EMERGING ISSUES IN SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
Social studies is a core subject in our various educational levels in Nigeria. It’s more pronounced from Nursery to Junior Secondary Schools. It’s completely absent at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria. There is need for the introduction of this subject at this level. This paper emphasized on emerging issues in social studies education in Nigeria. Such emerging issues like curriculum review, syllabus, bridging the gap between JSSI-3 and SS1-3, democratization of teaching methods, strategies and techniques, issues of national integration and structural realignment were discussed. Recommendations were also made.

Introduction
Social studies as a growing and dynamic subject have been firmly entrenched in the curricula of Nigerian schools and colleges. It is operational at the Junior Secondary School level and all the colleges of Education and even at the University level. The subject is also very prominent among many subjects at the Nursery and Primary School conventional subjects offered. Nevertheless, there are many emerging issues that need urgent attention in social studies Education. This paper delved into some of these emerging issues such as curriculum review, syllabus, for senior secondary level (SSI-3), bridging the gap between the junior secondary school (JSS) and senior secondary school (SSI-3). Democratizing teaching methods, strategies and techniques, issues of National Integration and structural realignment rounded up this paper.

Social Studies Education
Series of definitions have been given to what social studies is. We should be conscious of the fact that social studies covers a wide range of studies since it takes and uses concepts, ideas, skills, knowledge, attitudes and values from the social science subjects like geography, government., economics, religion, sociology and a host of others (Fadelye 2005). Therefore, there is no single definition of social studies that is universally accepted.

Fadeiye (2006), defines it as the study of man, as he interacts with his different environment. These environment could be physical, social, political, economic or cultural environment. It is also the study of how man influences his environment with a view to getting maximum benefits from it. The subjects also deals with how the environment influences man in return. Social studies has also been described as a way of life, as it touches on all spheres of human endeavour. Social studies also describes how man tries to solve the problems of survival in whatever environment man finds himself. It also studies the society, the relationships between people and the world in which they live. Awe (1976). Saw social studies as a problem-solving discipline. She declared that:-

Social studies as a discipline if properly programmed and effectively taught should help to solve social problems that are facing developing countries like ours (Nigeria) where the old norms are fast losing their groups and no effective substitutes to replace them.

NERC (1980), defined social studies as a way of seeing, viewing and approaching things with special regard to their proper place and function in the ordering and management of man's total natural, social and technological environment (CESAC 1979), defined social studies as a relationship between man and his physical and social environment as well as his relationship between science and technology.

In order to achieve the overall nature of social studies, Duhey, (1980), have identified the following as the objectives of the subject.
1. The development of good citizenship, the upliftment of more character and the promotion of social understanding in the societies,
2. The promotion of national unity and economic development;
3. Preparing students for the world of work and understanding of everyday problems that they may face as adults;
4. The development of critical thinking problem solving and decision making for the survival and progress of the nation.
5. Enhancing socialization and acculturation of citizens in the society.

6. In general, social studies education aspires to achieve humanistic, citizenship and value education. These objectives are geared toward the reduction of the complexity of the environment and the necessity of constant learning.
7. In order words, social studies education makes efforts to involve a consciousness in the
citizenry at all levels of the society, which will inculcate in them the virtues of self-regulation, rediscovery of the meaning of duty and accept responsibility, pursue honest endeavours through dedication and hard work. The overall goal of this type of education is the inculcation of the value, habits and orientation which will lead without force to the realization of a great, self-reliant society in which justice, democratic change responsibilities and tolerance shall prevail. (Danladi ed 2005).

8. Fadeiye (2005), affirms that; social studies enables its learners to understand their environments in all their ramifications. When people understand their environment, they will able to solve the problems of survival in such an environment and equally live comfortable there. According to him, social studies emphasizes discovery, dialogue, and experiences. It gives the learners the ample chance of discovering things for themselves by experiment or through dialogue and experience. This explains the reason why social studies uses methods such as inquiry method, problem solving method, excursion, questioning technique, discussion method and creative activity method through which pupils or students can discover things too, themselves.

9. Social studies will help us to achieve our goal of building a united, viable and prosperous Nigeria since the subjects seeks to achieve national unity and national survival. In social studies, we learn about the cultural aspects of the different groups in Nigeria. One of the major problems facing Nigeria since independence is the absence of national unity. When Nigerians understand and appreciate their differences, develop genuine cooperation and a high sense of commitment to nation building, they will be able to promote the unity of the country. Also in a situation where Nigeria is plagued with social problems and indiscipline among adults and youths social studies is essential to build a strong and united nation by combating the social vices.

10. Emerging Issues in Social Studies

Education Problems of Social Studies

Education

11. Having overcome the problem of defining social studies as a school subject, the issue now is the readiness of individuals and groups to accept it as a veritable tool for personal and national growth and development. Some citizens have an antagonistic perception of what social studies is out to accomplish. This is so because the positive value and skills of social studies education are opposed to the existing negative social, economic and political environment. Citizens still insist on living with their selfish, greedy, discriminatory, exploitative, corrupted personal and social values. There is no doubt that global values and traditions are Western values and traditions. These Western values are counter to Nigerian traditional values and traditions that should be cherished and protected.

12. Social Studies Curriculum Review

13. Social Studies have been reviewed several times to meet the needs of the citizens. This review will surely continue since the needs of man is dynamic in nature. There is therefore, the need to refocus Social Studies curriculum, for globalization calls for a radical shift from the present perception of Social Studies education. For instance, as Castella (2001), points out, Social Studies must produce new mode of knowledge through the distillation of new global theories and techniques involved in information retrieval.

14. The focus of globalization from Social Studies perspective should centre on human resource capacity empowerment. It is only on objective and refined labour that can make the new information technology productive. Social Studies has to redesign the school curriculum to accommodate global and value system that can increase international understanding and cooperation since man has universal problems such as, hunger, hatred, diseases, transportation, communication and many others to contend with. The present deficiency of Social Studies curriculum at school level to face the new challenges of globalization must be addressed urgently. This could be pursued through the revitalization of the Social Studies teacher to adopt the "Social action" approach toward the inculcation of the contents of Social Studies education. This approach calls for a resocialization of Social Studies teachers who constitute a vital element in curriculum design and development. This is the time to face national realities for effective development and progress of mankind in national and international interactions. For instance, there is urgent need for Social Studies curriculum experts to review the subject curriculum to meet the international standard. In line with this review, and in Nigeria to be specific, there is need to put in place syllabus for senior secondary schools to cater for SSI -3. This is long overdue. Presently, we run Social Studies curriculum or syllabus right from Nursery schools to primary schools and to Junior secondary schools. We also run this subject at the colleges of education and universities in Nigeria. Why can't we
bridge the gap between Junior Secondary school (JSS) and higher institutions of learning mentioned above with syllabus for senior Secondary school level. This will enable our students to register for the subject at WASCE level thereby bridging the gap. This will allow free flow of the subject from Nursery Primary junior Secondary schools, senior secondary-colleges of education and to the university. This is long overdue for consideration.

**Democratizing Teaching Methods, Strategies and Techniques**

Another emerging issue in the Social Studies education is the issue of teaching methods, strategies and techniques in Social Studies education. This has become an issue because many teachers or lecturers are not democratic and dynamic in their teaching. Over the years they have been using the same method of teaching. Most lecturer or teachers use the lecture method. A situation where the lecturer or teacher use lecture method in a class teaching. There are need to vary our teachings. This depends on the topic of the lessen. There various teaching methods which can be put to use in a class room situation. Democratizing teaching methods therefore, involves the use of more than one method of teaching Social Studies education. This will enhance students participation and understanding. When different methods of teaching is applied or when teaching methods are democratized it will enhance better understanding by students.

In the same vein, democratizing strategies and techniques of teaching will greatly help to boost the Social Studies education in Nigeria. Teachers of Social Studies need to acquaint themselves with these new strategies and techniques of teaching in Social Studies. For instance, we have questioning techniques, brainstorming techniques, simulation techniques etc which are hardly used in teaching by lecturers. It's also very glaring that, many lecturers hardly have time to strategies before embarking on teaching. These are burning and emerging issues in Social Studies education in Nigeria that needs urgent attention.

**Issues of National Integration**

The issue of national integration as an emerging issue in Social Studies education cannot be over emphasized. This is because Social Studies education helps to achieve our goal of building a united, viable and prosperous Nigeria. Since the subject seeks to achieve national unity and national survival. In Social Studies we learn about the cultural aspects of the different groups in Nigeria. It is no longer news that our country Nigeria is suffering from lack of proper integration. Looking at it from the time of independence in 1960, we seem to have married ourselves to our nationhood. We are divided long tribal and ethnic lines. Social Studies stands out as the main subject that can be used to integrate the nation. This is because it empathizes much on citizenship education. This is a situation where no matter where you come from, no matter your tribal or ethnic affiliation we are one. If we therefore, encourage the teaching of this subject at all level of our educational system, our children who are our future leaders will be taught about love, care, values, honesty, sacrifice for ones country, hard work, cultural differences and the need to accommodate one another. They will also be taught about our cultural heritage, customs, traditions, coverage, kindness, patriotism, self discipline, appreciation, perseverance, open-mindedness, endurances, resourcefulness, obedience, sympathy and industry. These social attitudes are important for national integration and health development of the society. It also inculcates in its leaders a sympathetic appreciation of the diversities" and interdependence of mankind, both at the local, national and international levels.

No tribe in Nigeria is independent. We all need each other to stay alive, we all need each other to survive, develop and make progress. We need each other to fight our common enemy, we need each other for protection, for security. Divided we fall but united we stand. This is the stand, belief, vision of social studies education.

Therefore, there's need for a serious structural realignment in our country. Before independence in 1960 we were divided along tribal and ethnic groups. After we secure our independence, we seem to have remain in our state of tribal and ethic alignment instead of a united country. That is why we still lay much emphasizes on the north, South, West and east. There's need for these tribal sentiments to die naturally and more emphasises laid on what unite us more. This is surely an emerging issue in social studies education. Social studies education can be used to solve these problems of national integration, unity and development if the subject is given the right place of importance.

**Recommendations**

No paper written on emerging issues in social studies can go without recommendations. Below are some recommendations.
1. There should be an urgent social studies curriculum review by the stakeholders at all levels to reflect pressing problems in Nigeria.

2. There is need to urgently consider the introduction of social studies as a subject at the senior secondary school level of our educational system in Nigeria. This will bridge the gap between the JSS level of education and SSS level of education in Nigeria.

3. Social studies education should be made compulsory from primary school to junior secondary schools (JSS 1-3).

4. Refresher courses should be given to teachers of social studies at all levels.

5. Government should establish social studies workshops at all tertiary institutions where they are not available.

Conclusion

There are many emerging issues in social studies education. This paper is of the opinion that these issues can be tackled using the teaching of social studies as a subject. These emerging issues are summontable if we apply the right remedy and at the right time. And this is the right time, if we want real development to take place in our country.

References

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