

REFOCUSING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL STUDIES FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

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Abstract

The study aims at examining the meaning of social studies and its role as related to citizenship education for sustainable development in Nigeria. This study sought to address the importance of citizenship education and some of the strategies used in achieving effective education for the citizen for sustainability development in the society. It also examined the meaning of education for sustainable development and various principle associated in sustaining developed society. The study also focuses on the rationale or reasons for sustainable educational development.

Introduction

Social studies can be defined as a subject, which concerns itself with man and his environment. It is seen as an investigation of human activity, which studies man at home, at work, in politics, at play, in the community, nation and indeed every programme of his life. In other words, social studies deals with man's interaction with his environment and the consequent relationship established (Ezegbe, 1988).

Authorities have been trying to define social studies based on their own perceptual understanding. For instance, Obede (1980), views social studies as a common learning of man's interaction with his social, physical, economics and political environments. This conceptual meaning of social studies deals with man's aspect of life, which requires special attribute such as skills, values and aspiration in order to manage it.

Dubey and Earth (1980), present social studies in analytical approach. According to Dubey and Earth, social studies is the study which aims at inculcating values, loyalty and spirits of service to* the community and the learners. They also, view the subject, social studies as a course of study, which enable an individual to identify problems, analyze the problems in his own environment and make the right decisions when they are necessary.

Social studies is part of the school's general education programme which is concerned with; the preparation of citizens for participation in a democratic society. Nigeria is one of the countries that require the integration of social studies in their educational programmes at all level. This is quite obvious because the most important aim of social studies education in a democratic society is to assist the citizens acquire a store of tested social theory or body of principles, relevant to the contemporary public and social issues and beliefs (Onyabe, 1980).

The Roles of Social Studies in the Education of the Citizens

The search for qualitative education in Nigeria could be better appreciated if we examine the extent of the nation's belief in education. Nigeria as a nation has a very strong desire for education and relies on it as having in-extricable relationship with national pride, prosperity and development. Thus, the federal government has adopted education in Nigeria as an instrument par excellence, for effecting national development (N.P.E. 2004:4).

Any nation that has a belief in education and links that belief intimately with national development would tend to translate all her national problems, wants and aspirations into social studies objectives, which is in accordance with the educational goals. These objectives are related to the nation's economic, social, political, spiritual, tolerance, discipline, attitudes, value, peace and harmony problems among other. As a result of the country strong belief in education as a means of solving citizens' problem, social studies aims at inculcating certain educational values in the life of the citizens for sustainable development in the society. Therefore, social studies create a serious impact in translating the content of citizenship education to the life of our learners. Such significant role includes:

- Helping the citizens to develop awareness about their environment
 - Helping the citizens to develop right attitudes towards the leaders of government and their nations.
- Preparing the citizens for their proper roles in the society

- Helping the child to develop his life and also understand the way of life of others
- Helping the individuals to relate effectively with other peoples of die nation
- Assisting the citizens to develop the spirit of togetherness as members of one great nation.
- Helping individuals to become good citizens (Eboh and Ukpong, 1993).

The overall aims of social studies education to every citizen of Nigeria is the production of good citizens and inculcating of good attributes for qualitative and sustainable national development in the society. Any society that is seeking for qualities and qualitative education, citizens must possess certain qualities that would enhance the development of that society such as; cooperation, loyalty, discipline dedication, faithfulness, honesty, moral and social responsibility, spontaneity, conviviality empathy sympathy and positive regard to human beings.

Onyabe (1980) maintains that the purpose of social studies is citizenship education. This implies that citizenship education is the content and major pre-occupation of social studies, Ikwumelu (1993) confirms that the patriotism and citizenship education are developed and sustained, when the spirit of National consciousness is inculcated in the citizenry. Therefore, social studies is the best leaching subject for proper implementation of qualitative education for sustainable national development in Nigeria.

Importance of Citizenship Education for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Citizenship education is a way of life for the nation. It is an education, which offers an ideal opportunity to examine, clarify and isolate the need, the assets and problems of the society. Through proper development, implementation and utilization of the knowledge, **citizenship** education offers the society, right environment or avenue to inculcate in the life of the learner, certain qualities, like laws, ethics and values compared to what should be obtainable in the application of this concept.

Nigerian society requires new value system that will assist the citizens to appreciate better meanings of society, loyalty, services and National consciousness. Application of citizenship education would make the dream of the country in educating their citizens in a proper way a reality. Therefore, citizenship education is relevant to the nation's national development and its sustainability.

Experts, confirm that, citizenship education would enable the citizens to know the cultural norms and social values which their society cherishes, upholds and which would leads them to see the differences between them and those of other people. Ezegebe (1988); Meziedir (1992:93) and Ikwumelu (1993:9). This implies that a well-informed citizen would learn to appreciate an interdependent relationship within and outside their community. Citizenship education promotes political participation in the society and also inculcates the right type of values and attitude that would assist them to appreciate and participate in the political process of the country. Apart from the inculcation of political interest in the lives of our citizens, citizenship education would translate this broad objective into reality during its implications. Therefore, effective implementation of this concept makes the learners to develop sense of love and responsibility to the nation.

The discharge of civic duties and obligation is another aspect of citizenship education that promotes sustainable national development. For instance, an individual who is well informed and properly trained through the concepts of citizenship education will be able to appreciate the need for payment of taxes as at and when due. Mczicobi (1992), stated that, payments of taxes are necessary for the following reasons:

It fosters economic development through the establishment of industries and other revenue yielding projects.

It facilitates the provision of social amenities such as electricity, roads water, hospitals, etc,

It indicates citizens loyalty and support lo the government.

Inculcation of values is another attribute of citizenship education. It is an education programme which offers the citizens an opportunity of inculcating appropriate values in his life, such as commitment to social improvement of his community, concern for others welfare, service to the nation, accountability, probity and tolerance. Apart from values inculcation, it is an education that instills discipline in the life of our youths, such as obedience to the parents at home, patriotism and loyalty to the nation wherever they may find themselves.

Citizenship education is relevant to the nation through the inculcation of national consciousness and patriotism in the learners. Ezegebe (1988), believes that the concept of national consciousness and patriotism as well as their implications and improvements should be taught to the individual citizens. This implies that it is through the concept "education for the citizen" that patriotism; nationalism and civic duty and responsibilities can be rightly taught. This would help the students or learner to

have the willingness to develop good habits for the nation building, which is the ultimate aim of sustainable national development.

There is no nation or society without culture. The methods of transmitting this cultural pattern are possible when implementing citizenship education. For instance, Uche (1980), states that citizenship education helps the learners to learn and acquire some societal-expected behaviours and group activities, attitudes, values and feelings. He further comments that citizenship education also helps in transmitting our cultural heritage from one generation to another. Therefore, citizenship education cuts across several human factors of both individual and societal interest. Based on its relevance to the national development, education of the citizen should not be looked upon as a preparation for life but rather as life itself hence, full utilization and implementation of citizenship education in the school curriculum would sustain national development in our society and the future generation.

Strategies for Achieving Effective Education for the Citizen

We believe that the quality of education our children receive in schools should endow them with the means to live more satisfying lives and enjoy the "humanistic" aspect of education as an end itself. All this would be regarded as comprising the "consumption" dimension of education. Again, we also expect the school to endow the children with the means to be better citizens, to get good jobs and to contribute more to the welfare of the immediate, the national and the international communities (Cooms, 1970).

The above expectations can only come to reality through the application of certain modalities in training our learners or citizens. These modalities include:

The goal and aims of citizenship education should be well stated and documented in the school curriculum. This is quite obvious, because it is the curriculum that would specify the concepts to be taught so as to achieve the national objectives.

Adequate social studies teachers who would transmit the desirable objectives into learners must be trained and the necessary instructional materials procured.

Within a stipulated period of time, beneficiaries of the noble programme should be exposed to practical training. This is done in order to evaluate whether the desirable behaviour and changes have influenced them. This may be in the form of an industrial attachment or something similar to this in which case, the learners be placed under close observation or supervision.

Regular evaluation programme within and outside the school environment should be conducted. The result obtained from these assessments would generate opportunities for suggestions of possible improvement.

Learners who have shown a remarkable change of behaviour in line with the desired objectives should be adequately rewarded to encourage others to do the same.

Citizenship education should be made a compulsory course of study in all levels of education in the country.

Textbooks and school curriculum should be revised in accordance with the contents of citizenship education. Having already employed all the strategies in the education of our citizens, quality and equality in the educational sector would be ensured for national development (Ebon, 1995).

Education for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

The past records of education in Nigeria have been marked by constant changes in the system in an apparent search for quality at all the educational enterprises. These constant changes would be described as "experiments" in the education system which has created a phenomenon, in which no one system has been allowed to get matured for proper impact assessment in terms of quality before another one comes on board (Udofot, 2005).

Education for sustainable development arises because of the dynamic nature of our educational system in order to search for quality, it is an education that searches for sustainable learning needed for the maintenance and improvement of our quality of life and the quality of generation yet unborn. It is an education, which aims at equipping individuals, communities, groups, businesses and government to live and act sustainably as well as giving them an understanding of (the environmental problems, social and economic issues involved.- It focuses on preparing the world in which we will live in the next century and making sure that we are not found wanting (Sterling, 2004).

Sustainable educational development concerns a wide range of interrelated issues, which may be approached through the following seven principles or dimensions. The first one is the independent nature of the world. This gives rise to the need for a participative response through the concern of citizenship and

stewardship, which is the theme of the second concept. The third, through the sixth concepts, cover further key dimension of sustainable development. Leading to the seventh, which is as a logical consequence of those that precedes a concerned with the limit of knowledge and exercise of the pre-cautionary principle. Therefore, any country looking forward to education for sustainable development should adopt the following principle (Rowell, (1996).

Inter-dependency of society, economic and the natural environment from local to global

Citizenship and stewardship-rights and responsibilities, participation and cooperation.

Needs and rights of future generation

Diversity - cultural, social, economic and biological equality of life equity and justice.

Sustainable change - development and carrying capacity, Wooltorton and Sandra (2002).

Uncertainty and precaution in action. These are the key concept of education for sustainable development. Application of these concepts into different learning stage would bring viable economic standard, which is one of the factor for national development.

The above seven key concepts which concern aspects of sustainable development inform the curriculum of education for sustainable development. This can be elaborated as below in terms of values, skills and understandings, which have generic relevance across the curriculum,

Reasons for Sustainable Development

The rationale for the effective inclusion and integration of education for sustainable development into the school curriculum is grouped under five basic principles. They are consensus, understanding, policy, entitlement and effective education (Nicalae, 2005).

Within the society, we have noticed that there is emerging consensus among the public, government and business on the need to move with some urgency change towards more sustainable lifestyles, if future generations are to enjoy quality of life (Rowell and Andrew, 1996).

Understanding: Everybody is 'directly affected by sustainable development issues, but while the awareness of these issues is high, the general level of understanding of these issues and their significance and relevance is relatively poor. Following the dynamic situation of our educational policy in Nigeria, education for sustainable development is necessary. For instance, education has been recognized as an instrument for achieving participative citizenship in relation to sustainable development.

Entitlement is also another aspect (that warrants the needs for sustainable education and development. All citizens need to be equipped with knowledge, values and skills in the area of citizenship and sustainable development that will allow them to participate as full member of the society and work towards possible solutions to sustainable development problems and issues,

Effective Education

An effective education is another reason while we should adopt education for sustainable development in Nigeria. It is observed that this type of education will help in motivating teachers and pupils which will in turn enhance effective teaching and learning which meets many established educational goals UNECE (2003).

The above variables (consensus, understanding, entitlement and effective education) are those factors or reasons for the integration of sustainable education for the development in our school curriculum to meet with the unstable educational policies in our country, social and contemporary issues in the society.

Conclusion

The analyses indicate that social studies education is the only discipline that will make education for sustainable development in the life of the citizens a reality. The concepts of citizenship education and the objective can only be implemented through the teaching and learning of social studies at all levels of education.

By doing this, citizens will have understanding and awareness about the expected needs of the society. Thus, this will sustain and promote the development of the nation for the future generation.

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