# Advocating Security Education Curriculum for Pre-basic Pupils

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this study was to stress the need to include security education in the curriculum for pre-basic pupils. The Nigerian National Policy on Education stipulates security education as one of the curriculum content for basic education where teaching and learning of the subject is scheduled to commence from lower basic I (primary 1) to Upper basic III (Junior secondary 3). The one year pre-basic education for age bracket 5-6, is seen as the onset of formal education in Nigeria, therefore foundational issues like security should be laid bare before the child as soon as formal education begins. The study looked at the pre-basic school Curriculum, the need for security education curriculum for pre-basic pupils and recommended teaching methods for security education curriculum for pre-basic schools. In as much as security education is approved for basic pupils, the pre-basic child should not be left out because they are exposed to the same environment, besides, available records show that very young children are victims of insecurity in our land. Psychologist down through the ages ( Eric Erickson, Sigmund Freud) accept that it is better to input right values into children while they are young than to correct them when they are adults. Some of the suggestions made in this study are that education policy makers should build in security education into pre-basic pupils curriculum, teachers should avail themselves of the teaching methods recommended for teaching security education to pupils of this age.*

**Keywords:** *Security Education, Curriculum, Pre-basic Pupils*

## Introduction

Life-threatening anti-social activities like human trafficking, sexual abuse, domestic violence, terrorism, armed robbery and murders, to mention but a few, are becoming recurrent headlines on news desk globally. These acts are carried out by more advantaged persons over the less advantaged irrespective of age and gender, rendering human communities unpredictable and insecure. Insecurity is a pandemic that not only inflicts pain, suffering and ultimate destruction to humanity but threatens the very existence of nations. It slows down development and ravages economies (Bruck & De Groot, 2013). This explains why security issues which have been of global concern in recent times.  It is therefore imperative to use the weapons of education beginning from its very early stage to fight insecurity. Beginning from the pre-basic class to teach pupils security issues through the curriculum is not only commendable but necessary because insecurity dawns on very

little children as well as adults. It is rational to make the pre-basic pupil security conscious by arming them with the required knowledge of what it is all about and how to curb, handle or escape from it.

One common identity of insecurity is violence. Violence is expressed in arm robbery, rape, social unrest, attacks, killings and the use of force by any means to hurt. In Nigeria violence has been domestic, communal and gender related where the most vulnerable are the women and children (Adegoke & Oladeji 2008). Since education has always been a viable tool for transformation and empowerment, it should be used to push back the forces of insecurity until they are totally disarmed or eliminated. Security education which came as an inclusion into the basic education curriculum at a time like this is required for all pupils including those in pre-basic education. This is to ensure that as soon as formal education begins, security education should be integrated into what the child learns at school to seal off security loopholes created by the prevailing circumstances surrounding the child in his/her environment.

The Nigeria National Policy on Education does not include Security Education as a school subject in pre-basic school curriculum. Rather, it is meant for the nine-year basic programme (3-years lower basic, 3-years middle basic and 3-years upper basic) this excludes the 1-year pre-basic education (FRN, 2014). The need of security education in the curriculum is to create awareness and arm the child against all forms of threats in his/her environment. Good as this is, it will be better to begin the teaching of this subject from the pre-basic class which is a one year schooling before registering into lower basic one. The prospects of this are numerous and worthwhile.

This paper shall be discussing on advocating security education curriculum for pre-basic school under the following sub headings:

1. Pre-basic school Curriculum
2. Security education
3. The need for security education curriculum for pre-basic pupils
4. Teaching methods for security education curriculum for pre-basic schools

**Pre-basic school Curriculum**

The Federal Government of Nigeria defines pre-basic education as one year education given to children aged 5 prior to their entering lower-basic one (primary one). Basic Education is the education given to children aged 0-15 years. It comprises the Early Child Care and Development Education ( ECCDE) for children aged 0-4 years, Pre-Basic Education for ages 5-6, Lower Basic Education (primary 1-3) for ages 6-9, Middle Basic Education (primary 4-6) for ages 9-12 and Upper Basic Education (Junior Secondary 1-3) for ages 12-15. In this arrangement, the Early Child Care and Development Education ( ECCDE) for children aged 0-4 years is classified as informal whilst Pre-Basic Education for ages 5-6 is within formal education category (FRN, 2014).

The Objectives of pre-basic education (1-year Pre-Primary education) are: (a) Effect a smooth transition from the home of the school; (b) Prepare the child for the primary level of education; (c) Provide adequate care, supervision and security for the children while

their parents are at work; (d) Inculcate social, moral norms and values; (e) Inculcate in the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, the environment, art, music and the use of toys, etc; (f) Develop a sense of co-operation and team-sprit; (g) Stimulate in the child good habits, including good health habits; and (h) Teach the rudiments of numbers; letters, colours, shapes, forms, etc, through play (FRN, 2014).

Unlike the other tiers of basic education where the objectives are stated alongside the school subjects that will serve as a means to achieving the objectives, the National Policy on Education does not clearly state school subjects that will lead to the achievement of the stated objectives for pre-basic education. It has been observed that schools formulate their own curriculum for this 1-year pre-basic programme based on their understanding of the objectives stated in the National Policy on Education. Since security issues are paramount to the development of any nation and the government of Nigeria has considered it needful to teach its rudiments alongside national values to basic education pupils, the pre-basic pupils should be included. This calls for the inclusion of security education curriculum for pre-basic pupils.

## Security Education

In defining security education, let us look at both words on their merits. Carter (2002) defined security as a state of tranquillity in a society. He compartmentalized security into two components: the emotional security which is the individual and the community's feeling of the need for security, and the procedural security which is the regulatory efforts to achieve or restore security. Henry, Merten, Plunkett and Sands (2008), explained that security is the sense of assurance that is felt by the individual, either because of the absence of threats to his or her existence, or as a result of having the means to confront such threats as they arise. Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary defines the word 'security' as protection of a person, building, organization or country against threats such as crime or attacks. Security therefore connotes tranquillity, comfort, confidence, and the lack of threat, fear or any opposing condition. The accompanying word education is generally defined as the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits that effect a change in people's behaviour and improve their living conditions. Security education can therefore be seen as the process of exposing the pupils to knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits that will protect them against crime, threats, attack from unfriendly persons or any condition or situation that may steal their peace or that of the society.

In Nigeria security education is taught and learnt as a sub-theme within a school subject named Religion and National Values. This subject comprises Christian Religious Studies/Islamic Studies, Social Studies and Security Education. It is also meant for basic education curriculum beginning from Lower Basic one (primary 1) to Junior Secondary three (JS 3) excluding the Pre-basic Education pupils. The crux of this paper is that if security education is meant for basic education curriculum it should be included in the pre-basic education curriculum also. Suffice it to say that most pre-basic schools have the following as subjects taught and learnt; Literacy, Numeracy, Social Norms, Nature talk, Health Habits, Writing, Creativity and Religious Studies. The need to consciously teach the pre-basic pupils security education cannot be over stated especially in these times. Al-

Edwan (2016) rightly observe that security is closely related to education and that the more moral values are instilled in the hearts of the students the more secured and stable the society becomes, so the school has to develop curricula to deal with the rapid changes, and continue its mission in the spread of security education. Al-Hoshan (2004) also emphasized the need for the development of security awareness through the teaching and learning of values and building positive attitudes on security through the curriculum.

## The need for security education curriculum for pre-basic pupils

There is need for security education curriculum for pre-basic pupils have based on the following challenges:

i. They are legible members of the society: The per-basic pupil does not live in isolation; he/she is exposed to the same hazards in the environment where the adult dwells. Therefore the need for security education curriculum for pre-basic pupils cannot be overstated. Security education is an instrument used to educate and fortify citizens against insecurity and other social ills in the society in order to give room for social and economic development. The pre-basic pupils need this fortification otherwise any gap at their instance may lead to a downward social and economic development. Al-Ayed (2009) opines that security education strengthens national identity by establishing the principle of social responsibility and the ability to compare and contrast ideas. Though the per-basic pupil may not be able to compare and contrast ideas, they will be able to decipher between the safe and secure from the unsafe and insecure for their good and the good of the society.

ii. They are more vulnerable because of their age: Pre-basic pupils fall between the ages of 5 and 6 (FRN, 2014). The child at this age is very dependent and has a fragile nature that requires deliberate efforts by teachers and relevant others to assist him/her to develop acceptable social qualities as adults. For this age bracket, Akpan (2013) opined that interactions with the child should be done with caution so that experiences that could make the child develop socially unacceptable life styles that threaten the security of other citizens could be avoided. Renowned human psychologist (Jean Piaget, Sigmund Freud & Erik Erikson) explain that the pre-basic pupil is at the concrete operational level of development and so cannot rationalize based on reasons, this child is also at the level of despair not knowing why certain things are done but wishes to do what he/she is told in order to be loved. This can be very unsafe when unfriendly friends lurk around them. The knowledge of what/who is safe or secure and how to remain within safe limits will go a long way to helping them develop security consciousness.

iii. Available Reports/statistics: According to United Nations International Children Education Fund (UNICEF, [2015] ) six out of ten children in Nigeria experience emotional, physical or sexual abuse before the age of 18, with half experiencing physical violence. This includes children in pre-basic level of education. Tade and Udechukwu (2020) in a study the of characteristics of rapists and their victims gathered from selected Nigeria newspapers found out that rape victims were reported to be between 1 and 20 years of age. This points to the fact that very little

children of pre-basic school age can be raped where there is nothing done to ensure their security.

Below is a table showing different types of violence experienced by little children including those within the pre-basic education age bracket (3-5years).

| | Type of violence | Age of victim | | Sex of victim | Source of information |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | kidnapping | 6years | | Male | Nwachukwu (2020) |
| 2 | Rape | (i)<br>(ii)<br>(iii) | 4years<br>9months<br>5months | Female<br>Female<br>Female | Okey & Ogunbamoho (2020)<br>Ohu (2020)<br>Ojo (2020) |
| 3 | Child Trafficking | (i)<br>(ii) | 6years<br>Eight children | Male<br>5 Males & 3 Females | Samson (2020)<br>Odogwu (2020) |
| 4 | Domestic violence | | | | |
| 5 | Murder | (i)<br>(ii) | 3years<br>6years | Female<br>Male | Oji (2020) |

**iv.** It is better to catch them young: security education is better given as a prophylaxis and not as a remediation. As children begin leaving the arms of their mother into the care of any other person it is better to also begin feeding the child with signals that will enable him/her know when insecurity lurks around and what they should do to avoid being hurt. This is safer than trying to heal the wounds of insecurity or giving some therapeutic counsel when the harm has been done. This means that security education is needed by pre-basic pupils and should be included in their curriculum

**Teaching methods for security education curriculum for pre-basic schools**

Teaching methods for security education curriculum comprises the principles and methods used by teachers to enable to pre-basic school pupils learn. They include classroom activities, experiences and preventive measures that are taught to help them avoid becoming victims or perpetrators of any form of insecure activity or crime as citizens of Nigeria. Al-Basheer (2005), assert that teaching methods for security education can boost students morale in overcoming security challenges. Some f these teaching methods are discussed below:

Story telling/re-telling: children love listening to stories; this is why right from very early times, values and traditions where passed to children from one generation to another through folklores, moonlight and fairy tales. Story telling is still captivating to children today and can be used to teach rudiments of safety to pre-basic pupils to make them security conscious. There are a lot of traditional folklores and animal stories that have bearings on safety and security consciousness. Teachers should avail themselves of these stories and others for the sake of teaching the pre-basic pupil security education. It is necessary to always outline the lessons portrayed in every story so that the pupils can

actually learn. It is good to allow the children re-tell the story after the teacher. Story re-telling is always an interesting time as children try to act the teacher.

Re-telling the story is a way of ensuring that the pupils got the exact story and can relay it to other children to still disseminate the story. It is necessary to ensure that emphasis is laid on the lessons learnt from the story and these lessons are re-echoed by all the pupils under the guidance of the teacher.

Case study: as the name implies, this method of teaching is about examining an already existing case for the purpose of learning indelible lessons from such. The teacher being a professional in pedagogy knows how to relate every teaching method to suit the characteristics of the learners, in this case the pre-basic pupil aged 5-6. The teacher has the responsibility of bringing down the lesson to the level of the pupils. This can be done by bringing up cases of insecurity around the community and make them see what really happened, what could have been done to avert it, possible solutions and what is expected of them as regards such issues. For instance, if there has been a case of kidnap, child sexual abuse or trafficking, this can be examined under the teacher's guidance. This should be done the aim of creating awareness, providing preventive bits and solutions to the problem.

Class Interaction/discussion: Discussion method: Omwirhiren (2015) defines discussion method as a method that utilizes guided interaction to highlight a particular subject matter with the aim of facilitating the students. Pre-basic pupils knowledge in security education can be facilitated by teacher-guided classroom interaction and discussion. The teacher guides the students through informed discussion on relevant security issues to dislodge ignorance and get the child's psychic armed against environmental security odds. While the teacher guides the discussion, pupils are asked questions to prompt their views on a given security problem.

Picture reading: children love pictures and amazingly they gain more understanding when pictures are attached to lessons. Teachers can therefore use the medium to teach security education to pre-basic pupils in order to secure the future. This is to confirm the assertions of Al-Edwan (2016) that the more moral values are instilled in the hearts of the students the more secured and stable the society becomes. Making pictures of current security situations as it affects the child and showing same to them through a structured curriculum is one simple way of presenting security education in the classroom to the pre-basic pupil. Here the teacher shows them the pictures based on the intended objectives and asks them to say what they have seen. From there a discussion and classroom interaction begins while the teacher guides to ensure that the predetermined aims and objectives for the lesson are achieved.

 Electronic media: benefits of the use of video and television to teach younger learners cannot be over emphasized at any time. Teachers can use this instructional resource to make security situations real and then provoke the emotions of the pre-basic pupil to guard against unacceptable attitudes and lifestyles which promote insecurity.

## Conclusion

Since security education has been slated for all basic pupils, the pre-basic pupils should not be exempted.  Besides, available reports and statistics show that children within the pre-basic age bracket also suffer from insecurity challenges in the society more because they are very dependent and susceptible. It is now a matter of urgent importance to develop a curriculum for pre-basic pupils in order to have a balanced spread of security lessons at the basic education level to ensure a more security conscious and enlightened the society.

## Recommendations

Recommendations made as a result of this study are that:

- Education policy makers should build in security education into pre-basic pupils curriculum.
- Teacher education curriculum for basic school teachers should include teaching methods for pre-basic pupils for effectiveness in lesson delivery at this level.
- Teachers should avail themselves of the teaching methods recommended for teaching security education to pupils of this age.

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