Social Studies Education as a Tool for Nigeria's National Development

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Abstract

This paper examined and appraised the concept of Social Studies Education as a tool for Nigeria's national development. It also captured the issues of national development, improvement on the standard method or approach on the content of Social Studies education if taught integratively to solve the contemporary problems to be grains of Social Studies education. Such contemporary problems as poverty, crime, public health, technology, international communities, HIV/AIDS scourge, terrorism, militancy, communal and religious crisis, socio-political crises, vandalism among others. This paper intends that, Social Studies become only a tool to the solution of such contemporary problems for national development. The paper recommends among other things. That Social Studies education should be re-introduced as a school subject qualified Social Studies teachers should be employed, trained and retraining through workshops, conferences. Seminars and symposia to upgrade their knowledge in the 21st century trends of events and proper monitoring by authorities concern should be carried out to check success or failure of the integrated Social Studies teaching in the classroom and report same to appropriate quarters for necessary action.

Keywords: Social studies, education, development, national development, socio-political crises

Introduction

Throughout human history, and its attendant civilizations, education has a potent means of the angens of socialization and development of the citizens. Education has proven to be the only sustainable means of responding to the ever changing needs of human society. The level of Nigeria's national development depends on how efficiently and effectively Nigerian society deploys its resources and educational structures to meet these needs. Although, it is truism that Nigeria needs are intractable and dynamic, the progressive and successful society ensure that the educational system responds to, or moves in tandem with its ever changing needs (Ogbado, ds 2011). Thus education is essential to the individual as well as the community for its development. This is so because a nation cannot rise above the quality of its education, educational aims are channels towards meeting the needs of the particular nation in which it is given.

Concept of Social Studies Education

Scholars have written extensively on the concepts of social studies education and other related concepts. For instance, Adaralegbe (2001) stated that the "concept of an educated man is

incompatible with being narrowly specialized." A wholesome education has to do with what is valuable and of worth in the general sense. Adedoyin (2008) observed that, the fundamental thing is to find the type of experiences that are worth having not Morley for the Moment, but because of what they lead to; the questions they raise, the problem they create, the demands for new information they suggest, the activities they invoke, the large expanding fields into which they continuously open. Consequently, Social Study is defined as the study of people in relationship to each other and their world. It focuses on people's relationship with their social, physical, spiritual, cultural, economic, political and technological environments. It teaches about human society, the past and presents, the way people interact with each other and the environment and how government works (Eboh, 2003).

In a similar vein, Social Studies can also be defined as the integrated study of the social sciences and Humanities to promote civic competence. It uses integrated approach to equip its learners with skills and knowledge to make them become active and responsible citizens. Social Studies Education is said to be inter-discipline and integrated because it draws upon many subjects including Sociology, Political Science, History, Economics, Religious studies, Geography. Psychology, Anthropology and Civics (Imogie, 2002). Hence, Social Studies education tackles issues that are challenging to man, such issues include: poverty, crime, public health, technology, international communities, HIV/AIDS, social cultism, terrorism, militancy, communal and religious crises, socio-political crises, vandalism, corruption among others. The subject also focuses on man's interaction and relationship with one another and the environment. It studies human behavior, past and recognizes differences in cultures and religions. Man is always in constant relationship with fellow human beings as well as his natural and man-made environments. The scope of Social Studies Education includes Civic Education. This implies that, Social Studies as a subject that imparts skills, knowledge and attitude required of learners to be good and responsible citizens. Learners learn about government; how it operates, democracy, rights and responsibilities of citizen's rule of law and public affairs. (Adaralegbe, 2002).

Concept of National Development

The concept of National Development is the focal point of all subsystems of a nation. Thus, it is the most emphasized clause in various manifestoes stemming from the general concept of FESTER environments. PESTER environments stand for various subsystems that make the Nation system work as a whole. These are:

- Political Environment
- Educational Environment
- Socio-cultural Environment
- Technological Environment
- Economic Environment
- Religious Environment.

Let us briefly discuss these concepts in turns. First, political environment uses political parties, politicians, and political participants through elections to wrestle for political power to govern at all levels in the society for national development; second, educational environment uses educational bodies and facilities to engage in researches and novel experimentations for improved syllabi to bring about national development; third, socio-cultural environment uses socio-cultural bodies to sustain and improve on the pre-existing ideologues and idiosyncrasies to accommodate and adapt borrowed cultures, ideas, technologies and religious for natural development; fourth, technological environment utilizes technologists to device new machines

and machineries and means of doing things faster and more conveniently to foster national development; fifth, economic environment makes use of economists to do much to study and stabilize demand and supply and to increase Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for national development; and sixth, religious environment works religious leaders to do much to fill the vacuum in the law of nations by propagating godly living and social ethics for peaceful co-existence to foster national development.

From the various sub-systems listed above, it becomes glaring that national development is at the heart of every core subsystem of a nation. The decadence in one of the subsystem will definitely bring about malfunctioning of the whole system. For proper Nigeria's National Development, there is an unavoidable need for all subsystems to work in tandem and harness a synergy for the achievement of the Grand National Development (GND) that has been crystallized in blueprints by our forebears.

Social Studies for Nigeria's National Development

The relevance of Social Studies education for Nigeria's national development cannot be overemphasized. The fact is that Social Study as a subject represents integration in education in several aspects which in turn geared towards national development. Adarlegbe (2000) observed that the definitions of Social Studies represent divergent thinking about the status of Social Studies spread along a continuum. One end of the continuum represents the views that social studies in the best preparations for good and responsible citizenship through the concept of integration of several Social Science subjects and Humanities such as History, Geography. Economics, Sociology, Religious Studies, Science and Technology. Anthropology, Psychology and Civics which are to influence the moral and character training of the youths for national development.

Furthermore, end of the continuum associates Social Studies with the behaviour of learners. That is to say that, while the total school programme contributes to the general education of the citizens, it is the particular responsibility of Social Studies instructions to provide citizenship education to the young ones. This is because Social Studies is the totality of experiences a learner goes through, having been exposed to such a course on man's interminable problems in chosen environments with a full knowledge of the Historical, Geographical, traditional, Political, Social, Religious, Economic, Cultural, Psychological, Scientific and Technological Environments that are normally responsible in man's web of interactions with his environment which enable him to work towards the goals, needs and aspirations of the citizens for national development.

By its interdisciplinary nature, social studies select its contents from a broad spectrum of human problems and experiences. The concept of integrated Social Studies in this regard is to equip the learners with basic cognitive knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes and values among others to make the individual live and function very effectively and positively to promote Nigeria's national development. From the standpoint of Ololobou (2000) Social Studies is defined as an organized and integrated study of man and his environment; both Physical and Social, emphasizing cognition, functional skills and desirable attitude for the purpose of creating a responsible effective citizenry. More so, it is clear that the contents of Social Studies Education deal with man's social economic and political, technological, spiritual and cultural behaviour with respect to his historical past, present and future at wherever he had lived, lives or will live.

Objectively, Social Studies Education geared towards Nigeria's national development in that, Social Studies, among other things:

i. Create an awareness and an understanding of our evolving social and physical environment as a whole in its natural, man-made, cultural and spiritual resources together with the rational use and conservation of these resources for Nigeria's national development.

ii. Develop a capacity to learn and to acquire certain basic skill, including not only those of listening, speaking, reading, and writing and of calculation, but also those skills of hand and head together with those of observation, analysis and influence which is essential to the forming of sound social, economic, cultural, technological, spiritual and political judgment for Nigeria's national development.

iii. Ensure that acquisition of that relevant body of knowledge and information which is an essential pre-requisite to personal development as well as to a positive personal contribution to the betterment of Nigeria's national development.

iv. Develop a sympathetic appreciation of the diversity and inter-independence of all members of the local community and the wider national and international community which in turns supports Nigeria's positive national development.

v. Develop in learner's positive attitudes of togetherness, comradeship and co-operation towards a healthy nation, the inculcation of appropriate values of honesty, integrity, hard work, fairness and justice at work and play as one's contribution to the development of the nation called Nigeria.

vi. An understanding of the dynamics of change is critical in Social Studies. A study of time, continuity and change will enable students understand the Nigerian problem, who they are, where they are coming from and the direction they are going and while the country espouses its values, its institutions and its culture.

vii. Social Studies play a prominent role in enabling students to develop as responsible citizen's individuals. By its nature, Social Studies provides numerous opportunities to develop the various components of responsible citizens. From Social Studies as a discipline, students accept and feel fulfilled as active and informed individuals in a pluralistic and democratic society such as Nigeria.

viii. As students develop an understanding of the forces that shape society, they develop a frame of reference to consider the future. They learn to develop criteria for a just. pluralistic and democratic society and also learn to recognise the hybrid nature of their culture and the interdependent nature of the world. With Social Studies, students are required to listen critically to others; to evaluate and respond to their arguments and to take positions on past and current issues.

ix. Citizenship education suggests a classroom climate that engages students, in the "process of critical thinking, ethical decision making and social participation" (Stanley and Nelson 2016:-532) in order to improve the qualities of their lives and in order to improve the qualities of their lives and their communities (Goodman, 1992). To acquire this skills and dispositions may be included to examine issues and information and to make sound decisions in the political arena, or resistance to the existing order and attempt to transform it into a better society.

x. Social Studies emphasizes that active nature of students' participation in the learning process must be stressed. Classrooms should be organized so that interpretation and criticism are fostered. The factor most likely to engender democratic values in students is an open classroom climate; an environment which signifying features are use of 2013 2004 which democratic leadership behaviours (Angell, 2013; Vansledright and Grant, 2004).

xi. Social Studies also require especially in this modern world a civic education that emphasizes the interdependence of human beings. Human beings and their societies are deeply interrelated and the various actions people take have enormous ramifications for the lives of others. Thus stimulating an understanding of this interdependence and a share concern for, and a willingness and ability to contribute to the welfare of the community should be a central concern for all individuals.

xii. There is also need to instigate a challenging analysis of concept development, critical thinking, students' creativity and methods to develop the skills required by students but generated through their own inquiries. Pedagogy must strive to do more than just produce passive socialized students who accept the political status quo and versed in "democratic idle talk. Social Studies, in fact, should be the impetus in preparing students to participate actively in all facts of life in society considering the multi-ethnicity of the Nigerian society.

xiii. Finally, Social Studies as a discipline are integrative by definition, objectives and contents selection which promote Nigeria's national development. Logically, it means that the methodology of instrument used in the field is also integrated and promote Nigeria's national development. Thus, the integrated method whereby various approaches and teaching methods from other subjects' areas are used systematically to look at and teach the various contents in the Social Studies curriculum towards promoting national development. The concept of an integrated Social Studies instruction at various schools' levels is based on the assumption and knowledge that the universe has an inherent unity of purpose which is known as national and international development.

As a subject, it provides a rare opportunity to study and understand the national world (universe) has a unity of purpose. It is not to be seen as mere body of knowledge but as a process for reflective thinking and action. It is a tool by which answers to the numerous questions about the problems of interactions and inter-relationship in the world are solved or reduce to the barest, which moves towards sustaining in man's mind and character minimum togetherness for national development in the country.

Conclusion

In conclusion, therefore, methods and strategies of teaching is not acquired in a day, but can be acquired through sustained and prolonged period of training and leaving through seminars and conferences, teaching strategies are achieved and are utilized by the system for moral and acquired and moral academic performance of the learners which the outcome portray development in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of such learners. The Consequently. Social Studies teachers who have acquired the necessary skills and remained relevant in the school system are likely to utilize Social Studies for national development.Social Studies teaches value for human life, preservation of human life and the general welfare of the citizenry which is one of the cardinal areas of Nigeria's national development.Social Studies is

no longer taught as a subject rather it the has been sub-merged into Religious and National Values in our Junior Secondary School Curriculum. It has also been observed that Social Studies was not taught integratively and accorded the status it deserves in order that, the intention of its curriculum designers were achieved. Thus little or no qualified teachers were there rather teachers were brought from other subject areas to teach Social Studies which accorded glory to their respective disciplines.

As a result of these flaws, instead of Social Studies solving the problems of the society, there are a number of avoidable problems that beset the Nigerian society and the world at large such as terrorism, assassinations, prostitution, same-sex marriage/child marriage, cultism, Boko Haram insurgency, militancy, examination malpractice, drug abuse, among others leading to the declaration of the State of Emergency in some parts of the Federation. People are now living in fear because of crises that may emerge. All these lead to the hindrance of Nigeria's national development.

Recommendations

From the foregoing. Social Studies is seen as a tool for social re-engineering and a machine to streamline Nigeria's national development. In realization of these facts, the writers recommend thus: that stakeholders in:

1. Social Studies Education should re-introduce it's as a school subject and not a component or part of any other subject or sub-merged into any other subject in order to take its status/position in the school curriculum.
2. Qualified Social Studies teachers should be employed to teach Social Studies integratively to achieve the goals of Nigeria's national development.
3. Social Studies teachers should be attending conferences, seminars, symposia and workshops to upgrade themselves in this 21st century trends of events.
4. Proper monitoring by authority's concern should be carried out to check the success or failure of the integrated social studies teaching in the classroom. If the teaching is a failure, such should be reported to the appropriate quarters for necessary action.
5. Social Studies should be used to provide learners with an opportunity to analyse appreciate and aid on the global challenges of an increasing interdependent world. Social Studies is expected to offer students opportunity and perspective from which to survey the impact of technological change(s) in societies and the environment. Once they are aware of these changes, they develop strategies and systems that promote collaborative problem solving, thus enhancing national development (Okon and Udoukpong 2016).
6. The study of human and their environments in Social Studies should focus on - understanding of the interactions of people, places and surroundings. The subject should be used to examine the interaction of humans within their particular environment and the effects of this location and place. With this understanding students would think about Nigerian situation first before they think about themselves.

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