

Managing Social Studies Education Curriculum for National Development

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ABSTRACT This study focuses on the roles of the social studies education curriculum in addressing national development in Nigeria. It examines the existing social studies curriculum viz-a-viz its roles in national development and challenges faced by social studies teachers in its implementation. The study advocates that learners should be taught the skill of problem-solving, critical thinking, moral and character education at the early stage of life for self-development of the learner and eventual national development. Nigerian society is the focus of this study. The paper concludes that the young ones are the instrument for national development; Nigeria can attain national development if they acquire the right types of skills (problem-solving skills), values, and attitudes. Part of the recommendations made was that government should set up a conference of curriculum experts to review the social studies curriculum in line with the current realities like insecurity, kidnapping, and other vices amongst others.

INTRODUCTION

In promoting the welfare of the people of any country, national development is essential. Meanwhile, by providing social facilities such as water, electricity, road networks, transportation system, and qualitative education, national development is the capacity of a country to improve the social life of its people which is vital for maintaining and sustaining all government development policies. In addition to employing its people, national development consists of the complete growth and expression of the national industrial, agricultural, educational, social, religious, and cultural sectors.

The rate of development in Nigeria has been very low according to Lawal and Oladoyin (2016), despite different development plans placed in place from independence by successive governments. Education in social studies given to a child in an educational environment from 6 to 15 years of age, which is from primary to junior secondary school, is, therefore, a priority. This is because it's an integrated topic that grows in the learner the skill of problem-solving and critical thinking (Mensah 2019). It is at this stage of education where ideals can be instilled into a child's life, and it is possible to identify and correct future maladaptive behavior and/or any abnormality in the pupil from the core.

One of the subjects in the junior secondary curriculum that can help people achieve moral,

societal, and educational objectives is social studies. Students can be incorporated into citizenship education through social studies, which provides them with the information, skills, and attitudes that will enable them to be capable and responsible citizens who can contribute to their communities and demonstrate moral and civic excellence (Akubuilu et al. 2019). In order to meet the goals, needs, and ardent desires of their countries, a large number of countries around the world adopted social studies. For example, after the First and Second World Wars, the British government incorporated social studies curriculum into their educational system to solve social issues, pacify citizens' consciences to follow constituted authority, and contribute positively to community growth (Akubuilu et al. 2019).

In Nigeria and all nations, social studies as a single school subject is a relatively recent discipline, although it has been around for a large number of years. It's new because most of the subjects/disciplines also relate to a conventional discipline in the school curriculum; decades and even centuries predate social studies. It is also new since nobody of knowledge of its own has yet been established (Kissock 2010) and still relies on principles and generalisations from current disciplines of social sciences and humanities.

Among the African Nations, after a long colonial rule and legacy, social studies have been used to boost the self-image of people in society.

In Ghana, the goal was to know the interrelatedness amongst the social and physical environment and their effect on Ghana's growth; to recognise the impact of history on the country's present and future development efforts; to appreciate the future environmental components and how they can be sustained to ensure sustainable development; to identify the important challenge; among the African nations, after a long colonial rule and legacy, social studies have been used to boost the self-image of people in society.

On the other hand, development planning is a multi-faceted mechanism and it plays an important role in shaping the strategies and priorities for the development of nations. To achieve well-defined national goals, the goal of every national development plan should be to use the available resources more effectively and efficiently. For the measurement of national growth, three major equally weighted components exist;

- i. Longevity: which is measured by the life expectancy at birth;
- ii. Standard of living: measured by real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capital at purchasing power and parity;
- iii. Knowledge: which is measured by adult literacy and the number of years children are enrolled at school.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this paper is to assess how the management of social studies education curriculum for national development.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This paper is a concept review paper and does not require collection of data and administration of questionnaire.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

The Antecedent of Social Studies Education

The implementation of social studies in Nigeria was followed by a follow-up to the 1968 Mombasa Educational Conference attended by seventeen nations, including Botswana, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Lesotho, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan,

Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe (Sofadekan 2012). The subject, social studies, first took root in the western region before spreading to other parts of the world. The National Education Policy (1977), which authorized the teaching of social studies in both primary and secondary schools, was a landmark moment in Nigeria's integration of social studies into the school curriculum. According to Busari (2015), the adoption of the 1977 and 1981 National Policies on Education authorized the teaching of social studies in both primary and secondary schools.

The National Committee on Primary Education Social Studies Curriculum was established by NERC in 1981 to develop an appropriate national social studies curriculum for all primary school classes and to conduct a systematic review of the existing primary school social studies curriculum. A new curriculum for social studies was planned in line with the 9-year basic education programme to fulfil the goals of the 9-year basic education programme.

The history of integrating social studies into the curriculum in Nigeria can be traced back to the social studies program created by Community High School (CHS) Aiyetoro, which was used until 1982 in almost all the states that approved the teaching of social studies (Sofadekan 2012).

Roles of Social Studies Education in National Development

In most countries of the world, the object of education is the development of individuals who can engage successfully in the process of the development of a nation. To break down regional and ethnic loyalties and promote national unity and growth, social studies were integrated into the Nigerian school system decades ago. Education was endorsed by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) as a premier tool for promoting national growth. Indeed, education in Nigeria is based on the following principles:

- i. The development of the people to become an effective and productive citizen;
- ii. To fully enable individual to effectively become a member of the community; and
- iii. Equitable access to educational opportunities for all Nigerians at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, both within and outside the formal school system.

Development implies increased capacity and ability, greater independence, imagination, self-discipline, accountability, and material well-being (Ross 2017). Development can be seen as a multidimensional process involving the reduction or eradication of inequality, total poverty, unemployment, slavery, and apartheid, as well as structural reforms and economic growth (Ezewu 2019). Education, which has to do with the inculcation of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes, is one of the other approaches to development with the main objective of transforming the individual, who in turn becomes an instrument of development for himself, family, community, country, nation and the world.

Therefore, the focus of social studies is primarily on people, community, and the environment, and its ultimate aim is to equip people with knowledge and understanding for productive relationships and living. For efficient relationships and living, the social studies program is the entirety of knowledge and comprehension. The program of social studies is the entirety of knowledge and understanding that a child gets subjected to a course of studies focused on the issue of men in his community. This form of curriculum helps learners to overcome different developmental challenges that they face as individuals and as members of social groups or communities daily. It, therefore, offers the child a richer preparation for life.

The National Policy on Education as it Relates to Social Studies

The national educational priorities, as set out in the national policy on education are;

- i. Global consciousness and national unity are inculcated;
- ii. The inculcation of the socially acceptable values, beliefs and attitudes for the person and Nigerian society to survive;
- iii. The preparation of the mind to learn and understand the world around it.
- iv. Acquiring suitable skills and improving mental, physical, and social skills and competencies as facilities for the person to live in and contribute to society's growth.

The aim and objectives of social studies in the Nigerian education curriculum are, following the national educational goals:

- i. To educate students to become and appreciate the world of useful people of the country;
- ii. To help them understand the influence of the world on humans and the relationship of humans with them;
- iii. To help them understand the need for interdependence with different social groups and the world at large;
- iv. To instil values, beliefs, knowledge, and skills in students to encourage them to work properly and to perform their roles as members of society.

The Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) categorize these goals into:

- i. Education for citizenship: training students for social responsibilities;
- ii. Humanistic education: assisting students to consider their lives;
- iii. Intellectual education: exposing students to social science modes of thought and inquiry;
- iv. Value education: inculcating those expected social habits and group practices, attitudes, beliefs, and feelings in the students.

The Nigerian child is expected to become imaginative, resourceful, responsible, understanding, and patriotic through these goals. In the Nigerian school curriculum, the essence of social studies is not only to prepare the child for society but to contribute significantly to national development. In the school curriculum, it is these objectives that make the subject relevant.

The Goals of Social Studies Education in Nigeria

One of the main functions of social studies is that it aims to educate learners to live a responsible life now and in the future in their communities. According to the National Teachers Institute (NTI), (2000), the role of social studies in the development of Nigeria is as follows:

- i. Inculcate accountability to others: the adage of being the guardian of one's brother was undermined by the selfish lust for material riches. It seems like we do not perceive our obligations to others as fundamental. This is not good because we try to destroy the distinctive characteristics of our type of cultural life. We may feel concerned about our fellow men in various ways. These include showing sympathy, soothing during sorrow,

- helping during need, guiding uncertainty, especially in the case of a stranger, and protecting in the case of danger, etc. Therefore, the child sees others' peace and protection as his concern.
- ii. Respect for the value and dignity of others: in its racial, religious, cultural, linguistic, and social composition, Nigeria is not only diverse but also respectful of the value and dignity of others. The nation is now facing a crisis of self-assured dominance in which some racial and religious groups are seeking to control others. This brings rancour and bias that causes disunity. From the outset, the Nigerian child should understand that, despite social and cultural disparities between them, all Nigerians are equal. Social studies help to instil in the child the spirit of acceptance of reverence for the value of all Nigerians through their goals.
 - iii. Creation of tolerance: Depending on their cultural context, Nigerians have different values and beliefs. Yet in the interests of national unity, these gaps are to be sunk. Unfortunately, with various social, political, and ideological views, several Nigerians have refused to accept their fellow citizens. Political and religious intolerance has led to several public protests in some parts of the country. People must be made to understand that every socio-political and religious community has the right to exist and co-exist in a stable and unified Nigeria. No one will be harmed if we love and tolerate one another.
 - iv. Growing awareness: what should concern you is why most Nigerians are involved in undermining the law of the land rather than helping them uphold it which is one of their civic obligations. Any of these actions are committed out of ignorance of the outcome. Sometimes, those who rigged or allowed themselves to be used in general elections in Nigeria to manipulate elections did so out of ignorance of the impact their acts would have on the nation's effective leadership. Therefore, the child needs to be gradually introduced as a citizen to his rights and civic duties. The creation of this understanding is one of the goals of social studies in primary schools in Nigeria.
 - v. The internalisation of national consciousness and national unity: as preparation for citizenship, social studies have been used as a means of instilling the child's desirable ideals and social attitudes and as a means of socialization. It is used by some as a form of indoctrination. This makes social studies a discipline that encourages a child to blend into the group. Honesty, fair play, hard work, patriotism, obedience, discipline, loyalty, honesty, self-confidence, among others, are some of the social ideals that should be inculcated.

Challenges in Implementing Social Studies Curriculum in Nigeria

Some of the issues affecting the delivery of the curriculum for social studies are:

- i. Lack of awareness of the subject: Adeyemi (2018), Herber (2016), and Kissock, (2010) believe that educators should recognize fundamentally that it is a field of research that draws material primarily from the social sciences and other sources. Mezieobi (2017) and Obiadi (2016) expressed concern about the state of social studies in the curriculum, especially how social studies were ignored, not controlled or supervised and left at the mercy of social studies students and teachers.
- ii. The inappropriate framework of social studies in different schools has hindered efficient teaching (Fan 2011). Ross (2017) and Akpabio (2017) claim that social studies help to mould and form the behavior of man.
- iii. Lack of teaching resources: one of the problems that restrict the teaching and learning of social studies in schools in Nigeria is the lack of teaching resources. Banks (2015) argues that we are now living in a modern society where the teaching of social studies involves technical devices such as computers, the internet, and ICT. Akpabio (2017) concludes that the absence of tools or instructional materials for a field trip, such as computers, globes, and funds, hinders the teaching and learning of social studies.
- iv. Inadequate availability and use of educational resources, including textbooks, which can increase the knowledge of teachers/students

- and improve learning, is an obstacle to social studies teaching and learning in Nigeria. A general shortage of social studies textbooks in Nigerian schools has also been reported (Ohundunwa 2014; Mkpa 2017).
- v. Low teacher qualifications: Okogie (2010) reports the absence of a systematic methodology training curriculum for teachers of social studies. Ezewu (2019) suggests that if teachers use social studies approaches such as expository methods, excursion methods, and assignment methods in their teaching and learning social studies, the achievement of multiple social studies goals would be accomplished.
 - vi. Problems of evaluation and assessment: the inappropriate framework of the curriculum for social studies presents a major challenge to the delivery of material for the national advancement of social studies.
 - vii. Another problem facing the introduction of the social studies curriculum in Nigerian schools is the lack of seminars, workshops, and conferences for teachers of social studies.

Curriculum Implementation for National Development

In the promotion of children from the early phase, the specifics of social studies education curriculum models are found. The curriculum collectively defines the resources available for teaching, learning, and evaluation for a given course of study. The curriculum is a form of learning designed and directed by the school, whether it is done in groups or independently, within or outside the school.

In the primary and junior secondary school curriculum, social studies is one of the subjects that can assist students in achieving spiritual, societal, and educational goals. Students are integrated in citizenship education through social studies, which equips them with the understanding, skills, and attitudes necessary to become capable and responsible citizens ready to contribute to society and demonstrate moral and civic excellence (National Council of the Social Studies 2004).

Social studies has been included as a discipline in Nigerian schools as a quest for identity in education and culture. This explains why social studies has been given an important position in Nigerian basic education as a subject, beginning

at the primary level and progressing to the junior secondary level (Awhen et al. 2014). The social studies curriculum has been designed to provide students with the skills they need to be prepared for and survive in their communities (NERDC 2013). The National Policy Education (NPE) (the Federal Republic of Nigeria 2013) stipulated the overall objectives of the social studies curriculum as developing the capacity to change the environment; being accountable, and disciplining citizens who are able and willing to contribute to national development; inculcating the right form of values; developing a sense of understanding Social studies as an implemented program is central to a vast range of educational courses for learners focused on social sciences (Godfrey 2017). It addresses the economic, political, psychological, physical, and technical importance to the national development of the cultural and moral way of life of an individual. Its contents are organized around social and environmental concerns affecting the lives of citizens, their capacity to function and maintain the environment for sustainable development (Mezieobi et al. 2018). The curriculum for social studies is one of those programs that deserves national attention, especially in the sense of curriculum planning.

A curriculum is structured with the target group in mind to achieve effective learning by an appropriate means or process of implementation. The curriculum is an intentionally and systematically planned body of knowledge, skills, and attitudes organized into subjects and taught to students in schools (Ikehi et al. 2014). The curriculum of any subject, according to the writers, is one of the most important implementation activities in the teaching process. The process of curriculum designers and developers enforcing defined rules, such as the teacher's discharge of instruction in the classroom, is known as curriculum implementation (Mkandawire 2013). Years of experience, exposure, and expertise are also factors in a teacher's ability to provide instruction in the classroom.

Teacher professional and academic credentials are two important principles that cannot be differentiated to evaluate the efficacy of teachers in implementing curricula for national growth (Nwaubani et al. 2016). Okam (2012) emphasized in the admonition that only professionally qualified teachers of social studies can effectively

achieve the desired outcome in instructional delivery. This stresses the importance of providing teachers with preparation before involving them in implementing the national development curriculum for social studies. To become an effective teacher, preparation is required to introduce teachers to the requisite skills, knowledge of the curriculum material, and appropriate use of educational resources (Okoro et al. 2012). The minimum national education certificate (NCE) was recommended by the NPE as the basic requirement for teaching social studies to primary and junior secondary school teachers. This means that in order for Nigeria to have a functional and high-quality education system that contributes to national development, it must constantly strive to produce qualified teachers who are well-versed in important subjects like social studies.

CONCLUSION

There is a very important connection between a nation's level of education and the level of development in the region. It means that it is not possible to over-emphasize the positive effect of qualitative education on a nation's growth and development. All hands must be on deck (government and citizens) to work harmoniously together for a greater and better nation through successful social studies education for there to be a significant level of national growth.

The role of social studies education in national development in Nigeria is discussed in this paper. In the school curriculum, social studies are viewed as a subject that inculcates relevant skills and values in a learner that can turn them into a responsible citizen who is capable of contributing to a nation's growth and development. The young ones are the instrument for national growth; we will attain national development if they are trained to learn the right form of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that are necessary for national development at the early stage of life.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the followings:

- i. That the Ministry of Education should, as a matter of urgency, provide instructional materials for teaching social studies in both primary and secondary schools at both the federal and state levels. To facilitate

learning in the 21st century, the use of ICT should be emphasised.

- ii. A workshop, training, and symposium for teachers of social studies should be organized. This would further improve their ability to educate the field of content that promotes spiritual, character education, peace education, and political education. The workshop should also concentrate on effective social studies teaching methods that will promote engagement and cooperation for national growth among learners and teachers.
- iii. Government conferences of curriculum experts should be set up to study the curriculum in social studies in line with current realities such as insecurity, abduction, and other social vices to achieve overall national growth in Nigeria.

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