REFOCUSING SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION FOR PEACE AND NATIONAL SECURITY

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Abstract

Social Studies education helps young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good and citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. It describes the importance of cultural unity and diversity within and across groups. Social Studies cuts across several disciplines which are all connected to human population, situations, and psychological understating. It educates people by providing them with the skills and attitudes that may help them become responsible and competent citizens. One of the benefits of Social Studies is the ability to think critically when it comes to social issues and their understanding. It encompasses civic, moral, security, and peace education among others and is a part of a school or college curriculum concerned with the study of social relationships, and functioning of society. It usually incorporates courses in history, government, economics, civics, sociology, geography and anthropology etc. In the milieu of the incessant violence, terrorism, militancy, insurgence, hate speeches, kidnapping, injustice, marginalization among other threats to peace and security in the nation, this paper is of the view that Social Studies education, if refocused at all levels, can be a vehicle for achieving peace and national security. It is therefore recommended among other things, that Social Studies/Social Studies education should be made compulsory from nursery to university levels of education. These will, among other benefits, help in the elimination of discriminating practices by governments at all levels in order to create harmony of co-existence and co-operation among Nigerians.

Keyword: Social Studies Education, Peace, Terrorism, Insurgence, National Security, College Curriculum.

Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Social studies provides coordinated, and systematic study by drawing from such disciplines such as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences (learner.org). Thus social studies is the various aspects or branches of the study of human society, considered as an educational discipline. Hence, social studies education focuses on teaching children/students about their world, so they can establish their own views about society and culture (classroom. synonym). It includes the training of social studies educators who emphasize the need for social education through the teaching of various social sciences discipline (e.g. history, psychology, political science) (www.oxfordbibliograpies, 2012). Social studies education programmes are committed to students comprehension of how to teach the social and behavioural science and history in a diverse society.

The two terms "peace and security" are inter-woven, for peace is suggestive of security and vice versa. According to Dietrich (2012) when peace is grounded in hegemic practices and a lack of concern for diversity, it becomes the very opposite of itself. Galtung cited in Guilherme and Cremin (2012) also made a distinction between positive and negative peace. He did this with reference to direct and indirect violence. Direct violence is made up of structural and cultural factors. Structural violence is present in societies that are structurally unjust while cultural violence masks or validates structural violence.

The negative peace is achieved by removing the threat of direct violence while positive peace requires resolving issues of structural and cultural violence (Cremin, Sellman & McCluskay, 2012). According to the authors, negative peace is achieved through peace-keeping initiatives, but positive peace is achieved through peace- making and peace –

building. Peace – making takes place when a conflict has occurred and peace – building takes places when there is need to proactively reduce the likelihood of conflict occurring. Peace-keeping is easier to implement than peace-making and peace-building is the hardest of all because it requires a political will to bring about social change. The danger for the field of peace studies comes from the tendency to focus on peace-keeping and peace-making to the exclusion of peace-building. This can have the function of maintaining the status quo and leaving structural and cultural violence unchallenged.

Governments all over the world have the obligation to maintain peace, security and protection of lives and properties of individuals and the society. Bayack (2011) noted that one of the generally agreed facts and the most important single function of government is to secure the rights and freedoms of individual citizens. In countries where there is incessant national and social unrest, people have over the years, been instrument of intelligence, information and security to their respective communities, nations and neighbouring countries. Individuals and groups have also been involved in the maintenance of peace and security for the communal good. National and societal securities are parts of the major challenges in Nigeria today. So refocusing social studies education for peace and national security can help wind down the effects of series of terrorist attacks, intra/ inter ethnic catastrophes and religious and communal clashes that have resulted in the destruction of lives and properties.

Concept of Social Studies/Social Studies Education
Social Studies

Social studies is a general term such as politics, geography, psychology and sociology. These subjects are all connected to human population, situations, and psychological understanding. Objective of social studies include:

(i)   Civic competence; social studies educate people by providing them with the skills and attitudes that may help them become responsible and competent citizens. As a result, people become thoughtful and it is easier for them to participate in the life of their city or even country. It also gives

better understanding of what the rules of being an informed citizen are and how you can use them.

(ii)   Critical thinking: It shows how enduring ideas and events affect the lives of people. One may get a clear image of a country's life and how one can establish the foundation for the future of the country. It gives the basic knowledge of historical facts and importance of people's voice. One of the benefits of critical thinking is the ability to think critically when it comes to social issues and understanding.

(iii)   Social understanding: It includes not only world issues, but also relations among people themselves. Thus social studies objective makes one to understand the human condition, learn about diversity and interdependence of the world and how to deal with a huge amount of multiple cultures and ideologies in this world.

(iv)   Intergrading ideas: This is the general objective that you may get from social studies. This one shows us how to use all the components and politics, for example, in one complete opinion (Adenisa, 2019).Hence, the general social studies establishes a foundation for all of the subsequent, more specific classes that student will take in history, civic and the like (teach.com).

Social studies is a school subject designed to inculcate in the learners a full understanding of the interactions of man with his physical and social environment. It creates an awareness and understanding that would transform them into citizens with skills, competencies, and reasoned judgments to effectively interact and contribute positively to the overall development of the society (Okam 1998, Izom 2010).

To Merriam.com, social studies is a part of a school or college curriculum concerned with the study of social relationship and the functioning of society and usually made up of courses in history, government, economics, civics, sociology, geography, and anthropology. Thus social studies could be defined as a course of study that deals with human relationships and the way society works. It is also a study of various aspects or branches of the human society, considered as an educational discipline. Social studies is the integrated study of multiple fields of social science and the humanities, including history, geography and political science (Saxe, 2018).

Branches of Social Studies include viz: History, sociology, geography, geology, politics, law, government, archaeology, linguistics, international relations, psychology. Hence the study of social behaviours of human in society past and present, the study of the past, and the study of the physical features of the earth are parts of social studies (slideshare.net).

According to the National Council of Social Studies (NCSS), the primary purpose of social study is to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good and citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world (Minnesite Center of Social Studies, 2015). Thus all parts of social studies are important to everything and everyone (Iloeje, 2014). Social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing up such disciplines as mentioned above. Social studies, therefore aim to provide an understanding of the development of community life in the context of time, space, economic, and political will to establish social harmony, progress and have a rational thought in decision making.

Social studies teaches students fundamental concepts of culture, economic and political skills to groom them into educated, productive citizens. Social studies centres around understanding how the world works on social level. It describes the importance of cultural unity and diversity within and across groups (The Progressive Teacher, 2016). The nature and scope of the social studies and the purpose for which they are taught in school are matters of reflecting adherence to a set of values and the existence of a philosophy of life and education. This is based on the belief that many personal and societal problems are the results of unresolved value conflict. Thus the course called social studies main goal is the cultivation/development of good citizens.

Social Studies Education

Social studies education most commonly refers to the training of professional educators (teachers) to teach social studies. Thus, it includes the training of social studies educators who emphasize the need for social education through the teaching of various social science disciplines (e.g. history, psychology, political science, sociology among others) (Oxford Bibliographies, 2012). Social Studies undergraduate and graduate

programs emphasizes interdisciplinary explorations of the social studies. Course offerings engage students in global perspectives, multicultural education, education for democratic citizenship, and moral justice issues (Education.UIOWC.edu, 2019).

At all levels, the goals of social studies education has been characterized according to Martorella as cited in encyclopedia.com as: (i) transmission of the cultural heritage; (2) method of inquiry; (3) reflective injury; (4) informed social criticism; and (5) personal development, the basic goal of social criticism; and (5) personal development. The basic goal of social studies education is to prepare young people to be humane, rational, and participating citizens in a world that is increasing interdependent. Social studies education also looks at critical areas of education, such as ability grouping, character education, ethics, information literacy, multicultural and global education, religion and testing among others. Of recent values of human rights, civic responsibility and respect for the environment has been infused into the curriculum in some countries (encyclopedia.com).

Social studies education covers wide range of disciplines which encompasses civic education, security education and peace education. The application of the contents will help the development of the society towards ensuring positive peace. Thus social studies education more than any school subject has a major role to play in ensuring effective implementation of peace education in Nigeria. Izom (2010)posited that the course content of social studies education is aimed at producing effective citizens to build a cohesive society. In order to ensure peace in Nigeria, Izom also suggested the application of various method and resources in teaching social studies to meet the needs of the learners. He argues that social studies education is a vehicle of achieving peace and security education in Nigeria, because its aims, objectives, curriculum content and various instructional strategies are relevant to peace and security.

Within the social studies education, more emphasis should be placed on moral training/education and should also be embraced by the relevant authorities, if it is excluded in the education of the youths, they remain unguided, then society is susceptible to the menace that this will trigger. Sam (2000) observed that the important realm that can yield

solution to the problem of security is the aspect of moral values. He stressed further that the development of human societies hinges squarely on the moral values, norms and laws. Moral education is not a new idea; it is as old as society and education. It addresses ethical dimensions of the individual and society and examines how standards of right and wrong are developed.

Fafunwa (2006) defined moral education as the inculcation of desirable values, norms, and attitudes approved by the society in order to have good citizens in the future. In the light of the above definition, moral education is the key to the general sustenance of national integration and social orderliness. In addition, what is morally good is what brings dignity, respect, contentment, prosperity, joy and happiness to man and his community. While, what is morally bad is what brings misery, misfortune and disgrace. Hence, this moral education teaches core values such as honesty, responsibility, and care among others and helps to raise morally responsible and self-disciplined citizens. Problem solving, decision-making and conflict resolution are also important parts of developing good moral character. Thus, to educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace in society (Omoregbe 2000).

Social studies education through moral education could be seen as a programme of planned educational action aimed at the development of value and character. In this sense, every action and thought should leaves an impression in the minds. These impressions determine our, behaviours at a given moment and our responses to a given situation. The sum total of all impressions determined the character. The past has determined the present, and the present thoughts and actions will shape the future. Thus, human values are resolved and having lasting impact necessary for bringing about change in thought and conducts. According to John (1999) if there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty of character, if there is beauty of character, there will be harmony in the home, when there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation, when there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world. There is need to establish a congregation of shared values to express the preference for things that are considered worth striving for. Values are intended to make life in society more peaceful, secure and progressive.

Munker (1998) argues that the core values of social responsibility, is caring for others and dominant values that can make a difference in the human search for a better existential situation. According to Kudadjie (1992) elements such as humanness, integrity, justice etc are crucial in the cultivation of positive value which leads to peace and national security. Teaching moral education is necessary because it will make people understand that they are designed and commanded to live in peace and respect each other despite cultural, ethnic, gender and religious differences because they are the expression of the diversity of God's creation.

Moral education teaches the principle of belonging to each other in our differences, and that all belong to ONE God. Moral education kicks against evil, because knowledge is not evil when it gives wisdom and better understanding of ourselves and others to go towards peaceful living. It could be affirmed that morality provides ethical principles that safeguard the light of the individual in the society and points out to him his reciprocal duties and responsibilities. In this way, there is justice, freedom and social order from the content of morality. Morality ensures the clarification of rules and laws differentiating good from bad, right from wrong in the society, it also ensures that specific trait of character or dispositions are instilled in people. Life in a human community is possible, only of there exists a certain level of friendliness, mutual aid and rules for settling issues. Without these facilities, a community cannot survive or exist at all. Finally, through morality education will guarantee harmonious, peaceful co-existence among men through the assurance of co-operation, goodwill and role designation as critical factors in any worth while social interaction.

The inculcation of moral values will disseminate favourable traits and dispositions among citizens which in turn would guarantee the continued security, peace, co-operation and friendliness that is indispensible for national integration. Social studies education therefore seem to be a way forward especially when defined and contextualized on its roles in the much needed establishment and sustenance of national integration in Nigeria.

Concept of Peace and Security

Dietrich (2012) identified "many peaces" and grouped peace into five categories viz; energetic Peace, Moral Peace, Modern Peace, Postmodern Peace, and Trans-rational Peace. Dietrich pointed out that moral and modern peace are much narrower, incomplete and therefore potentially violent. This concept of peace is deeply embedded within warrior ethics, fear and insecurity. When societies become afraid of thieves, economic change, disease and death, they also become afraid of love, freedom, change and the unknown. They live in constant anxiety and chronic hypochondria. They become defensive, hard, mistrust, lonely and driven by the need to have more. Dietrich (2012) posited that moral and modern peace are intimately connected to war and conflict. They are the flip side of the coin, each sustaining the other, neither capable of resolution, both suggesting negative rather than positive peace. Hence, there is need in Nigeria to build positive peace through focusing on the kinds of structural and cultural violence that inhibit a genuine sense of global diversity.

Security is from latin word Securus, Securitas or Secura andwas introduced by Cicero and Lucretius referring to a philosophical and psychological state of mind, or the subjective feeling of freedom from sorrow. It was used as a political concept in the context of "Pax Romana" by referring to political stability in the era of Augustus. Today, "security" as a political value in western thinking and in the social sciences has no independent meaning and is related to individual or societal value system. (Brauch, 2015). Thus, Brauch posited that security has became a major goal of the power of society; peace, safety and public good of the people. Over time, security becomes closely associated with preventing both internal and external dangers with the means of the police and courts and other political, economic and especially military measures.

Social Studies and Social Studies Education for Peace and National Security

The goals of social studies education as stated in the National Policy on Education (NPE) 2014 are as follows:

i. The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity

ii. The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society

iii. The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around

iv. The acquisition of the appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society (NPE 2014)

These goals are relevant to peace and to the training of patriotic, socially responsible citizens who understand the social environment in which they operate (Azide, 2007). The core values which social studies should incorporate include: appreciation of unity in diversity, positive attitude to citizenship, co-operation and honesty (Orakwe, 2000).

Wolfers (1993) sees security as a social science concept, and it is ambiguous and elastic in its meaning. Wolfers pointed to two sides of the security concept: "Security, in an objective sense measures the absence of threats to acquired values, in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked" so the two terms peace and security are the flip side of the coin.

Hence, it is pertinent to mention here, that in refocusing social studies/social studies education for peace and national security, is of utmost importance for everyone. In Nigeria, the need to refocus on social studies concepts such as empathy, honesty, sympathy, tolerance, rationality, respect for human life and needs, interest, independence, morality, co-operation and critical thinking is pertinent (Izom, 2010). Necessary caution should be exercised on issues of politics, religion, inter-ethnic relations, boundary disputes and sharing of national resource. It is incredibly true that there is environmental degradation, lack of education, health care, employment opportunities and government service delivery in many aspects and areas of the country, thus is at the core of the conflict. In fact, perceived injustice and marginalization are often threat to peace and natural security. Social studies education should be refocused to provide

caution against over-reaction to issues which may cause social disharmony, conflict or even war. The Niger Delta restiveness, Fulani Herdsmen/farmers altercation, the Boko-Haram terrorism just to mention a few are good examples of social conflicts within the nation.

Conclusion

There has been an increase in the occurrence of acts of violence, lawlessness in Nigeria, such as the Fulani herdsmen killings, arms insurgence, and hostage taking of prominent citizens, Boko-Haram terrorism, militancy among others. The teaching of social studies education at all levels (Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Institution) could help in addressing the conducts of the citizens. It is very important that everyone in communities recognize the need for peaceful co-existence, as this will help curb disputes and civil unrest, enhance emergency management and resolve conflicts. Values of patience, tolerance and perseverance are needed if peace and security achieved, because through patience, tolerance, and perseverance, peace is ensured. Peace and security if realized will bring about national integration and development. In the milieu of incessant unrest in the country, social studies education, if refocused at all levels can be a vehicle for achieving peace and national security.

Recommendations

1)   Social studies which comprises civic, security and peace education should also be introduced as a compulsory subject from primary to tertiary level in order to inculcate civic responsibilities and moral values into the students.

2)   All leaders (various associations and organizations including teachers, public office holders, politicians and parents) should lead by example.

3)   The inculcation of moral values should not rely on the government alone; parents, teachers, religions leaders and community leaders, are expected to contribute.

4) Youths should learn to identity the self-worth of an individual. Thus, discrimination will disappear from society when persons are judged not by ethic group but by their ability and integrity.

5) Conflicts begin at home; children should learn that conflicts are to be resolved through dialogue and eventual consensus.

6) Children need to understand that the society is interdependent, hence should take this concept from within the family unit and then extend it to the community and wider world.

7) Government at all levels should not practice any form of marginalization or discrimination anywhere against any ethic, religious group, youths, women etc.

8) Provision of the right type of education and training that will ensure the possession of a stable skill suitable for youth to enhance youth participation, in social orderliness and national development.

9) Government at all levels should do all within its powers to live to its promise of eradiating arms insurgency and any form of terrorism.

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