

THE ROLE OF HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION IN PROMOTING NATIONAL SECURITY

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Abstract

This paper is predicated on the Role of Home Economics Education in Promoting National Security. The paper discussed National Security in the context of Home Economics education for national growth and development through practical skill acquisition that enhances enduring life style. It explained the various components of Home Economics Education and their consequential impacts on individual and the society, hence it engenders peace and security through creative endeavours. In conclusion, it is pertinently observed that Home Economics will obviously change the hitherto narrative of consistent security challenges through concerted approach of vision circle of skill knowledge acquisition for self-reliance. While, the paper recommends among others that youths should be train with requisite skills and knowledge that will keep them busy to avoid being a threat to National Security, growth and development.

Keyword: Home Economics, National Security, Life Style, Creative Endeavours, Self-Reliance

1.0 Introduction

The term National Security became prominent in Nigerian society during the upheavals that followed the political imbroglio of 1966 which heralded the Nigerian civil war, beginning from 1967-1970. The word gained ascendancy and became a household parlance in our polity at the return to civil democracy in 1999, following the withdrawal of the military from the active politics and governance of the country. There is no gainsaying the fact that Nigeria is currently facing serious security challenges, that have put every citizen on the edge including those at the helm of affairs and even the security operatives saddled with the responsibility of securing lives and properties. Hardly can Nigerians sleep with their two eyes closed. Since the last four years, there has been a dramatic twist on the wave, dynamics and sophistication of insecurity in Nigeria. Insecurity that used to be one of the lowest concerns in the hierarchy of Nigeria's social problems has now assumed an alarming proportion. A time we thought that corruption and power failure have the crown of our problems, insecurity in the country has now taken the centre stage (FinIntell, 2013).

Fear, apprehension and jitteriness have become the concern of Nigerians. Consequently, huge amount of money is always allocated to security by government for the purpose of addressing these threats of insecurity. A cursory glance at the Nigerian daily newspapers

will convince one of the states of insecurity in the country. Youth restiveness, kidnapping, bombing, arson, militancy, insurgency inter alia, have become the order of the day (Ogheneakoke, 2014).

National growth, economic development and human capital development have all been hampered by this social problem. Robert McNamara, a onetime president of the World Bank, once observed that no country can develop under an environment of insecurity. Peace and stability, to him, are necessary condition for growth and development (Osakwe, 2013). As seen in Nigeria, Mordi (2013) noted that the nation's growth and stability have been truncated by the on-going mayhem and destruction of lives and property in different parts of the country by the menace of terrorists in the Northern states, the militants and kidnappers in the south-South; among others.

Food production has been grossly affected and on the decline as farming and agricultural activities have been hampered, while oil exploration, exploitation and export have been negatively affected in the North and south-south, respectively. Food is of paramount importance to the survival, and growth of every human being. The relationship between health and food cannot be over emphasized, the consumption of unwholesome food has caused so much havoc globally, it is an indisputable fact that human lives are lost or maimed daily because of intake of contaminated food or food prepared with addictive and chemicals that are injurious to health (Oloya and Egbule, 2016).

Thus, insecurity have effect on food security. Therefore, food security exists when all people at all time have access to safe nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life. The main goal of food security is for individual to be able to obtain adequate food needed at all times and to be able to utilize the food multifaceted. So, where food insecurity exists there will be no growth and development. Marcenko (2017) stated that food security is the ability of every citizen in a given country to have regular access to enough food to meet up the daily nutritional requirement for healthy and productive life.

Home Economics is a field of study and a profession, classified in the educational sciences that draws from a range of disciplines to achieve optimal and sustainable living for individuals, families and communities. Its historical origins place Home Economics in the context of the home and household, and this is extended in the 21st century to include the wider living environments as we better understand that the capacities, choices and priorities of individuals and families' impact at all levels, ranging from the household, to the local and the global community (Lind and Parlin, 2017).

Today's Home Economics subject content has very many-sided. It is developed in accordance with today's education and life requirements. Its content has expanded and specified. However, the main focus of which runs through all the time training programmes is aimed to promote the quality of life. One of the most important changes in the Home Economics study subject content is to further intensify the practical skills in education including shift of training goals and motivation accent from subject' relatively

limited to pragmatic area (from household self- service area) towards social attitudes and psychological personality, suitable creative and applied area (Lips and Kikkul, 2017).

It has been established that a causal relationship exists between the sector of the society that is concerned with supply of manpower through the educational sector and the world of work. In other words, home economics education is a very crucial industry for the production of skills, positive attitudes, knowledge and personality upon which national existence depends (Reihmane, 2016). Reihmane further noted that the central focus of home economics is the well-being of the people within the context of their personal, family, community, and work roles.

Wikipedia (2019) stated that Home Economics Education borders on the quality of life of the individual, family and society by equipping them with relevant knowledge, attitude, and skills, productive and effective life. It is geared towards the development and use of limited resources to achieve the desired goals. The above characteristics cannot be achieved on a platter of gold; it calls for individual families and society to adopt healthy lifestyles that will necessitate the achievement of the set goal.

2.0 Concept of Healthy Lifestyle

Healthy lifestyle leads to fitness and wellness and reduces the risk of heart diseases and stroke (Zikmane, 2018). Although good health, a healthy lifestyle goes beyond adequate diets and exercise. He further stated that it is a total way of life, encompassing the physical, mental and emotional aspect of life. Nestle emphasized that healthy lifestyle should be free from the clutches of alcoholism and drug abuse that harm the body and cause social ills that may lead to insecurity.

3.0 Concept of Security

Brown (2013) view security as preservation of independence and sovereignty of a nation state. Security means safety or freedom from anxiety or danger in such a manner that one's future can be certain and guaranteed. He further noted that the aggregation of security interest of individual, political entities, human association and ethnic groups make up a nation while the security interest includes safety of life and property, economics, psychological, mental well-being and freedom to pursue the attainments of legitimate objectives without hindrance.

Bindir (2012) also posited that security is the sum total of activities undertaken to ensure the protection of a country, people and facilities against attack or danger. He further explained that insecurity is defined as lack of freedom or protection against danger or worry. That causes of insecurity in Nigeria is as a result of poverty, weakness of physical infrastructure, weak socioeconomic system, and weak performance of local industries, challenges of bad leadership, low literacy level, high poverty and dependence on food imports. The above shows a country in the pit of insecurity.

4.0 Signs of Insecurity

Insecurity is the condition whereby the life and properties of citizens are not safe. In

secured people often reveal their self-doubt without being aware of it. This is because they lack confidence about themselves or their relationship with other people, (Adamu, 2012). In this light, inimical behaviour could easily be experience and identified while taking a cursory look at the individual. Nandi (2013) identified the following list of behaviour that suggests insecurity, as;

- i. An inability to maintain eye contact hard for many individuals who lack confidence.
- ii. They will look away or look down, but rarely maintain the gaze of the other by looking into his or her eyes.
- iii. The self-doubting person tends to apologize a good deal with no apology is necessary. It as if the person expects to be reproached or is afraid to give offense, or prophylactically tries to excuse any possible mistakes in order to avoid just such response.
- iv. Answering a question with an upward inflection of the voice has been heard or done by everyone. The person being question doesn't have certainty about his answer, so he replies with a tone of voice that betrays its insecurity.

Many things can contribute to the cause of the conditions enumerated above. According to Nandi (2013), these conditions could be as a result of a critical or neglect of parent, poor academic knowledge, frequent moves that make you the “new person” (especially if you are introverted by nature), learning disabilities, frequent rejection, getting fired or laid off, and on, can be used to consider whether you are personally insecure or to evaluate the confidence to those around you. All the above can make an individual become depressed and that may result in unhealthy lifestyles like drug addiction, alcoholism and other immoral activities that further threaten security.

5.0 Security challenges in Nigeria.

In addition to the fact that Nigeria is Africa's most populace nation, there have been a number of worrisome security related developments in Nigeria's recent history. Ogheneakoke (2014) identified security challenges currently facing the country to include; Political violence, Extremism (religious intolerance), Communal violence, The Niger Delta militants, Maritime security and transitional crime,

Edinyang (2013) opine that national security is threaten as a result of more educated younger generation with less responsibilities, more influential cross-border satellite mass media with less moral constraints, more westernized living habits with less respects on tradition and heritage, more communication tools on internet with less abiding by-law. Edinyang (2013) further posited that a lot of information from cross-border satellite TV channels also affects younger people's behaviours and thoughts against traditional values and heritage. Young people usually pay little respect to their own culture and blindly adopt western values and living habits without choice. Apart from other communication services, short message service (SMS) and social network tools such as Twitter and Facebook on the internet are the most powerful and influenced means for people to communicate and exchange messages. If you think about nature of these messages as anonymity without any responsibility, some lawful restriction should be naturally applied

to those tools so that it does not result into lack of insecurity in the country.

6.0 The Role of Home Economics Education in Promoting National Security

There is a relationship between Home Economics Education and Nation's security. While security is the sum total of what people do to safeguard against danger, Home Economics Education on the other hand provides people with skills that will make the individual productive and self-employed. Home Economics is therefore seen as a security guard. This is because it creates innovation that drives economic growth in the society, such as inculcating healthy lifestyles and skills that will make individuals be self-employed, e.g., tailoring, hotel managers, hairdressing saloons and so on.

Home Economics Education Curriculum at all levels of education emphasizes the acquisition of skills for its graduates with a view to enhancing the capability of self-employment, (Reihmane, 2016). Home Economics is a skill-oriented course that forms the basis for many professional and entrepreneurship skills so that the graduates can become job creators rather than job seekers and with this, there will be little or no time to become a security threat to the country. The Home Economics graduate can produce various types of clothing for herself and others from the entrepreneurial skills acquired in Home Economics. Marcenko, (2017) observed that the establishment of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) are entrepreneurial drives towards self-employment and industrialization that can help curb the insecurity in the country.

The following areas of Home Economics contribute in promoting National Security in Nigeria:

6.1 Food and Nutrition: The role of food and nutrition in promoting national security cannot be over-emphasized. Home economics food and nutrition courses provide the only opportunity for the students to learn about nutrition and healthy eating through the 'hand on' effective in changing behaviour than knowledge transmission (Lips and Kikkull, 2017) A child that is well nourished will develop healthy lifestyles effortlessly, and will not engage himself/herself in harmful issues that vitalize the interest of maintaining peace, security and national unity. Adamu (2012) noted that, parents have a great role to play in providing an adequate diet for family members. If that is done, children may not engage themselves on issues that will bring security challenges to the country.

6.2 Parenting practices: Parenting is the most important job because it determines the character of our children and the quality of our society. Yet few people get training for it. An alarming number of children are at risk of being abused, neglected or otherwise, poorly cared for by inadequately prepared parents. Nnom (2013) reveal that parenting practices have significant outcomes and, on the likelihood, that a child is vulnerable in some ways. Parenting education for school age children and teens addresses these concerns in several ways working to interrupt the cycle of poor parenting that will

lead children to crimes such as arm robbery, car snatching, pipeline vandalization, and terrorism among other. A possible solution to insecurity in Nigeria is good parenting practices, teach the children the fear of God through the knowledge acquired in Home Economics Education (Nnom, 2013).

6.3 Home Management: Mordi (2013) outlined some key areas of the skills acquired in Home Management that prepares individuals to participate effectively in a changing world and maintain security and peace of the nation through food-related small-scale business. These areas include; bread and cake making, garri, yam and plantain flour processing, production of starch for laundering, bottling of ground pepper, groundnut and spices, manufacture of biscuit, candies and chin-chin, marketing of raw food crops, operation of snack shop, marketing of popcorn, akara, moi-moi, fruit drinks, establishment of fast-food restaurant, and nutritional diet counselling unit.

6.4 Clothing and Textiles: Another area of Home Economics Education that can help our teaming youths to become self-reliance are production of tie and dye/Batik materials, laundry services, garment making, dyeing and bleaching, and textile trade (buying and selling of clothing materials). Home Economic Education therefore, is not just to impart knowledge and skills that enable beneficiaries to function as economic and social change agents, but also to impart values, ideas, attitudes, and aspirations important for the development and maintenance of security for peaceful coexistence in the country.

7.0 Conclusion

It is apparent that Home Economics is a vital profession currently enjoying renewed attention in the present day. Our contemporary world is characterized as one of unprecedented transition from industrial to knowledge-based culture and globalize economy, with all-encompassing effects on society, culture and security of the nation. The information age is complex, diverse and unpredictable, yet Home Economics Education has a strong commitment to retaining those elements of society such as values, while looking ahead to the imperative of improving the world in which we live through preparing our youths to contribute to Nigerian future economic growth, security and sustainable development. As national security hangs in the balance, Home Economics Education can salvage the situation through entrepreneur skill acquisition for self-reliance.

8.0 Recommendations

- i. Youths should be prepared with essential skills and knowledge that will keep them busy to avoid the adage that says, "An idle mind is the devil's workshop", and focus on the development and maintenance of peace and security of the nation;
- ii. Government and curriculum developers at all levels (Federal, State and Local) should ensure proper implementation of entrepreneur skills contained in the curriculum through supervision and follow up;

- iii. The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) should do more to encourage the youths and school drop-outs to enroll for skill acquisition activities so that they will be self-employed rather than becoming security threats to the nation.
- iv. Home Economics subjects should be made compulsory at all levels of education. This will help the students have a basic foundation of entrepreneur skills.
- v. Teach the children the fear of God.
- vi. Security officials should be included in the curriculum development.

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