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## **EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION CURRICULUM: AN IMPERATIVE FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION**

**EGBULE, PHILIP O.C; OLORI OGHOGHO & EBOH, RHODA N.  
(08035443411, 08032060003)**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES, COLLEGE OF EDUCATION,  
AGBOR, DELTA STATE.**

### **ABSTRACT**

Social Studies without any doubt is a strategic tool for social transformation. In order to achieve this noble objective, social studies education curriculum must be effectively implemented. Against this background, this paper attempts to examine the place of effective implementation of social studies education curriculum towards social transformation. The need for national consciousness, religious tolerance, and social reconstruction should be taught in schools to ensure peaceful co-existence and consequently social interaction and transformation. The paper further isolated, clarified and conceptualized key concepts: education, curriculum, social transformation, social studies curriculum and social studies curriculum implementation. Among other recommendations, this paper suggests that social studies education should be taught at all levels in the educational system.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In all human societies, particularly the modern ones, education remains one of the most powerful instruments for both the development of man and transformation of human society. However, the ability of education to achieve the objective of human development depends entirely on the effective implementation of curricula of some social sciences like social studies education. The relatively "new" social studies education curriculum in the Nigerian educational system, with all its well-conceived goals is an imperative for social transformation. Since the introduction of social studies in our school system, it has won much support from educational authorities, educators, the government as well as the general public. This is because, they have recognized how valuable and relevant it can be for the values, social transformation and appropriate decision-making skills in the students. Reform becomes necessary when a

structure/mechanism to achieve an expected end becomes redundant or obsolete and unable to accomplish the purpose for which it was established or to address emerging challenges.

Good governance is a major tool for transforming the society. It is correct to recognize that social studies education is a full of knowledge course which breeds good and sustainable leaders and also enhance social transformation. Social studies education plays essential roles in the social transformation process through interpreting the law of the land, participating in decision making process, active role advisory capacity, and suggesting better policies and ideas in ensuring that developmental policy alternatives are not in any way jettisoned. If social studies is well planned, organized and coordinated, it will generate positive impacts on learning and also facilitates the realization of these desirable changes that are expected in the learner which eventually empowered the recipient towards economic self-reliance, maximum productivity, economic, social and educational transformations. Social studies is very much concerned with national consciousness and national unity. In fact, social studies has a lion's share in contributing towards the realization of the goals of national consciousness and national unity. Social studies is very highly involved with raising the level of awareness of our national goals and aspirations and the need to have pride in the nation and also the need for peaceful co-existence among the various groups in the country-hence the total incorporation of citizenship education as an integral aspect of social studies education (Osakwe & Itedjere, 2005).

#### **Clarification of Concepts**

The following concepts are clarified:

##### **Education**

Education, defined as permanent change in behaviour as a result of learning, consists of all efforts (conscious or incidental) made by a society to accomplish set objectives, which are considered to be desirable in terms of individuals as well as societal needs (Labo-popoola Bello & Atonda, 2009) Herbart (1776) cited in Ughamadu (2006) maintained that education is a process of developing should moral character for the good of the society. Education is defined as a range of activities and experience varying from formal teaching to the building of underlying understanding and

knowledge. This implies that education is a life-long process, leading to bringing out the best in every human being. Education is a weapon for combating ignorance, poverty, disease, social vices etc, in our society and so on (Peretomode, 2012).

### **Curriculum**

There is no universally accepted or precise definition of the term Curriculum. Tyler (1963) cited in Ughamadu (2006) defined curriculum as all of the learning of students which is planned and directed by the school to attain its educational goals. Regan and Shepherd (1977) cited in Ukadike (2006) defined Curriculum as all the experiences of children for which the school accepts responsibility. Curriculum emphasizes that school life is a continuation of the life in the society it serves. It selects desirable elements in the culture of the society for perpetuation. It is a continuous insight into the life of the society by the school with a view to bring about improvement (Ukadike, 2006).

### **Social Studies Curriculum**

According to Mezieobi (1993) social studies curriculum refers to planned and unplanned, though positive oriented, societal sanitized learning activities, experiences, contents and methods which learners are provided with and exposed to in and outside the school, most appropriately under the guidance of teachers, for the purposes of contributing its quota to the accomplishment of societal needs. Hence, social studies curriculum focused on learning experiences which deals with man's interaction with his social and natural environments, acquisition of problem solving skills, and new areas like population and family life education, AIDS education, peace education, drug abuse education and so on.

### **Social Studies Curriculum Implementation**

Social studies curriculum implementation refers to a process in social studies curriculum engineering, concerned with in stilling life into a dormant or inert social studies curriculum plan or document in the sense of operationalizing it with a view to achieving specified educational objectives. It also involves a complex of activities, materials, personnel and other factors which when appropriately harnessed constitute integral parts of curriculum implementation. These include the schools (which are the major implementation theatre), the teachers, curriculum materials, students, teacher

training institutions, administrative and political factors, examination bodies, the public or community members (Mezieobi, 1993).

### **Social Transformation**

Simple put, social transformation refers to a large scale social change as in cultural reforms or transformations. Social transformations are such when they sustain overtime where attitudes and values are held in a completely new context (or paradigm) based upon different assumption and beliefs. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) social transformation in social sciences refers to the change of society's systemic characteristics. This incorporates the change of existing parameters of a societal system, including technological, economic, political and cultural restructuring. In social scientific literature, the term social transformation is increasingly used to describe societal changes and generally indicates a critical stance towards older notions of the idea of development. Social transformation implies a change in societal system from ugly situation. It is a better and desired situation. It is aimed at improving the society in order to obtain maximum beneficial social returns, in health, security and well-being. In other words, it is a change from an existing state of social life, to an improved version (Ogonor, 2013).

### **The Role of Social Studies Education in Social Transformation in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, Social Studies found practical expression into the school system after the 1969 National Curriculum Conference. The subject is geared towards building individuals and thereby building the nation. The potentials of social studies are yet to be fully exploited in our quest for a desirable social-political transformation. The knowledge included in social studies is related to important generalizations about human relationships, institutions and problems, together with supporting facts to ensure that these generalizations are clearly understood problems. Social studies examine issues and problems from a holistic viewpoint. Consequently, in resolving a problem or an issue, social studies examines the historical, cultural, sociological, economical, physical and other related dimensions (Osakwe, 2009). Nigerians need a new social orientation that will bring about social transformation. From primary school through junior secondary school to the tertiary level, social studies through its core component

of moral and ethical education can re-orient the people to walk through the path that leads to social transformation. In order to foster the development of informed, responsible participation in civic life by citizens committed to dignifying values and principles fundamental to Nigerian constitutional democracy that bring about social transformation, social studies education is geared towards the following goals:

1. create awareness of and sensitivity to man's environment,
2. influences man's attitudes positively to social and environmental problems,
3. enabling man to acquire skills for solving societal and environmental problems,
4. equip men with the basic understanding of the knowledge of the total environment and
5. encourage voluntary participation of social and civic duties while developing the sense of responsibility (Abubakar, 2013).

Oyebode (2008) cited in (Osakwe, 2009) says that if Nigeria ever intends to make progress in socio-economic and political transformation, the universities should be given pride of place; hence university autonomy remains a pre-requisite for rolling back the frontiers of ignorance for the benefit of Nigerians. The goals of social studies education listed earlier include enabling man to acquire skills for solving societal and environmental problem. In fact, social studies education in Nigeria has a special task to perform in transforming Nigeria, socially and other wise, into a modern state. They include healing the social and political wounds of the past decades, nurturing the most recent hopes in good ethnic group relationship and nationalism, and the engendering constructive reforms to make the nation a just and progressive society. It also helps to faster the desire for self-reliance, economic development, national efficiency and national pride (Abubakar, 2013). The world is constantly undergoing changes and social studies remains a veritable instrument for examining these changes, whether they be positive or negative. According to Osakwe (2009) social studies examine issues and problems from a holistic viewpoint. He further stated that social studies education is an avenue for providing young people with a feeling of hope in the future and confidence in their ability to solve the social, political and environmental problems of individuals, their community, state or nation.

Social studies is known for the teaching of morals, honesty, values, norms, citizenship education, religious tolerance and so on. According to Ade (2002) social studies, if appreciated and well taught, is a school of morals for all. It describes vices, it unmasks false virtues, it exposes errors and prejudices. It shows by several examples that there is nothing great and laudable except honesty and uprightness. Thus, social studies provide a better ground for moral training especially in countries undergoing development like Nigeria. No society will thrive except its member behaves in ways that will further development. Social studies also is an informative subject that has to do with development within a society. The information obtained through social studies education are usually current and up-to date. The information so gathered are expected to be used in fostering national transformation.

According to the FRN ( 2004) the philosophy and goals of Nigerian education for social studies is the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of the society (by fighting societal vices such as corruption). The aim of establishing social studies in the post primary institutions is therefore, to develop in the learner an appreciation of his cultural heritage and a desire to preserve it and not to destroy it with social vices (Edinyang & Usang, 2012). Briggs (1930) stated that education is a long-term investment by the state to make itself a better place in which to make a living. What this statement simply means is that education is an instrument of change and transformation in order not to lag behind in changing times and changing conditions. This is what social studies as a subject was established to achieved.

Social studies as a value laden subject has the capacity to build sound morals and integrity in all facets of the society. It serves as aid to changing the value system, the people and as a means of re-appraising undue obsession to materialism and primitive wealth accumulation which is the mania that is somehow responsible for corrupt practices in the society which invariably thwart national transformation. The study of social studies will inculcate worthy attitudes and habits (worthy character development) that will go a long way in eliminating social vices and instituting needed changes for social transformation.

Through the enter-educate-an instructional educative setting or circumstance which has an entertainment outlook but from which one or more educative content is taught and knowledge derived from it for the overall benefit of the educable entertainers or learners (Mezieobi, 2012). Through its instructional mode in social studies, corruption inhibiting educative content can be taught in an informal entertainment looking situation through educational miming, entertainment oriented students' group, social-drama or creative dramatic, storytelling, music, songs, dances, role-playing, educational simulation, recorded video films or tapes as used in Venezuela and Hong Kong which can be replayed from time to time at the relaxation whims of the students. The effects of the language vision-oriented enter educate instructional mode in social studies delivery with regard to arousing emotions, inner conviction, feelings and resistance against temptation to indulge in corruption and it is synonymous with such as moral decay or depravity, organized begging, chameleonic praise signing, lasciviousness and squander mania and enhancing interest and acceptance of positive change.

Other roles played by social studies education toward social transformation and national development include:

1. the development of national consciousness and commitment as necessary ingredients for national transformation,
2. the inculcation of social value and skills for active social life,
3. the development of intellectual skills, knowledge and abilities for better understanding of the immediate and remote environment,
4. developing rational thinking ability for practical social life,
5. identifying and solving problems using problem solving techniques and
6. promoting value awareness and utilization of some values in tackling dynamic problems in the society (Mezieobi, 1994).

## CONCLUSION

Some scholars consider social transformation studies as a field of research that can lead to positive steps for social and political action to protect local and national communities against negative consequences of global change. Social transformation



since the history of the world is mostly accompanied by one challenge or the other in the attempt to achieve a balance between nature, man and society. Social studies education plays a very role vital in developing rational thinking ability for practical social life, promoting of political literacy and encouraging democratic values and principles for the promotion of functional citizenship. It also enables citizens to develop positive attitudes toward the welfare of the society and building up of the nation to bring about social transformation-all things being equal.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the relevance of social studies education in social transformation, the following recommendations are made:

- Only professionally qualified (trained and registered) social studies teachers should be allowed to teach the subject. Social studies should no longer be seen as a free zone for any social scientist.
- Government at all levels should as a matter of urgency make adequate provision of instructional materials in our schools. More educational resource and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) centers should be established.
- Teacher professional development should be incorporated in the strategic plan at all levels and should be budgeted for. The National Teachers' Institute, Kaduna, should be adequately empowered financially to enable it plan for wider and more encompassing programmes including such emerging skills as the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) resources.
- The payment of teachers' salaries should be regular to motivate them socially and psychologically in doing their job. Government should provide/ increase the financial resources for teachers' welfare, to enhance effective curriculum implementation.
- Social studies curriculum should be structured to focus on and oriented towards acquisition of problem solving skills by the learners. Its content should also be properly structured to be elastic in accommodating the thrust of our dynamic society.
- Also, social studies curriculum should be developed to include social interaction, democratic value, peace education, climate change education, unity in diversity.

citizenship education, religious tolerance and so on. Social studies should be taught at all levels in the school system.

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