

THE STATE OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN STUDENTS

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Abstract

The study investigated the state of social studies in the development of citizenships education in students. The study aimed at determining whether social studies contributes to the socio-economic wellbeing of the students, foster unity in diversity as well as promote international understanding, inculcate disciplined behaviour, promote unity among people. The study also highlighted the impact of social studies on students, and the impact of social studies on teachers. The study further discusses the problems of social studies Education. Finally, Conclusion and Recommendations were made.

Introduction

Social Studies is of American Origin. It entered American educational curriculum as a result of a major change in thinking about the nature and purpose of science and education. It was introduced into school curriculum with a view to giving social and political education to young Americans and as a major instrument of fostering unity. Before the introduction and implementation of social studies, traditional subject, like Government, Sociology, History, Religion, psychology and other subjects in the Art and social sciences were taught, but after the Second World War, the need arose for American to foster unity among her displaced citizens with the tenet of social interaction as their watchword. In that case, bits of knowledge from the above mentioned areas of studies were integrated and taught to young Americans after getting the blessings of the American National Educational Association in 1916. (Adewuya and Omolewa 1992).

Notwithstanding, social studies originally sprouted as an offshoot of American Historical Association's commission which was set up to

look into the importance of social studies to the Americans educational system and to the American society in general. Uzoagulu (1996) observed that the American Historical Association's Commission undertook surveys and research, which resulted in not less than seventeen volumes published between 1932-1942. It also devoted considerable time and energy to the careful formulation of objectives and the rationale for various types of contents. It should be noted that it was not until the early 1960s, that, the field of social studies began to received wider acceptability and special fundings for its curriculum planning and implementation from the government of United States.

Social Studies as a subject became important in Britain almost at the same time as it was taught in America. Other European countries also joined the new way of Social Studies Education after the Second World War. This was as a result of the need to socialize and rehabilitate their citizens and evolve a new discipline capable of promoting national and international understanding.

Social Studies in the Nigerian educational system has always been that of a tool for fostering national unity and citizenship and for teaching of societal values. It also makes education more relevant to the society through teaching students to develop the spirit of unity in diversity, religious tolerance, cultural heritage and promotion of social interaction. Much emphasis on social studies education came after the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-1970.

It should be noted that the introduction of social studies into schools and colleges into Nigeria and in different states of the federation was at various times and strategies, hence its incorporation into the syllabus of the junior

secondary schools to reflect the new system of education.

The State of Social Studies as a Citizenship Education

Citizenship education provides useful application of norms and values of the society to the citizen who find himself in such society. A child is sent to school to be useful to himself and the society in which he lives.

Adewuya and Omolewa (1992), contend that social studies is a subject which helps individual to be useful to the society and to appreciate the culture in order to be acceptable by the society. Social studies as a citizenship education, caters for the wellbeing of the students in a way that enables them participate in the day-to day activities of the community. It also exposes them to their civic responsibilities to the nation at large. Uzoagulu (1996), observes that, the school communicates with the community through the study of social studies which paves way for the understanding of the society and thereby, helps the students to accept the norms and traditions of the society. Ezewu (1995), opines that social studies as a citizenship education, helps to solve a lot of social problems if carefully planned and implemented. Through social, studies, students would become aware and conscious of the immediate social and physical environment thus, appreciate the need to be aware of their civic responsibilities. Allen (1981), sees social studies as a subject that teaches self awareness, self discipline, self reliance which in turn, develops a sound mind in a sound body. It develops national consciousness and international co-operation. Social studies allows easy evaluation by the child who in turn, is motivated to learn through the activities given in the course of teaching.

The Impact of Social Studies Education on Students

Adeyemi (1989), observes that social studies education has always been an educational tool for fostering class unity and co-operation

among students. In view of the above, social studies is perceived as an instrument for peaceful co-existence in any educational institution. Adewuya and Omolewa (1992), admit that, social studies leads students to understand the relationship among themselves in their physical and social environments.

They went on to say that social studies education also helps the students by way of enabling them to examine those norms and cultures of their core and immediate communities within the Nigerian environment in order to strengthen their socializing and humanizing responsibilities.

They also added that social studies Education provides students with several ways of developing ideas and skills which would make them play effective roles in community life.

Iyewamun (1989), provides the following as the roles social studies education plays on students.

- (a) Establishment of reasonable goals in life and works toward them.
- (b) Functioning effectively as part of a group through co-operation and competition.
- (c) Holding oneself and others accountable for commitments and behaviours.

Commenting on the role which social studies education plays on students, Awoyemi (1993) opines that, social studies education develops in the students the following:

Self-awareness, respect for others, respect for natural environment and their tolerance of uncertainty. He also postulates that social studies education develops competencies in students that relate to their participation in the society as workers, and good citizens. Students desire to know their world that will help them to develop those skills needed in the society.

National educational Research Center (1983), has it that, social studies makes students to cultivate the habit of observing things and people around them.

The Impact of Social Studies Education on Teachers

Makinde (1998) has it that social studies makes teachers in schools to have the idea of being less dogmatic and accept the fact that the teacher does not have monopoly of wisdom. According to him, teachers are aware that they need adequate preparation so as to convince themselves that they are committed and interested in the teaching profession. They develop the attitude of tolerance, sympathy, kindness, and a high degree of love as well as the spirit of co-operation.

According to Alaka (1999), a good classroom teacher does not only possess a thorough knowledge of his subject area but is also highly interested in the subject. He further states that, a good classroom teacher learns how to co-operate with the school head particularly teachers of social subject.

According to Farrant (1989), the influence of social subjects over teachers enables them to pay attention to individual differences in the class. Awoyerni (1993), observed that social studies education makes the teachers to possess the talents of awareness of the important up-to-date information and research. He further added that the subject makes the teachers to have the ability to appeal to pupils imagination in order to arouse their interest and enthusiasm.

Problems of Social Studies Education

The problems that hinder the growth of social studies education are as follows: Selection of teaching materials, problem of textbooks, lack of incentives for teaching, insufficient number of specialist teachers and problem of evaluation.

Selection of Teaching Materials

One of the first problems of a teacher is the preparation of the teaching materials to meet his aims, the initial state of his pupil's knowledge and individual characteristics and the development of the teaching programme itself as

a sequence of measure to assure the inclusion of these materials.

Solomon (1977) and Allen (1971), as cited by Ibe-Bassey (1993), indicated that learning can be significantly enhanced by the use of instructional materials. Ibe-Bassey (2000), said that a teacher should acquire the necessary knowledge about selecting instructional materials. Jibaku (1990), is of the view that the teaching of values of social studies in schools is a very difficult task in absence of appropriate instructional materials. Will teacher's qualifications and experience affect the selection and utilization of instructional materials in the teaching of social studies education? Willis (1989), has this to say-that teachers who have been educated in media and materials have greater knowledge about utilization of these materials in the classroom. Could this be applied to the solution process? The selection of media must take cognizance of the concern of the instructional methods, which should be employed. It should meet levels of skills and altitude of the teachers.

Ibe-Bassey (2000), explains many roles that a teacher plays in a given classroom. One of these is the selection of suitable materials to facilitate the learning process. Learning is a function of its environment. The teacher's main duty is to create the most favourable environment for maximum learning to take place. This could be achieved by incorporation of suitable materials in the learning process. Utilization of instructional materials by teachers provides a way of enriching the environment for effective learning. Instructional materials play a central in the process of lesson planning.

Problem of Textbooks

Okunrotifa (1990), pointed out that the new problem that is likely to face social studies education syllabus would be the problem of suitable textbooks. Khaluf (1989), in of the opinion that poorly written text books make social studies teaching instruction to be uninteresting.

Moses Awoyemi (1993), observed that, the text is wittily used in elementary schools throughout Nigeria, but in some instances, it provides inadequate information to the seven and eight year old reading it. So textbooks is one of the problems facing social studies.

Lack of Incentives for Teachers

The government has an enormous influence on the effective teaching in our secondary schools. According to Durkheim (1978), Government fails to provides the necessary incentives such as paying of leave grants, in-service training, transport allowances, good accommodation, regular payment of salaries as well as providing enough seats in the classrooms. These contributes to ineffective teaching in our secondary schools. Okpo (1983), is of the opinion that lack of incentives in the form of regular payment of salaries and promotion affected teachers¹ attitude and that led to the poor teaching and lack of interest in the subject social studies. This implies that teachers are not motivated in order to be duty-conscious as a result contributes unsuccessful social studies teaching in our secondary schools,

Insufficient Numbers of Specialist Teacher

An outstanding problem militating against effective teaching of social studies in Junior Secondary schools is lack of expert teachers in the field. Obiada (1980), holds that, there are trained teachers for social studies but most of them handling the subject at present have little knowledge about the new social studies methodology. The paper discovered that unemployment of the N. C. E trained social studies teachers has led to their allocation of the subject to the teachers who specialized in the traditional subjects like History, Geography, Government, Economics etc. who can now teach in junior secondary schools.

Problem of Evaluation

Inappropriate structuring of curriculum for' instruction and teaching constitute another hindrance to the teaching of social studies. Obiadi (1980), states that, since social studies is an open ended subject, it may be difficult to standardize answers and achievement. It is expected that social studies should have positive effects on human behaviour even though human behaviour is not easy to evaluate. Experts are working hard to introduce evaluation criteria for measuring attitudinal performance.

Conclusion

The paper investigated the state of social studies in the development of citizenship education in students. Specifically, the paper aimed at determining whether social studies contributes to the socio-economic wellbeing of the students, foster unity in diversity as well as promote international understanding. The research work uncovered that social studies education contributes to individual social-economic wellbeing, improved international awareness, inculcation of disciplined behaviour and promotion of unity among people. It also revealed that social studies education enables students to develop a greater understanding of themselves, become more responsible members of their families, as well as a happy member of a home.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings made in this study, the following recommendations are suggested for improved emphases.

1. Teachers should make appropriate remarks on students behaviour to enable them develop and display desirable positive attitudes.
2. The teaching of social studies should be made to meet the needs of the students and the country at large.
3. Teachers should create the proper atmosphere for learning of social studies by being sincere and encouraging students

participation in every teaching learning situations.

4. Adequate instructional materials should be provided for effective teaching and learning of the course.

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