

**SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM AND SECURITY COMPONENT OF THE  
NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT SEVEN- POINT AGENDA: A MULTI CULTURAL  
PERSPECTIVE**

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**ABSTRACT**

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*The study was conducted to examine the security component of the Nigerian government Seven- Point Agenda in the basic school social studies curriculum using multi- cultural perspective. Data were collected from 3270 basic school teachers across the six states of the North Central Geo- political Zone of Nigeria. It was found that basic school social studies curriculum did not adequately take care of the security component of the seven- point agenda. It was found that practical and entrepreneurial skill acquisition, economic empowerment programmes for sustainability and full employment and community policing need to be included, among others, in the present basic school social studies curriculum to enable the curriculum to adequately take care of the security component of the Seven- Point Agenda. Majority of the respondents were of the opinion that education and provision of employment should be provided to all citizens. It was suggested among others that the social studies curriculum should be regularly reviewed and also interactive programme in form of seminars and workshops should be organized for UBE teachers to enable them acquire the pedagogical disposition for implementing the curriculum of 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government.*

## **Introduction**

Social Studies, for long has been regarded as an amalgam of all the social science subjects including humanities. The subject has become unwieldy to teach effectively, particularly in view of the government position that a new civic education curriculum be disarticulated from the subject. Therefore, social studies curriculum has been realigned to take cognizance of these challenges facing the subject as a core subject at basic education level. Effort has been made to redress the observed inadequacy by teaching the subject as a discipline that brings the reality of everyday societal living to students with the desire to making them acquire the knowledge, attitude, values and skills required to be responsible and discipline members of their society.

The nature and objectives of Social Studies in Nigerian secondary schools emphasize students' familiarity with their physical and social environment; improved social relationships and interactions; skills and ability to think reflectively, critically, creatively and independently. All these objectives are required in life- problem solving. As a totality of man's experiences in the society and a problem – approach discipline, it becomes imperative to emphasize students' active participation in the learning process (Akintola, 2000). Social Studies could be seen as a programme of study in our schools which is used to inculcate in the learners the knowledge, skills, attitude and actions considered important in human relationship in the society CESAC (1993). The basic education curriculum in social studies, apart from taking into consideration societal needs, has incorporated many of the contemporary issues of local and global concern such as youth unemployment and youth restiveness, environmental issues, drug abuse, family live education, security, peace and conflict issues including other aspects of the Seven- Point Agenda of the government.

Social Studies is society bound. This requires that, its curriculum reflects the problems, yearning and aspiration of a given society. It is observed that, the nature of the problems and aspiration of the society as always determined the nature of social studies curriculum and of course, determines the purpose which the curriculum is out to serve. Probably, that is why Awoyemi (1994) opined that when we plan a social studies curriculum for any society, it must take the problem of that society into consideration. He stated further that, Nigeria for instance, has her problems which are not necessarily identical with the problems of other societies. It is essential therefore, that the social studies curriculum of Nigeria should take into consideration the peculiar problems of Nigeria among which is the

problem of insecurity which has become an issue of national concern irrespective of cultural background.

According to Technical Committee on Security (2008), security is conceptualized as the actual or potential freedom and safety from physical/military, political, economic, socio-cultural or psychological danger or attack. That is, it is the protection or defence of people against all kinds of victimization from external/military attack, economic want, poverty, illiteracy, disease/ill-health, political oppression, social exploitation, criminality, etc. And it is perceived in terms of the generality of the population i.e. the physical, political, economic, and social security of the average citizen rather than that of the government of the day and its officials.

By implication, security is the condition which enhances the ability of government, its agencies, and its citizens to function without hindrance. Differently put, it implies the absence of threat to life, and property; encompasses the socio-economic well-being of the people; and enables co-existence in peace and harmony. Section 14 [1] b of Chapter 2 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria captures the importance of security when it states that “security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of Government. Seen this way, security is a social contract between the state and its citizens in which the former is expected to protect, defend, and provide for the latter in the public arena

Various people such as Okiro (2008), Etim (2009), Adelugba, Adesina and Ujomu (2008), and Odah (2009) have observed the unpalatable state of security of the Nigerian Nation which is highly lamentable and nothing to write home about. There has been growing insecurity, an increase in the incessant kidnapping incidents, the reigning cases of broad day-light robberies, hired assassination or political sponsored killings and the most recent attacks and religious crises in the north. In addition, there are the destructive demonstration of the militants in the pre- amnesty period and other grave problems besetting the country. The growing insecurity in the country has made the Nigerian government to come up with 7-Point Agenda in which human security is considered a critical infrastructure.

Since Obasanjo came to power in 1999, more than 10,000 Nigerians have been killed in sectarian and communal violence. Recent events have only exacerbated the country's deep divisions: The imposition of sharia, or Islamic law, in twelve northern states forced thousands of Christians to flee, while more recently, Danish cartoons ridiculing the Muslim Prophet Mohammed resulted in attacks and reprisals that killed dozens and injured or displaced

thousands in the north and south. Former Nigerian leader like Obasanjo has been criticized both in and outside the country for not definitively responding to religious violence and communal tensions that cropped up during his regime. According to the "nigeria4betterrule" derivations, many Muslims and Christians have been identified as perpetrators of violence, but very few—if any—have been prosecuted.

Violence in the Niger Delta—where upwards of one hundred thousand barrels of oil per day is stolen—cost the country about \$1 billion last year in lost oil revenue, leaving global energy investors wary of Nigeria. Since December 2005, violence in the Niger Delta has decreased Nigeria's oil output by nearly 20 percent. Roaming militias have kidnapped foreign oil workers, set fire to offshore oil installations, and bombed pipelines. Lewis (2008) states that the fighters are angry with oil companies they feel have exploited the delta's resources without returns to the community, and feel a deep sense of isolation from the government. Years of neglect have left Nigerian security forces with little more than a few boats to patrol the delta, and consequently militants have attacked at will (Lewis, 2008). To maintain the security of the Delta Area, Nigeria and the United States signed a security agreement to jointly patrol the delta region, though U.S. action was delayed and Nigeria instead has looked to China—which has invested billions in Nigeria's energy infrastructure—for security assistance.

According to Yar adua (2007), security of life and property represents one of the most important constitutional duties of Government. Security and law and order are the foundation on which the success of all initiatives of Government in ensuring good governance is anchored. The authority of government over the people can be legitimised and sustained only to the extent that it guarantees the security of their people and properties. The primary challenges of national security revolve around the general economic down-turn. Under no other form of government have the challenges of national security been more daunting and potently sensitive than in a democracy. Lack of security threatens the stability of the polity and the safety of economic and social sectors of society and greatly discourages foreign direct investment, undermining economic growth.

Yar adua stated further that collaboration of all security organisations in the country is a major step to combating crime. The Military Intelligence Directorate, the State Security Service, the Criminal/State Intelligence Bureau of the Police and the intelligence units of all other agencies must pool resources and create a Central Crime Intelligence Directorate. This

will also help stem the growing tide of rivalry between the various agencies. The ability to communicate effectively within and between the services will be enhanced.

To further enhance security, the government will review the NYSC Act in order to provide legal cover for the youth corpsers in the area of crime prevention and community policing. This will be achieved as Nigeria invests heavily on security and also properly reward those who put their lives in the line of fire to ensure safety of lives and properties. Sustained public education campaigns will be used to alert people to the consequences of deviant activities. The community must be directly involved in designing and claiming ownership of programs aimed at reducing crimes. To complement this, government will seriously explore avenues of cooperation with established law enforcement agencies across the world to provide assistance to our law enforcement agencies.

It is observed by Yar adua (2007), that an unfriendly security climate precludes both external and internal investment into the nation. Thus, security will be seen as not only a constitutional requirement but also as a necessary infrastructure for the development of a modern Nigerian economy. With its particular needs, the Niger Delta security issue will be the primary focus, marshalled not with physical policing or military security, but through honest and accurate dialogue between the people and the Federal Government.

In an attempt to provide adequate security, the Nigerian government provided 9- year basic education and realigned social studies curriculum. Illiteracy and innumeracy are forms of insecurity in themselves. So, the first and most immediate contribution of successful basic education and social studies curriculum is a direct reduction of one form of deep rooted insecurity. Second, it is believed that if basic school social studies is taught well, it can be very helpful in guiding individual to live effectively in the society (Iyewarun, 1989).

It therefore becomes of paramount importance to bring about the type of basic school social studies and teaching that world reflect the areas that need to be addressed. The areas are the values that need to be emphasised and the problems to solve in our society constitute the security. One of the viable means of reducing this society's problem is the realignment of the basic school social studies curriculum. Poverty is the source of all menace needs to be reduced to the minimal level. A way of reducing poverty; using education, is the application of the proactive Empowerment Model developed by Adesina and Adeyemi (2009). According to them, the model seeks to eliminate poverty at its root rather than simply reacting to the manifestation and products of poverty. In model, there are fundamental

rethinking of the three major dimensions of empowerment – Social, Economic and Political. These three dimensions are predicated on a qualitative empowerment basic education programme, which emphasises the role of education in promoting economic sustainability. The model is predicated on eliminating the fundamental cause of poverty-ignorance and illiteracy by radically restructuring existing curriculum of the school within a neo-liberal humanistic restorative and sustainable philosophy.

This emphasis is the continuation of poverty reduction programmes of the government and nongovernmental organizations. Education programmes need to be restructured to emphasis pragmatism as against the conventional theoretical acquisition of knowledge. Economic empowerment programmes must be encouraged, adequately funded by the government (especially) and non-governmental agencies and gives space in the school curriculum. The effect is to reduce dependency of young graduates on government jobs. Self employment and sustainability is the watch word. The model emphasises political, citizenship and Moral Education as moral decadence increases at all levels of our society. It could be added here that the model caters for the necessary values which are needed to bring about peace and development to the Nigerian society.

Against the foregoing background, the aim of this paper is to find out the various perspectives of the basic school social studies teachers on the present social studies curriculum and security component of the 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government, with a view to providing suggestions on how security issues should be addressed in the curriculum. The specific objectives are to: find out the extent to which security is adequately taken care of in the present basic school social studies curriculum; examine the security component in the present basic school social studies curriculum; determine the content that should be included in the basic school social studies curriculum to cater for security; and finally, highlight how security should be addressed in the basic school social Studies curriculum.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were answered in this study:

1. To what extent does the basic school social studies curriculum adequately take care of the security component of the 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government?
  2. What are the security components of the 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government in the present basic school social studies curriculum?
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3. What are the issues of security that should be included in basic school social studies curriculum?
4. From your own cultural perspective, highlight how security should be addressed in the curriculum.

### Methodology

The survey design was adopted for the study. All the Universal Basic Education (UBE) teachers who attended the 2009 NTI/ MDGs programme in the six states of the North Central Geo- political Zone, that is Kwara, Kogi, Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, and Niger States November 2009 constituted the population. Through the use of stratified random sampling technique, 545 respondents were sampled from each of the six states of study. This gave a sample size of 3270. State of employment, constituted the strata. Instruments used for the study were the List of the Security Nigerian primary school curriculum modules in Social Studies (PSCMSS), National curriculum for Junior Secondary School in Social Studies (NCJSSSS) and a questionnaire containing 20 items. The PSCMSS and NCJSSSS were analysed to identify the extent of coverage of the security component. The questionnaire items were structured on a four- point scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

The questionnaire instrument was content validated by three lecturers at University of Ilorin, Ilorin. The test- retest procedure was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument twice to 20 Basic School teachers in Kwara State who did not participate in the MDGs programme. The scores were analysed using the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient and this yielded a coefficient of internal consistency of 0.67. The obtained data were analysed using percentages.

## Results

### Research Question One

To what extent does the basic school social studies curriculum adequately take care of the security component of the 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government?

**Table 1:** The extent to which basic school social studies curriculum adequately take care of the security component of the 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government

S/N)	Content of Security List (CSL)	Number of CSL topics in SSC	
		Frequency	%
1	Peace And Education	3	3
2	Sustainable economic and social development	7	6
3	Respect for all human rights	3	3
4	Gender Equity	1	1
5	Democratic activities	3	3
6	Understanding, tolerance and solidarity 8 7	8	6
7	Participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge	3	3
8	National security	3	3
9	Food Security	4	3
	Total	35	32

Table 1 shows that 35 (32%) of the 115 topics in the entire UBE Social Studies curriculum (from primary to junior secondary school) adequately take care of the security component of the 7-Point Agenda of the Nigerian government.

### Research Question Two

What are the security components of the 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government in the present basic school social studies curriculum?

**Table 2:** Frequency of security components of the 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government in the present basic school social studies curriculum

S.N	items	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
1	Life	327	10	523	16	1112	34	1308	40
2	Property	521	19	589	18	1275	39	784	24
3	Neighbourhood	360	11	818	25	784	24	1308	40
4	Solidarity	262	8	521	19	1210	37	1177	36
5	Justice	98	3	458	14	1472	45	1243	38
6	Human Right	784	24	589	18	981	30	916	28
7	Dignity	1046	32	981	30	523	16	719	22
8	empowerment	262	8	327	10	1308	40	1373	42
9	Respect	521	19	818	25	1145	35	687	21
10	Democracy	1014	31	948	29	719	22	523	16
11	Gender discrimination	98	3	458	14	1472	45	1243	38
12	Food Security	687	21	1275	39	719	22	589	18
13	tolerance	916	28	1177	36	556	17	521	19
14	employment	687	21	556	17	1079	33	948	29
15	Pollution	556	17	521	19	916	28	1177	36
16	Rules and regulation	1046	32	523	16	981	30	719	22

Sample =3270

None of the items scored up to 50%. When scores for “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” were put together, only items 10, 12 and 13 had up to a total score of 50%. This indicates that respondents did not agree that the security components of the 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government were in the present basic school social studies.

**Research Question 3.**

What are the issues of security that should be included in basic school social studies curriculum?

**Table 3:** Frequency of security components of the 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government in the present basic school social studies curriculum that should be included

S.N	items	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
1	Life security	1602	49	166	51	-	-	-	-
2	Property security	1079	33	1766	54	294	9	131	4
3	Neighbourhood security	1700	52	1308	40	131	4	131	4
4	Solidarity	1210	37	1635	50	229	7	196	6
5	Justice	1635	50	1234	38	131	4	262	8
6	Human Right issues	1373	42	1504	46	131	4	65	8
7	Human Dignity	1504	46	1668	51	33	1	65	2
8	empowerment	1635	50	1373	42	131	4	131	4
9	Respect for others	1145	35	1995	61	98	3	33	1
10	Democracy	1700	52	1504	46	65	2	-	-
11	Gender equity	1472	45	1570	48	164	5	33	1
12	Food Security	1864	57	1079	33	262	8	65	2
13	Tolerance	1406	43	1733	53	98	3	33	1
14	Entrepreneurial Skills	1079	33	1275	39	556	17	360	11
15	Pollution	1864	57	1172	36	98	3	131	4
16	Rules and regulation	1635	50	719	22	687	21	229	7

Sample =3270

From the analysis, it was observed that the respondents were of the opinion that all the items related to the security components of the 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government should be included in the present basic school social studies curriculum.

**Research Question 4.**

From your own cultural perspective, highlight how security should be addressed in the curriculum.

**Table 4:** Frequency showing how security components of the 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government in the present basic school social studies curriculum should be addressed

S.N	How to address the component	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
1	To be taught as a separate subject	458	14	687	21	1112	34	1014	31
2	To be included in Social Studies curriculum as a topic	987	30	1668	51	294	9	320	10
3	To be taught along with other components of the Seven-point agenda in the social studies curriculum	491	15	654	20	1145	35	981	30
4	To be taught only at lower basic level	491	15	425	13	1145	35	1210	37
5	To be taught only at middle basic level	491	15	425	13	1145	35	1210	37
6	To be taught only at upper basic level	491	15	425	13	1145	35	1210	37
7	To be taught across all the basic levels	1668	51	1406	43	131	4	65	2

Sample =3270

## Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that the Social Studies curriculum for the UBE programme in Nigeria contained some topics that were related to the seven-point agenda of the Nigerian government. However, respondents observed that the topics in the entire UBE Social Studies curriculum (from primary to junior secondary school) did not adequately take care of the security component of the 7-Point Agenda of the Nigerian government. This finding is not in line with Awoyemi (1994) who noted that the subject the social studies curriculum of Nigeria should take into consideration the peculiar problems of Nigeria among which is the problem of insecurity which has become an issue of national concern irrespective of cultural background. The finding also revealed that respondents did not agree that all the topics of the security components of the 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government were in the present basic school social studies. It appears that to be the first subject to overtly address the security components of the 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government in the Nigerian school system.

The finding also showed the security components of the 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government should be included in Social Studies curriculum as a topic. This is consistent with CESAC (1993) who opined that social studies could be seen as a programme of study that contained topics that could be used to inculcate in the learners the knowledge, skills, attitude and actions considered important in human relationship in the society. However, effective implementation of 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government requires the integration of security concepts and strategies across all levels of basic education and to cut across classes. This is because the security component of the 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government is not just about adding topics or themes to the curriculum. It is about mind transformation through the acquisition of appropriate skills, values and attitude which will empower the learners to seek, protect and maintain security.

The implication is that peace education goes beyond subject matter issues to include all aspects of learning that touch on the behaviour of the learner. The findings of this study also imply that teachers should be conversant not only with the concept of peace education but also with its instructional strategies. This will enable these teachers use every opportunity in the instructional process to develop in the learners a culture of security.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Findings of this study have shown that the security component of the 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government is yet to be effectively implemented in the Nigerian education system. The major problem is that a good number of the teachers do not understand the concepts, issues concept or its objectives, principles and strategies related to security. This buttresses the need for adequate teacher preparation in this area of study. This is to ensure that these teachers can effectively help learners develop the ability to seek, maintain and protect others and to resolve conflict without creating atmosphere of insecurity. In this regard the following recommendations are made:

Interactive programme in form of seminars and workshops should be organized for UBE teachers to enable them acquire the pedagogical disposition for implementing the curriculum of 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government.

Principles and strategies of security related education should be integrated into basic methodology courses taught in teacher training institutions.

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The 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government topics should be taught across all levels and classes in the UBE programme.

Text books for the UBE programme should be reviewed to provide information needed for the appropriate teaching and learning of the 7-point agenda of the Nigerian government.

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