority of these police men form and guides the entourage of the political class and other well- to- do people (VIP). Because of this, so many villages do not have policemen to protect them in Nigeria. Also, there are places known as “ungoverned places” which policemen, by the virtue of their number cannot cover and guide, this “ungoverned places” are the places where the criminal elements resides. The people that live in these places are do not experience the presence of security officers therefore, they easily fall prey to the criminals living in these places.

Corruption is another factor. Every sector of Nigerian economy is heavily corrupt. Those who supposed to keep Nigeria secure are also

corrupt. Nigeria has one of the most corrupt defences in the world. Again, Nigeria police force (NPF) is also endemically corrupt, poorly paid and often predatory (Carnegie endowment for international peace, 2018) confirmed that in 2016, security operatives seized a total of \$800,000 in a rare crackdown on judges – including a supreme court Justice who was implicated in fraud and money laundering. Under these people, it is easy for criminals to be allowed to go unpunished.

Mostly, wrong religious teaching also contributes to this great insecurity we experience in Nigeria today. Some of the spiritual messages preached in some of the religious centres help in aggravating insecurity. Instead of teaching the members of the congregation, what their religious teachers what the religious leaders is preaches is indoctrination.

Poverty level is very high in the country today. Nigeria is adjudged to be the capital of the world's poverty. The survey conducted in 2018-2019 by the World Bank and released by the National Bureau of Statistics shows that 40percent of the total population of 83 million people live below the poverty line of 137,430 naira per year in Nigeria (World Bank, 2020). It is easy to co-opt these people living below the poverty line to join criminal gangs so as to make ends meet than the children of the elites.

Illiteracy rate is equally very high. Literacy rate in Nigeria in 2018, by zone and gender shows that in the North Central, level of illiteracy of male was 72.9%, female 49%, North East 50.5% and female 31.8%, North West male 59% and female 29%, South West male 89%, female 80.69 (Simona, 2020). Correlating this level of illiteracy in every part of Nigeria today with the level of insecurity, according to the figure given by Simona, one will find out that the areas that have lowest literacy level are the ones experiencing heavy insecurity.

Religious Education

Religious belong to the set of values transmitted through the educational process as

a complex whole. Religion has a great impact on the day to day life and it seems to be the strongest anchor of humans, original inhabitants and new comers. While education has to be done in accordance with the human rights. One of the important human rights is represented by the freedom of religion; this freedom implies everyone's right of being educated within the spirit of the personal religion and everybody's duty to be tolerant with the others' religious belief (Mariana & Norel, 2012).

Educational process has been defined as “the entire process of social life by means of which individuals and social groups learn to develop consciously within, and for the benefit of, the national and international communities, the whole of their personal capacities, attitudes, aptitudes and knowledge. There are a lot of different religious beliefs in the world. But essentially they have some core values which could and should be pointed out within the educational context. Over the periods of childhood and youth, the parents, the specialized educators and the communities should grow children in a nurturing and unambiguous environment. Religious education can receive other nuances if we are be able to see only the core issues of the religion, and focus the educators' action within the formal education context on developing core and common values for all the learners no matter to what religion they belongs (Mariana & Norel, 2012).

Sustainable Security

Security is a theme which is accompanied with man's life and is considered as necessary needs of individuals. Hope to having better life, progress and development in all areas including cultural, economic progresses and reaching to the technology and industrial achievements is only feasible through security. In other hand, when the security coefficient of a country is in high level, the people residing in such country will lead a peaceful life and will continue their collective attempts to build and develop their country. However, security is one the main themes which have been considered and noticed

importantly by Quran (Heidarizad, 2013). Islam pays sufficient attention to human security. This proves the fact that growth and prosperity in material and spiritual fields are not possible to achieve without human security. Islam considers security immune from any threat, because according to religious texts especially Quran verses, it is concluded that security is one of the great blessings of God and takes precedence over other human needs in terms of human dimension. From Islamic point of view, human security is the infrastructure of the individual and society lives and a precondition for any development, and has considered necessary strategies for human realization such as fighting against poverty, supporting from property rights of people, and inviting to making effort, administering justice and avoiding discrimination (Faghihi, 2015).

Furthermore, Security and safety in religious education deserve similar consideration as key drivers to manage and reduce adverse events, and avoid Impact on Health, Wealth, Safety and Environment. While maintaining a process productive and in compliance with local and global regulations. Therefore, Sustainable security and development is the biggest challenge for education system in the 21st Century. The education system, at both secondary and higher levels, contributes to change and accelerates sustainable development for the next generation, and universities are the key to a sustainable future. Since the security and safety is one of the critical factors of sustainability it would be interesting to know to indicate the key factors for improving the security and safety education in the context of sustainability (Senkus, 2020).

Finally, sustainable human security which is the same empowering the citizens of the society to protect their health against risks arising from the exercise of state sovereignty, natural barriers, and social and cultural inequalities, has been always emphasized by Islam, and some specific guidelines have been recommended by this religion to faithful

people to remove the barriers and improve human security. Islam also has fought with risks threatening human security such as injustice, oppression, aggression, coercion and threat, and proposed some solutions to eliminate such risks (Faghihi, 2015).

Sustainable Safety

Safety, which is one of the supreme values for man, at the same time, plays a special role in shaping his attitudes. Education for safety begins from an early age. Shaping appropriate attitudes and behaviours in children and adolescents is a very complex process. The importance of personal safety for citizens is linked to the need to establish human security, a people-centred notion of security, which recognises that 'all individuals, in particular vulnerable people, are entitled to freedom from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential (Bakrania, 2014).

Therefore, Safety can be defined as the process of achieving a desired state by specific individuals or the state. It is related to the dynamics of changes in society that are conditioned by a given situation in the country. In addition, safety is also referred to as the need for peace and development opportunities. This is also related to the certainty that the entity is not in danger. Safety defined in this way means that not only a given country, but also society, which can be perceived both as a given individual and, contributes to its sense (Senkus, 2020).

Characteristics of Sustainable Security and Safety

The attitude for sustaining Safety and security is not a one-time event. It is a continuous process of collecting, analysing, and using safety and security information. Situations in the field can change, sometimes rapidly and without warning. With each change, the risk may increase or decrease and security measures should be adjusted accordingly.

The concepts of safety and security have a lot in common, but nevertheless two faculties

have developed with a certain degree of rivalry between them. Security people maintain that the safety people are just a gang of old men who are unwilling to learn something new, the safety people retaliate that the security people are youngsters who haven't realized that they're re-inventing the wheel! Certainly there is a communication problem between the two groups: each has developed its own vocabulary for similar – or even identical – concepts, which at least produces confusion (Bartnes, 2016).

Roles of Religious Education in Ensuring Security and Safety in Nigeria

In Islam, a special attention has been paid to a personal and social security and safety. Allah (God) describes retaliation and blood money to provide physical security and prevent from assassination attempt at the life of others, and considers so high value for retaliation that believes that its administration leads to public life. Allah says:

"and there is life for you in (the law of) retaliation, o men of understanding, that you may guard yourselves" (Al-Baqara, Verse 179).

Another verse says:

"and do not kill any one whom Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause, and whoever is slain unjustly, we have indeed given to his heir authority, so let him not exceed the just limits in slaying; surely he is aided" (Surah Al-Isra, Verse 33).

Qur'anic education is the root of Islamic education. This is because Qur'an is the primary source of Islamic knowledge. It is the book of guidance to the Muslims, their way of life and their code of conduct. Though an ancient education, Qur'anic education is dynamic and so, moves with the changing world. The system of learning remains unchanged in some aspects as a natural divine revelation. The originality of Islamic education also remains unchanged in its basis, principles and objectives throughout ages. But this is not disallowing some

modifications in the methodology of learning and teaching where necessary (Adeyi, 2016).

At least a century before the western world thought of establishing higher centres of learning, the Muslims world had established such institutions in some cities such as Basra, Kufa, Baghdad, Cairo and Cordova. These began as religious schools located in Mosques, and later developed into universities. Islam came to the place now known as Nigeria several centuries ago. Hence, before English Language, Arabic Language and Islamic education have dominated many cultures of Nigeria. However, government recognition of this has been very slow (Adeyemi, 2016)

Finally, education has been used as a tool by religious in conquering the challenges of forgotten identities and lost memories in a nation. Education in itself is a reforming agency, which stresses moral uprightness in interpersonal relationships at all levels (Nwankwo, 2017).

Recommendations

The paper recommends the following:

1. The federal government of Nigeria should introduce peace and Security studies to a Nigerian school's curriculum in order to inculcate our younger generation about safety and Security.
2. Religious leaders, stakeholders and parents should put more effort by remaining their followers, children on the important of protecting, and respecting the life of humanities.
3. Higher institutions management, secondary school principals and primary school head masters should also put eyes on admitting morally and decent individuals into their various schools.

Conclusion

Nigeria is known as the giant of Africa for its wealth, religious scholars, influence and population. But faced with a lot of security and developmental challenges such as high

rate of poverty, income inequality, unemployment, conflict, and violence among others. Therefore, religion has a great impact on the day to day life of an individual, and it seems to be the strongest anchor of humans, original inhabitants and new comers. This could be considered as a positive aspect. But the religious education becomes a thorny issue in this context.

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