

Role of Social Studies Education in Citizenship Training: Implication for National Development



Education

KEYWORDS :

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this paper is that there is an urgent need for citizenship training in Nigeria on account that Nigerian citizens are expected to contribute their own quota to the development of the nation through a good spirit of national consciousness, love for the nation and its noble ideals. These social characteristics are expected to be inculcated in the citizens through social studies education. Taking a look on Nigerian social and political life one needs to review the efficacy of social studies curriculum in achieving national objectives. The social ills in Nigerian society such as Boko harams, child trafficking, child labour, political thuggery, social maladjustment, kidnapping, corruption and corrupt practices and current spates of bombing in private and public places among others envisaged in social life of Nigerians today are attested to the facts. To address these problems, the role of social studies education for citizenship training cannot be over-emphasized. More emphasis should be made on citizenship training aspect of social studies. Hence the paper found that inadequate citizenship training remains the cause of social problems that bring back the pace of development of Nigeria; that adequate citizenship training through social studies education will enable the citizens have knowledge of their fundamental human rights; rule of law and other ideals of democracy and respect same towards national development. This will help them understand their roles toward peaceful and orderly society for national development. The study recommended among others that Social studies education should be taught by qualified teachers (those that read it at NCE, degree, masters and doctoral levels) at all levels of the education system; the Federal Ministry of Education should make social studies education a core subject at senior secondary school level and an elective course at tertiary level given its importance in citizenship training for national development. When these are done, the vices and/ or social malaise in Nigerian society would be reduced to its barest minimum.

Introduction

Social Studies Education in many countries of the world is a child of necessity. This may imply that the essence of introducing Social Studies in most countries' curriculum was to heal some social ills towards national development. Ideally, Kissock in Akubue (2006:15) traced the development of Social Studies and pointed out that:

In western Germany, it was introduced after the Second World War as a means of developing a new political order and as knowledge for effective citizenship. In Britain, it was used to legitimize the teaching of social sciences particularly Sociology, while preparing students for their role in the society. In Japan, it was introduced to build a foundation for democratic society while in Canada and the United States (USA) it continues its primary function of preparing students for effective citizenship in democratic society.

Going by the reason for establishing social studies as a subject in USA, the essence of Social Studies education is for citizenship training as to produce effective, efficient, useful, loyal, self reliant, creative, and/or functional citizens in a state.

Probably, the above rationale could be the reason some scholars see Social Studies as a living subject. According to Nwoji (2006) Social Studies is a living subject in that it deals with the matters of the moment as a preparation for now and future. She further adds that it is a discipline that deals with social change, better future and problem solving. Ezegbe, Ikwumelu & Okeke (2012:81) appear to corroborating the above view when they assert:

Social Studies is a discipline that deals with social change and ensures that a meaningful interaction of the recipients with their physical and social environments is attained. It engenders sound education of the citizens, as well as inculcates a sense of social consciousness and social responsibility... incul-

cates the values of honesty, co-operation and the need of the nation, as well as the desirable skills to solve environmental problems.

Hence, the role of Social Studies in citizenship training for national development cannot be underestimated.

Citizenship can be seen as a position or status of being a citizen with all the rights associated with it (Ukegbu, Mezieobi, Ajileye, Abdulrahman & Anyaocha, 2009). It is a concept used to ascertain the status of individual who possesses full political and legal rights in a state and his contribution to national development (Ngbendim, Okeke & Njoku, n.d). According to Oyovbaire, Ogunna, Amucheazi, Coker & Oshuntuyi (1991) citizenship is the special status which is accorded to citizens by the state. Citizenship is the benefits associated with being a legal and political member of the society which may better be enjoyed by effective and efficient citizens. Citizens are the political, economic and social members of the society or state (Oyovbaire, et al, 1991). They could be referred to the legal, political and social members of the society who enjoy political, economic, social and legal benefits in the state as they keep their duties and/ or obligations to the state. Citizens' duties and/ or obligations are the responsibilities any legal and political members of the state should or must keep to maintain continual existence of the state and to enhance national development. Efficient and effective citizens and citizenships are required for national development. To produce effective and efficient citizens for national development, citizenship training is required.

Citizenship training can be referred to as citizenship education. According to Ikwumelu (1994) citizenship education is the type of education that transforms a person into a citizen. The implication of this is that citizenship training inculcates in a citizen right kind of values or orientation towards contributing to national development. It aims at inculcating through practical exercises such qualities as public spirited-

ness, voluntary service, sense of fair play, honesty, and respect for opposing opinions and views, self-sacrifice for good of others (Ibezim, 2001). Hence, citizenship training through Social Studies could help in producing effective, efficient, functional, patriotic and useful citizens who can contribute to national development. The effective citizen acquires citizenship status and the creative potentialities and abilities that go with it through the interactions prevailing in the group or society in which he participates and demonstrates his capacity in assisting the group to complete its tasks and solve its problems (Lambert 2003). In other words, if Nigerian citizens are trained through Social Studies education, national development that appears a mirage may be realized as citizens exploit the social and physical environments using their potentialities. It is therefore opinion of this paper that social studies education should not only be junior secondary subject, but should be made a core subject at senior secondary school level as well as being elective at higher institutions in Nigerian educational system. This is to enable the nation attain national development.

National development may be seen as advancement in political, economic and socio-cultural lives of the people of a country or state/nation as a result of advancement in science and technology. This definition is in line with the view of Ogbé (2011:126) who sees national development as:

increased capacity, greater effectiveness and efficiency, improved technology, knowledge, initiative and disposition which people in a particular country have acquired overtime. National development involves increase and improvement in social and economic overheads of a country.

Accordingly, the future of any society does not depend on achievement of science and technology alone, but also upon the knowledge, attitudes, values and skills that have bearings on human relations and social engineering (Jarimi & Danladi, 2013). To actualize the dream of national development, citizens ought to be made to be aware of their rights, privileges, duties and responsibilities as well as their contributions to enable the state progress. Social studies education is a subject used for preparing, mobilizing young learners in schools for purpose of helping them cultivate an awareness and understanding that would transform them into citizens with skills, competences, moral values and reasoned judgements to effectively live, interact, interrelate and contribute positively to economic, social, political and socio-cultural development of the nation (Okobia, 1985).

Social Studies education was introduced by different nations of the world, to help give citizens right kind of orientation they may need towards national development. However, it appears that in Nigeria today despite the existence of Social Studies education in the school system, the values of Nigerians are degenerating, traditional institutions are dying down, Nigerians engage in all sorts of intolerance manifested in ethnic chauvinism, Boko Harams, ritual killings, militancy, kidnapping, election rigging, thuggery, child trafficking, terrorism and some other violence. Consequently, the social, economic and political upheavals in Nigeria have underscored the need for social studies education for effective nation building (Jarimi, 2013). In another related exposition, Ogbé (2011:128) laments:

It is however, disheartening to observe decline in the values of honesty, dedication, transparency and patriotism. The recent upsurge in cultism, disrespect for constituted authority, official corruption and examination malpractice has made it compelling to revive and promote citizenship education as a vehicle for national development.

Giving reason for the failure of social studies in citizenship training, Permit, Blackmore & Cookey in Okam (2006:48) state that;

the failure of social studies to make any reasonable headway amongst learners in terms of transforming them into good citizens are because the subject has not meaningfully received the co-operation of other agents of political socialization like the family in achieving the identified purpose.

In the light of the foregoing, the problems of this study put in question forms are: What is the role of Social Studies education in citizenship training? What are the implications of citizenship training for national development? To ensure proper delineation of the subject matter, the topic is divided into the following sub-headings: Conceptual framework, role of Social Studies education in citizenship training, implications of citizenship training for national development, conclusion and recommendations.

Conceptual framework

Social Studies can be defined as the study of man and his social and physical environments. The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) in Babatunde (2012:134) defines Social Studies as:

the totality of experiences a student goes through having been exposed to such a course based on man's interminable problems in chosen environments with a full knowledge of the variable factors such as historical, religious, economic, psychological, cultural, scientific and technological factors that are normally responsible in man's web of interactions that aid environment.

Social Studies as an integrated social science has many objectives. According to Dobey Barth (1980), the general objectives of Social Studies may include development of good citizenship; upliftment of moral character and promotion of social understanding in the society; promotion of national unity and economic development; preparing students for the world of work and understanding of everyday problems that they may face as adults; development of critical thinking, problem solving and decision making for the survival and progress of the nation and enhancing socialization and acculturation of citizens in the society. Emphatically, Okam (2011) reiterates that the main goal of social studies education is to generate and develop intelligent, responsible and self-directing citizens who are expected to explore opportunities to develop their potentials and as well contribute their own quota to the improvement of group living within a social milieu. However, Babatunde (2013) adds that the main focus of social studies education is transformation of the citizens for national transformation. It is an instrument of positive change in terms of knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills required to be responsible members of the societies as equipment for social unity (Utulu & Shaibu, 2011). Given the above objectives, it is clear that Social Studies education can help in citizenship training towards national development.

Social Studies education may be seen as the kind of education designed to enable the citizens (people) have right form of citizenship training, acquire right form of values, aspirations, skills, norms, customs, attitudes and science and technological know-how that will enable them to be functional members of the society. This invariably would in no small measure facilitate national development.

According to Seers (1971) National development can be defined as a process of solving the problem of unemployment and poverty in a given state. To solve the problem of poverty, unemployment and inequality, people must possess skills, at-

titudes, norms and values that would enable them exploit the environment for their benefits. Consequently, national development has to do with increased skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self discipline, responsibility and material well-being of members of the state that brings about total transformation in the lives and activities of the citizens.

To this end, national development may imply the ability of the people to exercise control over their natural environment and utilize the resources and potentials of the environment for their benefit. Deduction from the above view points, it could be said that is general improvement in all facets (political, economic and social aspects) of the national life of a country. That is improvement in political, economic and socio-cultural well-beings of people of a country, society or nation.

For national development of any nation or country to be realized, there could be changes in citizenship orientations. Citizenship orientation refers to citizenship training, where the students are made to understand their roles in national life and development. However, according to Etta (2004) people all over the world have suffered from the mentality of thinking of what their countries can do for them, rather than what they can do for their country. This negative expectation tend to have led to irresponsibility on the parts of citizens towards their societies, resulting in a situation where many took their citizenship only as an opportunity to survive and to make ends meet, instead of an opportunity to make a difference (Jarimi & Danladi, 2013). To make a difference in national life, the citizens' competences, potentialities, experiences, productivity, creativity and manifestations should be enhanced. Consequently, the nature of Social Studies education if well articulated could enhance citizenship training towards national development.

The role of Social Studies education in citizenship training

Social Studies education could be a veritable tool for citizenship training towards national development. It was designed for functional citizenship training (Tijani, Abdulgaffar & Musa, 2013). It is expected that Social Studies inculcate in Nigerian citizens the spirits of patriotism, unity in diversity, respect for fundamental Human Rights of citizens, respect to democratic values, self reliance and other values in Nigeria society. According to Ikem & Oghenemiderhi (2013) social studies education would help give in moral re-armorment and rejuvenation of the society where there will be fairness, equality, and unity for national development. The researchers add that social studies education could enhance citizenship education through inculcation of spirit of patriotism, respect for rule of law, dignity of labour; hard work and dedication to duty as elements of good citizenship for national transformation. Abdullahi (2007:1) buttresses the above functions of Social Studies education by stressing that:

The philosophy of the Social Studies education hinges in part on the idea that Nigerian schools should not only train individual to be just and competent individuals, but to function as contributing and participatory members of a free constitutional democratic nation. This implies that students must rely on the knowledge, skills and awareness of the rights of minority and majority groups to co-exist and worship freely; respect for law and order; and respect for public and private property of Nigerians and non-Nigerians. This includes the awareness of the rights and obligations of citizens to government and society and reciprocal government responsibility to citizens.

Social Studies education could help in preparing Nigerian citizens to be creative, productive and responsive to national

development projects or programmes of the government. On the other hand, it could prepare future leaders and followers that will have interest of the masses and the nation at heart in their local and global pursuits.

Social Studies education could help in instilling democratic values on the citizens. Accordingly, Mike (2011) opines that Social Studies has the aim of promoting civic competence of the citizens. Supporting this view Mbaba & Omabe (2012) opine that Social Studies is a vehicle through which desired culture, values and norms of the society are being inculcated to its young ones. Hence, Social Studies as an agent of citizenship training could help impact on the youth democratic values like one man one vote, non violation of election rules, recognizing opposition, voting rationally, defending the nation, participating in election and above all respect to the rule of law and constituted authorities. These when practiced could lead to national development.

More still, Social Studies education enhances citizens' knowledge of their fundamental Human Rights and the need to respect the rights of others. The study of social studies education enables the citizens to internalize the fundamental human rights and respect same towards a better society. The knowledge of rights, duties and obligations among the students (citizens) may help in producing functional and informed citizens that may contribute to national development (Okeke, 2013).

Nonetheless, social studies education helps in social reconstruction of the citizens for national development. The dynamic nature of social studies lies fundamentally in its utilitarian values for social reconstruction (Tijani, Abdulgaffar & Musa, 2013). According to Imah-Obong (2009) social studies education inculcates good values to the citizens. The researcher continues that one of the most important trends in social studies education is the teaching and learning of values. Patriotism is a concept in Social Studies Education and as well one of the values that Nigerians advocate. Citizens' love for their country is an important part of citizenship training which Social Studies education transmits on the young ones. This very patriotism made Nigerian patriots like Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Awolowo, Sarduna of Sokoto (Ahmadu Bello), Herbert Macaulay among others to fight for Nigerian independence.

Social studies education could help reduce the incidence of corruption and corrupt practices to the barest minimum. Social studies education influences the attitudes of the young (citizens) through early inculcation of good value system in them early in life to enhance spirit of nation building (Onifade, 2006). Implied in this is that when the citizens are exposed early to social studies education, they would imbibe positive values that would reduce corruption tendencies in their manifestations.

Moreover, value restoration and building are roles of Social Studies education. Umar in Okam (2012) recounted the main values to be promoted as follows: honesty, accountability, cooperation, discipline, industry, self confidence, moral courage and respect for the rule of law and dignity of labour.

On the contrary, in Nigeria today there appears to be value degeneracy among the citizens. On equal footing, Osakwe (2012) regrets that several social vices and malaise that are pulling down the hand of development in Nigeria are corruption, indiscipline, dishonesty, prostitution, armed robbery, pen robbery, child trafficking and electoral frauds among others. Social Studies as a means of citizenship training could address the above social malaise when well implemented in the classroom. Currently, Social Studies education, in our schools'

system, has failed to inculcate right forms of values like tolerance, co-operation, patriotism, honesty, justice among others on the citizens. Probably, the poor value system of Nigerian citizens retards Nigerian national development.

Against this background, it is lack of national consciousness that manifests in the prevailing attitude of most Nigerians to exploit others for personal aggrandisement (Philip-Ogoh & Okloho, 2013). To this end, Okam (2004) maintains that Nigerian society needs massive re-organisation, redirection, national rebirth, reconstruction and repositioning through effective implementation of social studies in all levels of the education system.

Implication of citizenship training for national development

Citizenship training may enhance national development. This is probably because if citizens are developed through citizenship training, they could contribute to national development. Citizenship training through social studies education could be beneficial in the following ways:-

- (1) If citizens are made to respect democratic values like free and fair election(s), one man one vote, hatred for election rigging, respect for fundamental human rights and respect for the rule of law, the society will be peaceful and crises-free to a high extent and this could lead to national development.
- (2) Understanding the principle of oneness, and indivisibility and indissolubility of Nigeria through unity in diversity value preached by social studies education could enhance national development. Here, we could infer that if social studies education is thoroughly implemented, citizens will have the training they need to understand that ethnicity and favouritism are not natural to Nigeria but foreign and therefore should be eschewed towards national development.
- (3) Citizenship training through social studies education could make Nigerian citizens to imbibe the core values of honesty, justice, accountability, co-operation and patriotism. These values when un-adulteratedly kept could lead to national transformation.
- (4) Citizenship training through the social studies education such as love for the nation and its noble ideals would help the citizens learn to be defending the nation within and outside its boundaries for a better image of the country which will enhance national development. This unalloyed love for one's nation could be transmitted on the youths through effective citizenship training using social studies as a special instrument for national development.
- (5) Individuals exposed to proper citizenship training could develop to be self reliant. Self reliant citizens can contribute to national development through empowering other citizens by means of employing them (other citizens) in their firms or companies.
- (6) Right form of citizenship training through social studies could change the thought pattern of Nigerian citizens towards thinking of what they could do for the nation and not what the nation would do for them. If this seeming development- carrying thought is maintained among Nigerian citizens through social studies education, the country will develop.

Conclusion

The role of social studies in citizenship training cannot be neglected. The reason for this contention is that Social Studies as an integrated Social Science was designed towards citizenship moulding for a better society. If citizens are trained on the values norms, aspirations and traditions of the society including the understanding of the environment (social and

physical) and how they can be manipulated, they are bound to make impact in their lives and the lives of the society members. This suggests that when students are taught their fundamental human rights, democracy and its principles, rule of law and its practical application and they learn and abide by them, there will be peace in the society. Peace on the other hand brings about national development. Hence, social studies education helps in citizenship training that enhances national development.

Recommendations

From the findings of this study the following recommendations were made;

- (1) Social studies should be taught by qualified teachers (those that read it at NCE, degree, masters and doctoral levels) at all levels of the education system. When qualified teachers teach social studies at all levels of the education system, citizenship training may be guaranteed and the nation will develop.
- (2) Social studies should be made a core subject at senior secondary school level and elective at institutions of higher learning given its importance in citizenship moulding for national development. When this is done, the vices and or social malaise in Nigerian society would be reduced to its barest minimum.
- (3) Students should try and practice the values they are exposed to through social studies education to ensure sound citizenship manifestations among them in the society.

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