

**USING SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION FOR  
CITIZENSHIP TRANSFORMATION: AN  
INSTRUMENT OF SUSTAINING SOCIO-  
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

The paper examined the used of social studies education for citizenship transformation as an instrument of sustaining socio-political development in Nigeria. The paper highlighted the objective of citizenship education as related to the Nigerian context, significance of citizenship education and the model contents of citizenship education. It also identified how social studies should be repositioned in order to address this issues and challenges of citizenship education. Still in this repositioning the following way forward are being examined: social studies as related to the philosophy of Nigerian education; production of effective citizens for Nigeria through the school syste; shifting the curriculum from teacher-centered to learner-centered; provision of adequate qualified teachers and provision of information and communication technology. Conclusions are drawn based on the above analysis of this work and few recommendations are made for possible for future plans.

**Introduction**

Social studies is one of the Nigerian school subjects which is geared towards the development and education of our young people. Social studies provide ample opportunities towards the nurturing of different kind of virtues in the life of our young citizens such as self-realization, better human relationships, self and national unity, social and political advancement, scientific and technological development etc. Social Studies is a course of study that studied human beings in various capacity of his interaction with his fellow counterpart (Osakwe, 2012).

The central focused of this great subject anchor on the promotion of civic competence, integration of knowledge, skills and attitude in resolving societal problems, issues and challenges of the society. It is a discipline that ruminates and explores the dynamic situation of our society and also work towards the changing nature of knowledge among the citizens. Moreover, social studies foster new and integrated approach which aimed at resolving societal and environmental issue (Imogie, 2010; Akpochato, 2013).

These glorious visions of social studies education can be realised by reposition the subject to accommodate challenges of the present era. This will help in moving the nation forward, in order to meet up with new hope of the contemporary society. For instance, in an effort of repositioning social studies in the United States of America, the National council for social studies (NCSS) provides guidelines for the teaching of social studies so as to assist the teacher in the school setting towards decision making on how to develop quality curriculum that will enhance development of citizens.

Ediger (2004) supported this claims by stating that there are trends in social studies that the teacher needs to understand and analyze. According to him these trends are relatively stable with the realization that, changes and modifications do occur. Similarly, new ideas in teaching and learning must come forth to keep pace with changes in knowledge involving related social science discipline, duties and responsibilities of individuals in the society. Just like the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) provides guidelines for teaching of the subject which will assist the teacher in the school setting. This guideline will help them in decision making on how to develop quality curriculum. For Nigerians to achieve a successful implementation of social studies, Nigerian Social Studies Association

(SOSAN) should more than ever before give direction on effective teaching of social studies for citizenship development (Gele, 2012). This standard may not necessarily be mandatory, but should reveal the thinking top of social studies educators. In order to achieve these objectives and also move the subject (social studies) forward to meet up with the present contemporary world, social studies should focused towards the production of effective citizens for Nigerian through the school system. Production of effective citizens became an issue for Nigerians. Therefore, since social studies came to the Nigerian system of education as a corrective measure, social studies should be restructure in order to address this area of needs in the society. Base on this fact, the paper therefore intends to examine the objectives citizenship education in the Nigerian context, significance of citizenship education, model content of citizenship education and repositioning social studies to address the issues and challenges of Nigerian situation for socio-political development.

#### The Objectives of Citizenship Education in Relation to Nigerian Context

Viewing the objectives of citizenship education, Ezegbe (1988) citing John Nitmeyer (1975) says that the task of citizenship education is to help learners to be socially sensitive, socially responsible intelligent members of their total school community and their school sub-communities. Again, Douglas (1967) maintains that citizenship education which the primary aimed is to develop citizens that are useful to the society. According to him, it is in the hands of good citizens that any country's democracy has a chance of survival. By this it means that the progress of any democratic society rests fundamentally on citizens who are intelligently and normally fit to run their government. Thus, the objectives of citizenship education according to the Nigerian context are as follows:

- Leading of young people to develop fundamental and democratic values that are necessary for sustenance of the society.
- Helping the learners to develop civic and democratic behaviour which will help him to become an effective adult citizen in society.

- Helping the learners to have a good knowledge of their rights and privileges in democratic society and make him know how to obtain them under the law.
- Helping the learners to know their duties, obligations and responsibilities as a citizen and induce him to learn to perform them in his own interest and for the well-being of the society.
- Conveying to the learners, the body of knowledge, sets of values and behavioural orientations which are considered necessary for the sustenance and well-being of Nigerian Nation (Ezegbe, 1988).

The above stated objectives can only come to reality through social studies education. Onyabe, (1980) added that the purpose of social studies is citizenship education. A proper implementation of these objectives through social studies contents will help in producing social citizens that are creative, reflective in their thinking towards the development of the society. These will inturn promotes socio-political life of the country and instead of ethnic conflict (Ikwumelu, 1993).

### Significance of Citizenship Education

Any country that wants to survive politically and technologically must focused on the education of their citizens. The reason is that citizenship education is not an ordinary study, but a way of life. It is also an education that offers ample opportunities to examine, clarify and isolate the needs, asserts and problems of society. The proper integration, implementation and utilization of the knowledge of citizenship education provide the society with right environment evolving the right laws, ethnics and values for the society.

Hence our society needs a new value system that will assist the citizens to appreciate better the true meanings of society, loyalty, services as well as appreciating the Plato Philosophical statement which says that laws which are not established for the good of the state are bogus law. Citizenship education, therefore is not only significant to an individual but also to the whole society based on the following points:-

1. Provision of societal awareness and understanding
2. Promotion of political participation.
3. Development of love and responsibility to the nation.
4. Inculcation of civic and obligations in the life of the learners.
5. Inculcation of values
6. Upliftment of the moral tone in the life of the learners or citizens.
7. Building in them spirit of National consciousness and patriotism.
8. Inculcating an act of respect to the constituted authority.
9. Lastly, transmission of cultural heritage in the life of the learners.

All these are the major target of citizenship education, it enables the citizen to know the cultural norms and social values which their society cherishes and upholds it. This will lead them to know the difference between their own culture and that of others (Mczieob, 1992 & Ikwumelu,1993). Again, citizens that participate in the political process of his country, have a greater love to their nations by sacrificing their personal interests in favour of their nation, payment of taxes, showing of commitment towards social improvement of his community concern for others, appreciation of moral values as well as developing a sense of right judgement towards others, willingness to develop national consciousness and patriotism habit for nation building, given due respect to the constituted authority and development of cultural heritage in the life of the learners.

From the above analysis, it seems that citizenship education reflects in all human endeavours of an individual and societal interest. Viewing its significance, we should not only dwell on it as a means of preparing learners for life, but should look at it as life itself. Implementers of this content should be aware of the interests and motivates the learners towards that direction (Mezieobi 1992).

Repositioning Social Studies Education to address the issues and challenges of citizenship education

For Nigerian to achieve realities of citizenship development towards promotion of socio-political culture, it is necessary to repositioning social studies education to be in line with the philosophical objectives of education in Nigeria as stated by the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Such as production of effective citizens for Nigeria through the school system, designing curriculum from teacher centered to learner centered, provision of adequate qualified teachers and provision of information and communication technology.

#### Social Studies in Relation to the Nigerian Philosophy of Education

The aimed of the Nigerian philosophy of education geared towards inculcation of sound and effective citizens of the nation at various educational development level (FRN 2004). Gele (2012) cited Okam (2004) that, a country like Nigerian society requires massive re-structured, redirection, national rebirth, reconstruction and repositioning through the teaching and learning of social studies in all levels of our educational institution. This implies that Nigeria must move from retrogression to developing standard like other developing nations of the world. This vision is revealed in the Nigerian second national development plan (1970 – 1974) which serves as a necessary tool of achieving national policy on education plans of nation building;

- A free and democratic society
- A just and egalitarian society
- A united strong and self-reliant nation
- A great and dynamic economy
- A land of bright and full of opportunities for all citizens.

Turkur, (2004) observes that, none of these objectives spelt out in the Nigerian policy of education that has been achieved for the past decades. Furthermore, Gele (2010) confirmed that classroom implementation of curriculum perspectives in schools should not only focused in the laying of solid foundation for perpetuating good moral and democratic principles for a just, but should also focused towards the development of learners who are expected to be accurately aware of the characteristic and be committed to its ideals through the teaching of social studies education. Therefore repositioning social studies education should centre towards the development of the following virtues;

1. Fostering better understanding of the movements and personalities that have influenced the historical foundation of

Nigerian society.

2. Displaying concern not only for control imposed on our lives by political, social and economic institutions.
3. Fostering and improvement of human relations through a better understanding of others both within walls and outside walls.

Fafunwa (1974) toe the same view points by saying that the lofty objectives and ideals including designs objectives of education enshrined in the national policy on education right from early nineteen eighties (1980s) has never been achieved even in this first decades of the twenty first century (21<sup>st</sup> century). Hence, repositioning social studies education curriculum for all levels of educational development is the best option for Nigeria as sovereign nation to achieve their objectives. Azeke (2000) added that restructuring of social studies education in Nigerian schools should focused towards promotion of nation building and sustainable national development for a young democratic nation that came out of a military dictatorship government. When this is done, issues and challenges of socio-political crises will be addressed in our society.

### Production of Effective Citizens for Nigerian through the School System

Another means of producing effective citizens in the Nigerian school is through restructuring of social studies curriculum towards changing the lives of our young citizens.

For instance, since the introduction of social studies in Nigeria, social studies have been taught in various schools and at various levels. The major aimed of teaching social studies at all levels of education is to produce good citizens for effective national development, but the objectives has not been realised. This is certainly true, because the current high rate of crime in Nigerian society that has evaded the country is an indication of lack of proper culturing and socialisation of our young citizens. For example many of our daily newspapers report on daily bases, incidence of vices and crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping, killings, drug abuse, suicide bombing and fighting among the national assembly members that are supposed to be reformed

models for the citizens and other forms of atrocities (Gele, 2012).

Social studies must be taught in Nigerian schools for constructivist purpose, for hardwork, for building good characters, for creativity, for reflective thinking, for problem solving, for obedience etc. if the contents of curriculum did not include the above listed virtue. Social studies curriculum should be repositioning and focused towards inculcation of these virtues in the life of our citizens. Beside, social studies is the only sure way of realising this goal when we hope of producing citizens with these desirable qualities such as; decency fair play, forbearance and respect for other's commitment to an acquisitions of the customs and tradition, and nationalistic ideas of his own country. Also producing citizens with these desirable qualities of life will promote the general welfare and pledged to raise and safeguard and the standard of living for all citizens (Okam 2004; Kolo 2008).

Still on the way forward of how to develop citizen capable of exploring our environment, the three great authorities observed that, the repositioning of social studies education in Nigeria will in turn help in producing good citizens who are capable of utilizing the nations' resource for sustainable national development and socio-political emancipation. This dream can only be actualised when social studies is taught with the intention of developing citizens that appreciate the nature of laws of social life, displayed intelligent and genuine loyalty to high national ideas, possess of sense of responsibility of the individual as a member of social group, show loyalty and a sense of obligation to his nation, state, and the entire human race and also participate effectively in the promotion of social well-being of the people. (Ukeje, 2000, Obanya, 2004 and Okam 2004). Thus, using social studies as a vehicle to transform citizens in schools is an avenue of sustaining our democratic and socio-political challenges.

Also, social studies should teach the learners concepts like; unity, loyalty adaptation, union, progress, decision making, respect for persons, nationality, sympathy honesty, need and interest, empathy, freedom, functions, authority, conflict resolutions, co-ordination, conflict management, bargaining powers, integration, critical thinking, obedience values, patriotism, value identification and role-playing through mastery and action learning process, value



clarification and value claims. Therefore any citizen that are fully integrated with all these virtues will surely make a good citizens of his society, thus promoting socio-political issues and challenges of today's contemporary society.

### Designing the Curriculum from Teacher's Centered to Learners' Centered

Curriculum is just like a seed of yam planted by a farmer. The seed deposited in the soil determine the harvest. A farmer therefore serves as a strong factor in the production and harvesting of his farm produce. The same thing is applicable to curriculum. Teachers are the high point of realising any curriculum goals. Akpochafo (2013) added that teachers next to students are the largest inputs of an educational system. They are also the most critical and expensive inputs". Teacher is seen like a walking encyclopaedia who knows all and pours them out to the waiting receptacle, that is the students. By this it means teacher is in full control- he decides what is to be learnt how to learn and when to learn and the students have no much input. The only thing expected from the student is to listen attentively and positively write one or two things. For citizenship transformation, and transmission of the good values to the learners, government and curriculum planners should restructured social studies contents (curriculum) from teacher centered to learners' centered activities to meet the needs and aspiration of the society (Onwuka 1996).

Again, Dauladi (2006) observes that, curriculum is the sum total of all the learning in the schools directed and experiences offered to a child in an attempt to prepare him or her for life training in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains". He further stated that this will help the learners in all the levels of educational development. Besides, it will help in developing in them national consciousness and sense of national unity.

On the whole, social studies curriculum should anchor on learner centered instead of teacher centered approach. Meaning that the contents of social studies should be such that emphasis constructive learning, rather than being passive listener and recipient of knowledge. Constructivist teaching is the paradigm in this contemporary world of life. It allows learners to construct knowledge for themselves.

In the light of this constructivist knowledge, learners interact with his or her own environment and through that interaction acquire understanding of its features and characteristics. This type of teaching approach help the learners to develop certain qualities that will help him survive in this sphere of life. These qualities include; spirit of investigation collaboration, sharing, co-operation analyses, team work, appreciation, hard work, crucial thinking, problem-solving habit, creativity etc. when a child learnt all these virtues, the possibility of being a good citizens is there, because he will be able to utilize this values for better development of his environment thus, promoting national development (Oyebola, 2013).

#### Provision of Adequate Qualified Teachers

Teachers are the central point in any education development. Agitating for educational plan without adequate arrangement for qualified teachers is just like going to farm without any farm tools. In order to use social studies in achieving citizenship transformation, should be repositioning to accommodate teachers training. Government should tackle this challenges and issues by providing trained teachers who;

1. possessed certain knowledge, understanding and perspectives which are in accordance with the deals of good citizenship.
2. Possessed professional skills and model techniques of the curriculum content which subscribes a mastery of some core subject areas of knowledge that are not only important and related to learner's current life style, but one who demonstrate knowledge acquisition and understanding of their subject discipline.
3. Acquired certain personal qualities and characteristic which are designed not only to relate learning to real life problem; but are also characterised by necessity for bringing about a closure of the gap between curriculum development and social need.

Gele (2013) cited Lambert (2003) added that government should provide enough classrooms with other facilities to enhance effective classroom management and enshrine discipline on the learners. Again, teachers should be given incentives as motivation to enable them put

in their best by paying their salaries on time and regular, given them appropriate promotion to correct grade levels, provision of in-service training, organizing refresher courses which will update their skills in teaching (Danladi, 2006).

#### Provision of Information and Communication Technology

Today's world embraces global information network. Social studies being a living subject and human related discipline attained to the globalization of any contemporary issues and challenge emanated in our society. This issues and challenges is no other thing but information and communication and technology. The idea of information and communication technology means a process of creating, processing, storing retrieving, deleting and disseminating information and data using computers and telecommunication (Gele 2012). It is one of the conditions that is very useful in determining the extent to which a nation participates in the global world is information and communications technology (ICT) (Olibies 2008). Olibies maintained that information and communication technology is an advance technology that provides a rich globe resource and collaborative environment for disseminating of knowledge and information.

Information and communication technology (ICT) embodied computer, internet electronic mail camera, video, satellite, telecommunication, GSM world-wide website (w.w.w). For citizenship transformation, social studies must be repositioning by the government to meet up the task of providing computer, internet service facilities, computers, laboratories, generators for power supply in case there is no national electrical service as well as training computer literate teachers to teach the learners in the repositioning social studies curriculum in all educational institution in the country (Mbakwem, 2006).

The use of ICT in teaching and learning of social education toward realization citizenship transformation cannot be over emphasized. For instance, Abolade and Yusuf (2005) serves as a powerful tools in the teaching learning process. Information and communication technology (ICT) have the capacity to accelerate the acquisition of basic skills and knowledge required in motivating the students to learn. It offers the teachers of social studies new role that is

preparing learners to manipulate information for solving social and economic problem. Hence, for the sake of citizenship transformation and promotion of socio-political cultural issues and challenges, government, educator's, stake holders of education and curriculum developers has the challenges to ensure that this generation of teachers and learners at the repositioned social studies curriculum in the institution in the country are well prepared to use new teaching methods and materials with the new ICT compliance for learning. By so doing, it will produce citizens that are hardworking, patriotic and creative in thinking thus promoting socio-political development as well as sustaining national unity in Nigeria (Alhassani, 2001, Inyioma, 2004, Falake; 2002; Ede 2010).

### Conclusion

From the above issues of life facing the entire human race, it is observed that repositioning social studies education to meet the needs of the contemporary world will help in developing good citizens for national consciousness and economic emancipation.

Moreover, the world is making for nothing short of excellence and if our dear country Nigeria really want to belong to the global community, excellence should be their membership and for Nigeria. The only sure way of achieving these noble plans is to saddle social studies education at all levels of educational institutions in the country. Therefore social studies must be taught at all levels beyond border, beyond discipline and beyond hope. When this is done it bridge the gaps of the issues and challenges of socio-political retrospective and prospect for sustainable national development. Furthermore, Nigeria at hundred years needs citizens that are well informed and patriotic, creative, problem-solving, and solution pushers. This will help in promoting socio-political prospective rather than retrospective.

Arising from this review and analyses the following views are worthy of note:

1. There is need for curriculum developers to recommend learners-centered pedagogy rather than teacher-centered pedagogy for teachers and student activities in the curriculum because this will go a long way towards enhancing teaching and learning of social studies in our schools.

2. Teachers of social studies should also embrace constructivist learning approach of teaching social studies for effective and learning of the subject in Nigeria schools.
3. Institutions involved in the training of teachers such as colleges of Education and faculty of education in Universities should ensure that student teachers have adequate knowledge constructivist learning approach (Learner-centered) such as when, and how to use them.
4. Citizenship education contents in the curriculum should well implemented by the implementers of curriculum in order to bring out the intended outcome of the societal needs and aspiration.
5. In-service training for practicing social studies teachers should be organized by government at Federal and State levels, such as private schools (proprietors), National Teachers Institute (NIT), social studies association of Nigeria (SOSAN), curriculum organisation of Nigeria (CON) and NGO's etc to update their knowledge about child centered pedagogies.

When social studies is repositioning to address the above recommended points it will surely bring hope to the development of our society and citizenship development.

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