
**Social Studies Education: A Distinctive Value for the
Attainment of Vision 20: 2020 in Nigeria**

By

TIJANI O. ABDULGAFAR

*Department of Primary Education Studies,
Federal College of Education,
(Technical), P.M.B 1013 Potiskum, Yobe State*

MUSA Y. IBRAHIM

*Department of Primary Education Studies,
Federal College of Education,
(Technical), P.M.B 1013 Potiskum, Yobe State*

And

ABUBAKAR M ABUBAKAR

*Department of Primary Education Studies,
Federal College of Education,
(Technical), P.M.B 1013 Potiskum, Yobe State*

Abstract

This paper examines the relevance or the place of Social Studies education in the realization of the Nigeria vision 2020 objectives. It is established that social studies is capable of welding into one entity the multi-ethnic groups in Nigeria since unity is inevitable for the actualization of any human development objectives of which Vision 2020 is hinged. For this human oriented programme to be achieved, the value and aspiration of the nation must be up held to a higher esteem by all citizens of the country. Therefore, social studies education stands out in any plan to bring comfort to mankind. The paper concluded with some recommendation among which is a call for purposeful commitment to the implementation of the education policies and the bridge of the existing gap in Social Studies curriculum in Senior Secondary education to enable it be used as instrument per excellent for effective national progress .

Introduction

The Nigerian government in its effort to bring the dividend of democratic governance to its people has come up with a holistic development programme that is aimed at placing Nigeria among twenty developed countries in the year 2020. A reflection of the past reveals various reforms programme designed to bring social transformation of the Nigerian society which either later abandoned or failed to yield the desired objectives. For instance, green revolution that was meant to develop Agricultural sector, Structural Adjustment Programme, MAMSA, Poverty Eradication programme, National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies were all failed to hit the predetermined target. The questions that need urgent answers are – how prepared is the Federal Government for this Vision? Is it going to be pursued to its logical conclusion or allowed to fail like its predecessors? Perhaps these fundamental questions made Abdullahi (2007) to lament as follows:-

Nigeria is known to be good in policy formulation but poor in implementation That the problem of our nation, particularly in education, is not the lack of technical know- how, workable and well intentioned national policy nor the lack of capital to adequately fund education and other sectors, but the main Problem is the failure to implement clearly defined and clearly articulated Vision and goals of education.....

A multi – ethnic nation with over 250 ethnic groups characterised with power struggle, political instability, tribalism, corruption, and high rate of crimes needs functional education to mobilize its entire forces for national unity and value re-orientation. Thus, one of the Nigerian curricula that are charged with citizenship orientation is that of Social Studies Education. The attempt to link Vision 20:2020 with this subject area stemmed from the point that sustainable human progress is predicted on tolerance, love, respect for human value, respect for the dignity of labour, patriotism, self-reliance, productivity, obedience and loyalty to the constituted authority, diligent and commitment to duties, co-operation and placement of high premium on the progress of the nation rather than tribal and religious affiliation. It is believed that Social Studies education has enormous role to play in actualizing this Vision, hence, the meeting point between the Vision and the subject area is the creation of enabling environment for human growth and development.

Social Studies Education

The term Social Studies is of American origin. Its existence in Nigeria is traceable to 1969 National Curriculum Conference. It was designed for functional citizenship which was meant to correct the irrelevant colonial education system which was based on compartmentalization of knowledge, facts and theories. Thus, Nigeria after independence, needed loyalty, unity and new commitment to nation building from her citizens. To ensure this and also cushion the effects of civil war of 1967-70 which called for reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation of Nigeria citizen, Social Studies found its way into the Nigerian school curriculum.

Ololobu (1985) in Grace (2010) perceived this subject area as “an organized. Intergrated study of man and his environment, both physical and social, emphasizing on cognition, functional skills and desirable attitudes and actions for the purpose of producing an effective citizenry”. Kisko (1981) conceptualizes Social Studies as “a programme of study which a society uses to instil in students the knowledge, attitudes and actions which it considers important, concerning the relationship human beings have with each other, their world and themselves”. From the definitions above, the focus of Social Studies can be categorized as follows:-

- a. It is visualised as the study of man and socio-physical environment.
- b. It is a level ground for preparation of younger generation for responsible citizenship.
- c. It focuses on the relationship between people in one hand and the resources of the land in another hand.

The broad aim of Social Studies is improvement of man through the creation of conducive environment for his survival.

Vision 20: 2020

First and foremost, Vision according to Horaby (2006) is seen as foresight, forecast, critical thinking, reviewing of ideas, thought, planning ahead of time. Having said this, Vision 20:2020 is a comprehensive framework designed to stimulate economic growth in the country. The main objective of Vision 20:2020 is to place Nigeria in the top 20 leading economies of the world by the year 2020. The Federal Government has inaugurated Technical Working Groups (TWGs) in Abuja to fashion out acceptable and achievable long term document for the realization of this Vision. (Sadiq, 2008). According to Ndubuisi and Abimbola (2009), twenty nine thematic areas have been identified as scope of this Vision representing different sectors of the economy. These are:- Agriculture, business, environment, corporate governance and social responsibility, culture and tourism, education, employment opportunities, energy, finance sector, foreign policy, health, human development, judiciary and rule of law, Niger Delta and regional development, manufacturing, media and communication, securities, science, technology and innovation, solid minerals, sports, trade and commerce, transport, urban and rural development, water and sanitation.

Vision 2020 is packaged for socio-political, economical and technological development of the Nigerian society. It is aimed at placing Nigeria side – by – side with the developed countries of the world. To achieve this objective, Sadiq (2008) asserted that “Nigeria would have to compete with the giant nations like United State, Japan, Germany, China and the United Kingdom which have traditionally maintained the top five ranking of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Bulus (2010) believed that to achieve this over arching goal, Nigeria will need to enhance her socio-economic and political development performance based on such parameters as:-

1. A peaceful, harmonious and stable democracy.
2. Sound, stable and globally competitive economic.

3. Adequate infrastructure service that support the full mobilization of all economic sector.
4. Modern and vibrant education system which provide for every Nigerian the opportunity and facility to achieve his maximum potential and provide the country with adequate and competent manpower, etc.

Besides, this vision could not be achieved on a Plata of gold. The desire of Nigeria to be among the twenty most developed countries in the year 2020 is only realizable through access to quality education by its citizens. This advocated quality, must be tailored through a sufficient value re-orientation and the development of adequate moral standard such as patriotism, tolerance, trustworthiness, etc. Accordingly, it requires high level of commitment and sincerity of purpose from the Nigerian government in the provision of necessary tools for effective implementation of well directed human development plan of this nature. This without any doubt will engender a progressive transformation of socio-economic and political structures of the society.

Values Embedded in Social Studies Education

Teaching and learning of values in Social Studies play pivotal role in clarifying and differentiating between the individual perceptions and social beliefs, attitudes and customs. Simon (1972) in Imoh-Obang (2009) stated that "one of the most important trends in Social Studies education at all levels is the teaching and learning of values." Akinlaye (1981) perceived value as "that quality of a thing according to which it is thought of as being more or less desirable, useful and estimably important. He went further to say that respect for life is a value that everybody must uphold in order to survive himself or herself." Beside, Social Studies is an interdisciplinary subject which inculcates knowledge, attitudes, skills and worth-while values into the students to enable them live and contribute substantially to societal progress. Social Studies as a value oriented discipline, presents values in a holistic manner to the learners so as to make them good citizens of a great nation (Nigeria). Some of these values are as follows:

- a. Respect for constituted authorities.
- b. Loyalty to Nigeria as young democratic entity.
- c. Love, broadmindedness and open-mindedness
- d. Willingness to live together as people of Nigeria.
- e. Tolerance of others and considerations for peoples' opinions.
- f. Rational utilization of both human and material resources,
- g. Assist accident victims; help the law enforcement agencies to curb crime.
- h. High level of co-operation for national development.
- i. Self-reliance, patriotism, self-discipline and piety.
- j. Justice, productivity, fair-play and sincerity.
- k. Hard work, orderliness, confidence and trustworthiness.
- l. Diligence, patience, perseverance, etc.

All these are held in higher esteem in Social Studies education. The inculcation of values is meant to produce balanced, effective and reliable Nigeria work force for efficiency and productivity. These values give meaning and strength to positive character formation. They also influence one's feelings, attitudes, action and thought pattern to do the right thing at the right time. Accordingly, Ignacimith (1999) in Imoh-Obang (2009) declared that "values give direction and fairness to life and they bring to life, important dimension which add joy, satisfaction and peace to life." From the above consideration, Social Studies education is packaged with the necessary citizenship orientation that no nation such as Nigeria can dispense with in her developmental struggle.

Vision 2020 and Social Studies Education

Social Studies refers to the study of man in his physical and social environment. It is therefore pertinent to say that the connection between Vision 20:2020 and this subject area is the achievement of sustainable socio-economic, political, cultural and technological environment for man to progress in. Vision 20:2020 has come with full package to save the Nigerian society from abject poverty, hunger and underdevelopment in totality. Therefore, quality Social Studies education is indispensable in this context. Before any meaningful progress could occur be it in agriculture, energy, foreign policy, communication, transportation etc, certain values and aspirations of the nation must be learnt, developed, internalized and displayed to an appreciable level by the citizens. The achievement of this vision is therefore beyond any reasonable doubt, highly placed on those values embedded in Social Studies education as revealed above. In support of this assertion, Fafunwa quoted by Okpanachi (1977) in Ubong (2009) stated that, what Nigeria of today needs more than anything else are men and Women of courage citizens, whom the love of money cannot corrupt, who can stand by the courage of their convictions. The country calls for a new morality, a new attitude to life and living and a new gen-ration of Nigerians who will be proud to be Nigerians.

Social Studies education builds the students with knowledge and understanding coupled with values and relevant skills that make them think and contribute intellectually to current issues and event in the country. It provides a platform for mass mobilization of citizenry for social reconstruction. Sharing this view, Ubang (2009) posited that "the Vision and mission of Social Studies education in Nigeria is a worthwhile venture that should be pursued vigorously for the building of Nigeria as a nation". Nigeria as a democratic entity is bedevilled by attitudinal problems which is detrimental to the achievement of any human development plan which Vision 2020 represents. This problem can therefore be corrected through quality Social Studies education within the four walls of the classroom via its unique contents, methodologies, instructional resources and evaluative procedure to create enabling environment for the survival of this Vision and the Nigerian society in its quest to be actively involved the business of a modern world.

At this juncture, it is necessary to reflect on certain developmental orientation that the Social Studies education has been used to achieve in the developed countries of the world. In America where Social Studies originated, it was designed to achieve unity in diversity and undiluted nationalism. No wonder that if a citizen of America is harassed in Diasporas, the American government rises up to the challenge. Today, Social Studies education is geared towards sustainable democratic values. In Great Britain, Social Studies was established for nobility, leadership and citizenship. In Japan, the Second World War (1939-45) devastation led to the feeling that the country needed a subject that would not only awaken national consciousness but also provide the basic element of scientific and technological development. Similarly, Social Studies was used for realization of racial equality and socio justice in Germany. (Romeo, 1998).

From the above exposition, it becomes necessary for Nigeria to capitalize on this noble subject as a tool for sensitizing her population for attitudinal change through the development of universally acceptable values in order to achieve rapid socio-political and technological advancement. Vision 20:2020 is a grand design to bring succour to the Nigerian citizens at home and in Diaspora. It therefore follows that Social Studies education is important especially now that human development is targeted in its entire ramification. Therefore, value re-orientation is highly essential in order to realize the desired objectives enshrined in this Vision. Thus, these values will make the society worthy of living in for the up growing citizens and the generation yet un-born. Moreover, successful implementation of this Vision would help tremendously to salvage the Nigerian society from the dictatorship of super developed nation.

Conclusion

Several developmental programmes had been designed and they failed to yield the desired goals. This failure is connected with the attitude of the Nigerian government towards implementing well articulated ideas and lack of adequate level of commitment by her teeming population. Therefore, our educational system deserves proper attention to propagate “Socio-Civic values” to develop in the youths, new commitment and sense of belonging to central authority. As a people, we need to lay more emphasis on social reconstruction thereby, shunning corruption, tribalism, political thurgry, electoral misconduct and a host of other values. These can be corrected through quality Social Studies. Nigeria desires a change of behaviour from her citizens to make positive contributions to national development. It is indeed, on this that any meaningful development objective could be realized.

Recommendations

On the basis of the above discussion, the following recommendations are made to achieve the desired objectives of vision 20:2020 in Nigeria:

1. Adequate funding of the educational sector by the government at all levels is necessary in this era of the Nigeria agitation for socio-economic and political change. Thus, budgetary allocation of 26% to education, availability of

- equipment and other facilities in our schools should be provided to enhance functional education.
2. The disjointed approach to the teaching of Social Studies education in Nigerian schools should be addressed. The situation where Social Studies is not taught at the senior secondary level does not help in our collective desired for value re-orientation.
 3. Adequate training should be given to teachers through frequent workshops and seminar to expose them to new dimension in teaching and learning enterprise.
 4. Adequate and prompt payment of teachers' salary especially, at the primary and secondary school levels by the government should be done for the actualisation of this human oriented programme.

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