

SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION: A PANACEA TO GRASSROOT SECURITY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA.

By

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Abstract.

The paper highlights Social Studies Education as panacea to grassroots security for sustainable development in Nigeria. It discusses the concept of Social Studies Education as an interdisciplinary subject. The paper is designed for the purpose of achieving the ideological concept of education as a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, custom and other capabilities and habits acquire by man as a member of society. It as well discusses the concept of security in Nigeria. The paper also discusses the concept of sustainable development. It also identifies the progress of Social Studies Education as a panacea to grassroots security in Nigeria such as the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skill and values for the attainment of national education objectives and the promotion of increased educational research and development. It equally focuses attention on the obstacles of social studies education as a panacea to grassroot security and economic empowerment. Obstacles include insufficient funds, poor infrastructures and poor qualified teachers. The paper explains how sustainable development can only be achieved through social studies education as panacea to grassroots of security in Nigeria. In conclusion, the country cannot be adequately secured if there is political instability, economic failures and ethnic disharmony in the country. It is recommended that there is need to evolve a new culture of politics which makes for tolerance and political accommodation amongst the political class and the teaching of social studies should be geared towards improved quality of governance in the country.

INTRODUCTION

Social Studies Education as an area of study has a lot of contributions towards sustainable development of a nation. Nigeria as a nation is besieged with several national issues such as insecurity of life and property, kidnapping and many others. Adeoye (2005) puts learning development as the sum total of all changes that occurs in an individual. It embodies the effect of growth, maturation and learning. Thus it entails structural and functional changes. Development partners which include children are influenced by social factors.

Education is perhaps one of the most fundamental heritage of the human race. It is the cream of society and more often than not sets the stage on which the human species is nurtured. Education more than any other thing else has given human species its remarkable uniqueness. A man without education or knowledge is like a man without personality. As the child grows up, he/she is taught the norms and values of his or her society which in turn is internalized and incorporated in the child's personality. The traditional African education according to Fafunwa (1974) was functional. It was participatory in nature since it prepared the child for life in the society

Nigeria as a Nation is facing a lot of national issues such as insecurity of life and property, kidnapping, robbery; assassinations, politically sponsored killings, looting of government treasuries by those in government, fraudulent banking activities and many more. All these have contributed to the security problems experienced in Nigeria and it has affected the nation's sustainable development but Social Studies Education, a panacea to grassroots security can be employed and this will checkmate the rising spate of insecurity and other crimes in Nigeria. Based on these prevailing conditions, the paper examines how the knowledge of social studies education could be used as a vehicle in solving the problems of insecurity in Nigeria. The purpose of this paper therefore is to examine the role of social studies education in preparing the young people to be good citizens in a world that is becoming more and more complex.

Social Studies Education

Social Studies education is an interdisciplinary subject that relies heavily on the content of social science and humanities to achieve its goal of preparing people to be citizens of a democracy. Kadiri (2007) defined Social Studies Education as "The aggregate of all the process by which a child develops his abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior which have positive value on the society in which he lives". Social Studies Education is therefore to be perceived as the process through which a society transforms and transmits its life pattern to the younger generation, who are responsible for leadership and as agents of continuity in the process of societal evolution and revolution.

Okam, (2002) noted that, Social Studies Education promotes attitudinal changes which enables the citizens to make positive contributions towards a united, strong and self reliant Nigerian society. Social Studies Education is not all about acquiring what will be useful to you and your country, not boasting about certification but anything learned to be creative in the society such as norms, values, attitudes, culture, knowledge, skills, actions, a good spirit of national consciousness, love for the nation and its noble ideals. He went further to present Social Studies Education as helping to boost whatever skills you have acquired like other self-reliance activities. Obi, (2008) defined Social Studies Education as a person whose moralities properly adapted to his society and who contributed meaningfully to the growth and development of his society. Based on these concepts Social Studies Education should therefore be planned with the needs and wants of individuals in the society.

The objectives of Social Studies Education covers the development of mans intellectual skills, abilities and competencies. It helps young people to develop the ability to make informed and reasonable decisions amongst citizens of culturally diverse, democratic societies in an inter dependent world. It provides students with direct access to the experiences of historical participants which can reinforce the dominant culture. It also evaluates the impact of students' involvement in community-oriented, art-based work in social studies education. It engages in persuasive writing and design while exploring community or societies issues.

Social studies education aims at collective responsibility of all citizens of a country in ensuring a secure and peaceful environment for the economic growth and development of the nation. It's concerns is the reduction of poverty and acceleration in economic, social and physical growth, development and youth empowerment. It is assumed that Nigeria has the highest rate of poverty, unemployment, corruption, among other social problems that need to be addressed. These socio-economic problems need to be solved using different strategies for solving those social problems. It is in the light of these, that the paper reviews how social studies education could be used in addressing social problems and these will go a long way in enhancing youth empowerment. This will play a complementary role in creating job opportunities in support of the Federal Government. If all hands are on deck, issues of poverty, unemployment and corruption etc will be a thing of the past.

Education

Education is seen as a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, custom and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society, Arviden and Chandrem, (2007). Education is the process that helps to develop the whole man, physically, mentally, politically, socially and technologically to enable him function in any environment in which he finds himself. (N.P.E, 2014). Education is a total process of human learning by which knowledge is imparted, faculties trained and skills developed". It is also defined as a drawn process through which the individuals acquire skills attitudes and competences" Ogunlade (1980) sees education as a reflection of what Nigerian educational institutions should vigorously pursue, that is a place where knowledge, skills values attitudes and competencies are acquired or imparted so that the person will fit into the society he finds himself.

Education provides the following benefits to Nigerians:

It regulates all aspects of human life.

It is shared by social groups, ever dynamic and never static.

It provides the framework for making policy choices in the country and for evaluating individuals.

It facilitates conflict management through contestation rather than personality's involvement.

It promotes unity among members of the society and tolerance among the people

It helps in legitimating leadership. For example, people justify their position and actions by referring to certain knowledge

Social Studies and Security

The current challenge in Nigeria is the issues of national insecurity. The nation that in recent times has been the refuge home for many and sundry in peace keeping corps to warring nations had been taken by surprise, by the unfolding nefarious attitude of visionless cabals. The paper regards relative deprivation, marginalization, ethnicity and unemployment as possible causes of insecurity. Poverty is a social scourge that every developing nation is struggling to eradicate. Nearly all the third world nations are still grooming under its evil effects. The developed nations are equally looking for ways out, for the developing nations. One of the ways out of this problem is the introduction of Millennium Development Goals.

Security is a social contract between the state and its citizens, in which the former is expected to protect, defend and provide for the latter in the public arena. This implies that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary responsibility of the government. (Jerolimek, 1981 & Cleveland 1985). Philips (1974) looks at social studies from the point of problem-solving. According to him, the aim of social studies is to teach students how to think effectively about significant social problems. Dubey, (1981) pointing to the nature of social studies, stated that social studies is the study of man at home , at work, at workshop, in politics, at play, in the village, in the nation, in fact everywhere, engaged in his busy programme of living. Social studies is particularly interested in man's problems and it encourages him and helps him to solve social problems. The resultant effect of the state of insecurity is that, the country is left to drift about, suffering from a lot of brain drains of intellectuals learning to other more peaceful and secured countries.

Section 14 (1) of chapter 2, of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria captures the importance of security when it states that security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of Government. Seen this way, security is a social contract between the state and its citizens, in which the former is expected to protect, defend and provide for the latter in the public area. Various writers such as Okiro (2008) Etim (2009), Adesina and Adeyemo (2008) and Odah (2009) have all observed the unpalatable state of insecurity of the Nigerian nation which is highly lamentable. In addition, there are destructive demonstrations of militancy in the Niger Delta region of the country. Yusuf and Babatunde (2009) noted that violence has been observed in the Niger Delta region, where upward of one hundred thousand barrels of oil per day is stolen costing the country about one billion dollars loss of revenue. The foreign oil workers are being kidnapped on daily basis, setting fire to offshore oil.

On installations and bombing of pipelines, Okiro (2008) noted that the militants or the fighters are angry with the oil companies because they feel that oil companies are exploiting the region's resources without adequate returns to the community.

National security in a broad sense implies the absence of threat to life, property and socio-economic well being of the people. A proper understanding of security is important for an adequate explanation of the remote causes of breach of peace and security, whether historical, religious, civil, ethnic, economic, social, political etc, that have contributed to the recurring conflicts, which the nation has witnessed over the years resulting in wanton destruction and loss of lives and property. Security has implication for individuals, communities and the nation and must be analyzed at these various levels. Certain factors tend to increase the vulnerability of people to insecurity. These include gender, class, age, status, ethnicity, religion, ecology, region etc.

The state exists primarily for the protection of lives and property and ensuring the well being of people, as such, state-based institutions are specifically charged with the responsibility of protection of life and property. These institutions are the Police, state security agencies, the military, immigration and prison services.

Nigeria in recent times has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity. Inter-communal and inter-ethnic clashes, religious violence, armed robbery, assassination, murder, gender-based violence and bomb explosion have been on the increase leading to enormous loss of life and property and a general atmosphere of siege and social tension from the people. The developmental connotation of national security is corroborated by Khan (1987). To him, national security is taken to mean the totality of measures instituted by government to protect the territorial integrity and the cherished values, and interest of the people as well as guarantee the freedom of the citizenry from anxiety, threats to life and property and their safety from natural or man made disasters.

It is important to state that contemporary thinking about national security has changed and has become more encompassing including social, political, economic and other forms of the security calculation, culminating in the concern for human security and improvement in the quality of life. To this end, Ogunsanya (1984) listed types of security to include economic security, social security, environmental security, food security, the quality of life security and technological security. Finally Imobighe et al (2002) in conceptualizing security observed that the process of development involves the application of national, human, mineral and agricultural resources for the enrichment of the life of the population. It is the enrichment that constitutes development. It does not only presupposes growth in income but also requires improvement in certain indicators such as health, nutrition, education, reduction in certain inequalities and income distribution. In Nigeria many strategies are developed to actualize national economic empowerment centered on security and governance. These include making government more efficient and effective through public service reforms, monetization, pension reform and local government reform. Also, governance focuses on national security in all its ramifications and levels, rule of law, fighting corruption and improved transparency.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development is conceived as a situation where by everybody has certain basic life sustaining needs which include food, shelter, health and protection. Sustainable development refers to the maintenance of a stand against foreign domination, or a protest against been dependent and subject to the control of foreign power. It involves the ability to use one's own social economy resource to transform one's environment in the ways that are best needed and desired. The questions that should be asked about a country on sustainable development are, what has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to education? What has been happening to corruption? What has been happening to the economy? If all these are in good shape, then beyond doubt, this indeed has been a period of development.

The Role of Social Studies in Ensuring National Security in Nigeria

National security has been defined to include not only safety devices implored by government for the safety of lives and property in the country but it also includes developmental strategies put forward to actualize effective social, political, economic and technological reforms that will bring about improvement in the quality of life of the people. To this extent, social studies can play a vital or pivotal role in ensuring that the nation attains full national security.

A starting point perhaps is the reality that majority of Nigerians are poor and are ravaged by hunger and starvation, religious disunity, ethnicity and political divides. Social studies as a discipline is geared towards ensuring good citizenship in Nigeria. A cursory look at the social studies curriculum at each level- primary, secondary and tertiary will convince people that the subject is tailored towards ensuring good citizenship education in Nigeria.

With regards to how social studies could enhance national security in Nigeria, the discipline affords pupils, students, and teachers in particular and members of the public in general, the opportunity to know about the positive aspects of our socio-economic and political life, factors promoting unity and Solidarity among the numerous ethnic groups making up Nigeria. Akinlaye (1979) stated that social studies would offer medication and provide for needed reforms or changes in society as well as catering for its survival by removing barriers between groups and classes within society as a result of birth, occupation, language, race and religion and even between generation tribes man and countrymen and also the schooled and the unschooled, the literate and the illiterate. He concluded that social studies' education would help to promote peace, co-operation, security and national pride.

It is common knowledge that our society (Nigeria) today is plagued by social vices or evils like excessive profiteering, embezzlement, statism, arms struggles by the youths, and other irresponsible behaviors. Social studies can help greatly to educate the youths on the importance of peace and security in Nigeria. Social studies as a discipline if properly programmed and effectively taught would help to solve social problems that

are facing developing countries like ours (Nigeria) where the old norms are fast losing their grips and no effective substitutes to replace them. No nation is self sufficient or can produce all her needs, it is therefore necessary to understand the relationships existing between one society and another. Various topics concerning safety and national security are designed to produce good citizens that will promote national and international security. They inculcate in students international understanding by emphasizing the essentials of oneness of the human race and to realize the growing interdependence of nations and peoples.

Social studies place many values on the affective domain in its attempt to promote good citizenship Education in Nigeria. In social studies for instance, the affective domain deals with the evaluation of the attitude and values that are developed or behavioral changes that are noticeable in the pupils after a course of study. The affective domain examines the behavioral changes in pupils like respect for elders and other constituted authorities such as parents, government etc, love of industry, dignity of labor and other positive attitudes and values. The psycho-motor domain in social studies emphasizes the development of skills, both in theory and in practice in its attempt at ensuring good citizenship education in Nigeria. In fact, the inter play of cognitive and affective domains has an effect on the performance of some skills. These skills include, the skills of sifting information, interpretation, identification, recognition, asking and answering questions, manipulation etc. These skills are necessary for safety and national security. In relation to this, Akinlaye (1979) stated that social studies involves pupils in purposeful activities based on observation and investigation of their immediate surroundings including their physical and social environment.

From the foregoing discussion, social studies places premium on development and inculcation of the right attitudes, values, feelings and national consciousness in the youth. Youths that are adequately informed, educated and have acquired basic social skills in the society, cannot be security threats to national co- existence. Instead, they become, through the help of social studies education, access to security solution in the country. As already highlighted in this paper security varies and as such we have political, social, economic, and safety related security.

Conclusion

The country cannot be adequately secured if there is political instability, economic failures and religious and ethnic disharmony. Therefore in order to be socially, politically and technologically secured, the youth and indeed the members of the public through the help of social studies education should be given the right education, social skills, values and attitudes that will promote national integration, unity and security. Social studies as a discipline if properly programmed and effectively taught, can help to solve social problems that are facing developing countries like ours (Nigeria) where the old norms are fast losing their grips and no effective substitutes to replace them. Education should contribute to the values of equal opportunity for all.

Recommendations

1. There is need to evolve a new culture of politics which makes for tolerance and political accommodation amongst the political class. The survival of democracy in Nigeria is hinged on this. This can be done through the teaching of social studies education in all schools in Nigeria.
2. The teaching of social studies should be geared towards improved quality of governance in the country. Through social studies education, the increasing irresponsibility of the political class and political leadership in Nigeria can be addressed. Topics like electoral law, political competition, political tolerance and consensus building should be introduced into social studies education curriculum. This will solve the problem of political instability and insecurity in the country.
3. There should be constant review of the basic social studies education curriculum so as to keep it abreast with the changing needs of the society.

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