FROM SOCIAL STUDIES TO CIVIC EDUCATION: CAN A PART BE GREATER THAN A WHOLE?

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Abstract

More than before, Nigeria is confronted with a plethora of citizenship (socio-political) issues and problems such as political apathy, ethno-religious crisis, political unrest, environment-related problems, killings, among others, making civic responsibilities and National consciousness low in the people especially, the young learners. Social Studies which had a good and broad curriculum platform for achieving the goals of citizenship education was perceived to have failed in achieving its objectives. This perceived failure led to the severing of citizenship contents from Social Studies to form a new subject called Civic Education. What could have led to its failure in achieving this fundamental objective? And can a part be greater than a whole? What are ways out? This paper uses analytical approach as its research method with secondary sources of obtaining information. It was discovered, among others, that the cultural, active participatory and value-laden methods which promote civic dispositions, skills, team spirit, tolerance and ethnic pluralism among students, as well as evaluation in the affective domain are rarely used in teaching and evaluating the subject. The societal ill attitude to civic values

and responsibilities can also not be ruled out. Despite these lapses, civic education should not be the next option, as it cannot provide all that are needed to produce all round responsible citizen. This study therefore, recommends that social studies curriculum be holistically reviewed in line with its lapses; citizenship contents should be re-added and the subject included in Senior Secondary School curriculum because being civil means more than political literacy.

Introduction

The civic and moral challenges which manifest in socio-political and moral problems in every part of the world have made the building of a civil society a very great task in different parts of the world. Nigeria – a multinational state is not an exemption as it faces a plethora of civic problems hindering nation building and national development. Sixty-one years after political independence, Nigeria has been unable to achieve sustainable nation building and development. This is due to issues such as low level of civic values and traits, ethnic polarization, ethnic loyalty, moral degeneration, among others. The heterogeneous nature of Nigeria tends to produce a kind of foreigner relationship among the sub-units, devoid of commonly shared values, interests, goals, and national consciousness which are necessary and inalienable attributes of national integration (Bolaji, 2011). Studies (Okam, 2009; Idowu, 2015; Idowu, 2017) reveal that coercing diverse ethnic-nationalities into a federation called Nigeria led to ethnocentrism, polarization, ongoing insurgency, and secession threats. Ethnic nationalities have been agitating for autonomy thus creating a set of centrifugal forces which constitute a major barrier to the continuous corporate existence of Nigeria as a unified nation. Consequences of this on citizens are inability to develop a feeling

of national identity, pride and unity, apathy, lack of civic values, and decline in citizenship commitment depicting citizens as passive, naïve and blithe to public affairs (Falade, 2011). Youths are not exempted from this civic problem as they are finding it increasingly difficult to be civil, particularly in the areas of civic responsibility, morality, inter-ethnic relationship, respect and tolerance of others' opinions, obedience to constituted authority and examination rules and regulations, among others. Generally, their level of civility and morality have remained low (Kehinde-Awoyele & Jekayinoluwa, 2012).

In addressing the issues of moral and value decadence and to instill national consciousness, various citizenship advocacy programmes have been pursued by different governments. For instance, Jaji Declaration (1977), Ethical Revolution and establishing a Centre for Democratic Studies (1982-83), War Against Indiscipline (WAI) (1984-85), Mass Mobilization for Self-Reliance, Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) (1986-93), War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAIC) (1994-99), National Rebirth (1999-2007). In the same vein, Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) were introduced. National Orientation Agency (NOA) was also established. All these government programmes seem to have yielded little achievement as people's civic culture deteriorates daily, hence, low level of citizenship literacy. Simultaneously, with the citizenship advocacy programmes, the government also believes in the efficacy of formal education as a veritable mechanism to achieve reform objectives (National Policy on Education - NPE, 2014). Education in its generic and global context is a strategic instrument for social and economic transformations (Idowu, 2015). Such reforms involve implementing formal curriculum contents to mediate socio-political issues and produce responsible and functional citizens. That is, using the schools especially through the teaching of different subjects to bring about citizenship initiation and reformation of society.

Despite the uniqueness of Social Studies in developing in young learners knowledge, attitudes and skills for peaceful intergroup

relations and by extension, cross-cultural unity, development of national consciousness, good and functional citizenship, still, the subject as currently implemented in the school system is perceived to have failed to prepare the young learners for citizenship responsibilities within the framework of democratic citizenship education. Kahne & Middaugh (2008) in their study state that the youth incivility has become the order of the day while civic virtues in all spheres of life have totally declined; the incessant cult activities, internet fraud, ritual killings, kidnapping, avoidance of civic duties, robbery, thuggery, banditry attacks and menace of Boko haram are some of the attested facts. For instance, the Imo State Police arrested a 19-year old serial burglary suspect, Chidiebere Okpara at Obodoukwu, Ideato North Local Government Area of the State (Punch, 16th October, 2017). The youngster who belongs to a gang that specializes in burgling houses when the occupants are not around has been on the wanted list of the police for a time being. Similarly, Adesoji (2017) reports that 30 young people were arrested by the security authorities of Ghana for their alleged involvement in cyber crime, and that 29 of the arrested suspects were Nigerians. About N127 billion was the estimated loss to cyber crime in Nigeria in 2018; Nigeria ranked third in global internet crimes behind the United Kingdom (UK) and United States (US) (Danbatta, 2017). The weakness in the potential of the subject (Social Studies) to contribute meaningfully to the building of a civic and moral society cannot be divurged from both political (immediate) and professional (remote) problems.

Civic/value reorientation which is one of the National Economic and Empowerment Development Strategies (NEEDS) led to the review and restructure of the existing primary and secondary school curricula. Religion and National Values curriculum is an umbrella subject housing Social Studies, Civic education and Security education as an outcome of basic education curriculum restructuring in 2007, 2013 and 2017 respectively (Gbadamosi, 2018). In a similar vein, Civic education was introduced into the senior secondary school curriculum as a compulsory subject. Citizenship education contents were severed from Social Studies curriculum to form civic education contents. The question which is germane to

ask here is that "Can a part be greater than a whole?" Does civility not mean more than political literacy? Can Civic education provide a general form of education needed to produce all round responsible citizen? It is as a result of the foregoing that this study looks into the uniqueness of Social Studies in promoting all round civic literacy; examines some of the political (immediate) and professional (remote) problems weakening Social Studies in preparing the young learners for citizenship responsibilities in Nigerian society and how the subject can be strengthened to improve its functionality in promoting civic literacy.

Social Studies and Civic Education – The Interplay

In terms of purpose, Civic Education is out to imbibe in young people responsible citizenship, while the goal of responsible citizenship is one of the purposes of introducing Social Studies education. At inception, citizenship development was and still the basis of Social Studies education (Heafner, 2008, Ogunyemi, 2011). Hence, a well conceived Social Studies is a veritable programme to attain civic education goals (Ogunyemi, 2011). It also has to be emphasized that the first and third aims and objectives of Social Studies in Nigeria as indicated by Comparative Education Study and Adaptation Centre (CESAC) in Abisola (2004) such as to teach as well as train Nigerians to be good citizens and nation builders by developing good skills, habits, and positive attitudes towards one another and the nation; also, to train people to be effective leaders and responsible followers are quite capable of promoting civic education goals.

Furthermore, in terms of appropriate approach or methods in the teaching and development of desirable attitudes and values which bring about civic literacy, democratic values and intercultural awareness leading to national unity and integration, Social Studies is in the fore-front. Thus, Obemeata cited in Nwaubani (1996) argued that "the main attraction in Social Studies is the fact that it deals with human behaviours in influencing the attitudes and values of the young and upcoming generation". Value clarification approach which is one of these methods is designed to engage students and

teachers in the active formulation and examination of values (Ajiboye, 2009). In teaching culture and social values with social issues, value clarification method provides students the opportunity to acquire and learn to use the skills, dispositions, knowledge and values which prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives; promotes the understanding of the inter-relationship between fellow citizen and the government; and also enhance the teaching and learning of emerging issues.

Moreover, the current situation in the classroom instruction is that there are no trained Civic education teachers (Falaye & Okwilagwe, 2018). Some studies (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Okecha, 2010) indicated high teacher recruitment for subjects including civic education due to the Federal Teachers' Scheme (FTS) introduced in 2006 as an avenue to provide teachers for the implementation of basic education. Other studies, although, not denying such recruitment, insisted that recruitment of inadequately qualified civic teachers affected 85% of the states in Nigeria. To them, this hindered quality of the delivery of civic education (Obanya, 2010; Ejere, 2011; Tsafe, 2013; Idowu, 2017). Without doubt, Social Studies teachers stand as the most qualified and competent subject teachers who can be deployed to teach Civic education because Social Studies teachers have been trained to teach especially, the young people civic education contents due to the fact that the contents were integral part of Social Studies before the severance. Hence, the objective of civic education (responsible citizenship) is still part of the goals of Social Studies education. It is also worthy to note that the problem of inadequately qualified Civic education teachers has led to civic teacher improvisation (teachers lacking civic contents, values and pedagogical skills). Due to this, the teachers focus more on political knowledge at the expense of apolitical issues. The fact that civility means more than political literacy brings out the uniqueness of Social Studies in producing all round civic citizen. How?

Uniqueness of Social Studies in Promoting Civic Literacy

Civically literate citizen is an individual who has the knowledge and skills which are needed to participate in making positive change in his/her community and the world at large. In addition to making positive political change, he makes positive impact in other aspects – economic, religious, environmental, etc of societal life. With this, the uniqueness of Social Studies as part of the school general education programme is brought out. The subject prepares a total child who is useful to himself and the society as a whole. Children are exposed to the subject right from their formative age when learning is highly receptive. The subject catches them young by laying good and solid foundation which adulthood is built upon for better society.

Social Studies also inculcates in children both ethical leadership and followership traits which make them to be good followers and effective future leaders. Students are being trained to suppress their personal emotions and goals for that of the group as they are given leadership positions and roles to play in different groups. With this, leadership qualities such as humility, honesty, straight-forwardness, fairness, open-mindedness, consensus-oriented, courage to stand up for what is right, accountability, among others, are not only formed in children but continue to develop as they grow up into the world of future which needs committed leaders. The sustainability of Social Studies in promoting ethics is largely based on its emphasis on the affective domain of education (Joof, 2010). The implication of this view is that Social Studies as a school subject has the potentials to contribute to the building of a sound moral and ethical society. It inculcates into students' appropriate values of honesty, integrity, hardwork, justice, discipline, patriotism, tolerance, to mention few. With the realization of this aim, the moral standard of children and youths (future adults) is ensured.

Moreover, Social Studies teaches students how to appreciate the diversity and interdependency of all members of the country. As students from different ethnic groups, religions, languages, and even socio-economic backgrounds work together in providing

solution to the group assignment given to them, tolerance as one of the national ethics is formed and developed, and this goes a long way in curbing intra/inter-tribal and religious crises now and in future. Not only this, students recognize the benefits and challenges of living in a world with multiple cultures and ideologies. They see the needs to respect, trust and balance the various opinions, lifestyles, attitudes and practices existing in Nigerian society and these also help them to know what it takes to manage such a society when the time comes (Oyewole, Egbetola & Akinsanya, 2017).

The concept of efficiency in the context of good governance covers the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment. Good governance according to Adejuwon (2012) means that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal. These views are in tandem with the World Bank's document on Africa that defined governance as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development (World Bank, 1992). Nigeria not only lack effective leadership to harness its rich human and material resources for development, but cannot also use them sustainably. The way and manner Nigerian leaders handle the country's resources has started to create the fear of the future generations not able to meet their needs within the carrying capacity of the earth's life support systems. In order to rescue the future, there is need to train the young ones how to efficiently utilize the available resources together with the skills to explore new resources for development. The place of Social Studies education in accomplishing this task (environmental citizenship) is not doubted.

Over the last few decades, the concept of Environmental Citizenship, as an inter-section between environment, civil society and the state has gained prominence. The European Network for Environmental Citizenship (ENEC, 2018), sees environmental citizenship as a specific kind of behaviour: the responsible pro-environmental behaviour of citizens who act and participate in society as agents of change in the private and public spheres, on a local, national and global scale, through individual and collective actions, in the direction of solving contemporary environmental

problems, preventing the creation of new environmental problems, achieving sustainability as well as developing a healthy relationship with nature. According to the ENEC definition, environmental citizenship could be regarded as a specific bundle of environmental rights, duties, responsibilities, knowledge, awareness and willing-ness to engage in the protection of the common environ-mental good. It should therefore be perceived as the guiding lifestyle option for future generations.

Furthermore, Social Studies as a problem-solving subject has been used as part of solution to social problems in many countries of the world. This, thus, explains the differences in the objectives and contents of the subject throughout the world since aspirations and challenges facing countries differ. The subject focuses on the utilization of knowledge from whatever sources in meeting the practical problems which confront a citizen. This means that Social Studies is a corrective and an applied discipline. It involves applying information to social problems and using responsible intellectual processes to the resolution of such problems. Thus, the socio-civic problem and a downward trend in morals especially among the youths in Nigeria can be solved through the teaching and learning of Social Studies; learners are made to participate in finding solution to many socio-civic problems, especially, those ones militating against responsible and morally upright citizenry in the society. With these and many more roles, Social Studies is potent in achieving the goal of Civic Education and other goals which are needed for all round responsible citizenry.

Challenges Facing Social Studies in Promoting Civic Literacy

Despite the uniqueness of Social Studies in promoting civic literacy in Nigeria, still, the subject is not without its own challenges which weaken its functionality. The challenges are both political (immediate) and professional (remote) in nature. There is inconsistency in educational policies/programmes formulation and implementation. The 1977-1998 educational policies portrayed Social Studies as an interdisciplinary curriculum designed to develop

learners' knowledge, dispositions and skills on the diverse environments of human. However, the review of education policy in 2004 shifted the focus of Social Studies to contemporary local and global issues. With this change in policy, citizenship issues which have been part of integrated Social Studies philosophy were severed. The quest for value reorientation later led to the review and restructure of the existing primary and junior secondary school curricula into a 9-year Basic Education Programme by the National Council on Education in the year 2007. This was responsible for the re-emergence of Civic Education as a separate school subject, at the primary and secondary levels of education. Evidently, there were inconsistencies in educational policy formulation and this became an issue making the development of effective citizenship through Social Studies unrealizable (Idowu, 2017). Hence, making Social Studies a victim of policy inconsistencies which constitutes a setback for the development of Social Studies education in Nigeria (Ogunyemi, 2011).

Over-politicisation of subject curriculum or curriculum politics is another political problem affecting the status and functionality of Social Studies. Politics cover the diverse sectors of Nigeria including the education sector hence, attaining nation-building through education is mostly politically inspired. Arguably, curriculum design and implementation in Nigeria are educational actions affected by political processes (Benavot, 2010, Ogunyemi, 2011, Idowu, 2017). Social Studies which was formerly taught as an autonomous subject (separate subject) is now compressed and made as a theme with other themes (newly introduced disciplines) under Religion and National Values Curriculum as an umbrella subject. Not only this, Social Studies after more than five decades of its existence in the primary and junior secondary curricula, still awaits its inclusion into the Senior Secondary School (SSS) curriculum while a relatively new subject (Civic Education) which is a sub-set of Social Studies education was introduced not only into SSS curriculum but, also, into primary and junior secondary curricula where Social Studies is already in existence. Individual and sectional political interests overrule national interests in Social Studies policy paradoxes, thus, reducing the status, relevance and

fortune of Nigerian Social Studies education (Ogunyemi, 2011, Adedigba & Wahab, 2015).

One of the professional (remote) problems of Social Studies is the pedagogical problem. The suitability of Social Studies in promoting civic and moral values is largely based on its emphasis on the affective domain of education (Joof, 2010). This domain of education cannot be taught the way other domains (cognitive and psychomotor) are taught because it does not have to do with facts that teachers just tell their students and expect them to imbibe them. As opined by Iyamu (2016), where Social Studies is taught as purely intellectual and expository discipline as it is the case in majority of Nigerian schools, rather than as problem-solving and value education, students no doubt would find it difficult to appreciate how the knowledge relates to real life situation. Research on need assessment of value-laden methods – value clarification, value analysis, moral development approach, among others, reveal that these methods are effective in teaching value-laden topics in Social Studies, but, many teachers still use modified traditional method in instilling civic and moral values unto the learners. Hence, affective objectives of this subject have not been achieved as expected.

Another area worthy of note is the evaluation procedure in Social Studies. It is not an overstatement to say that among all the subjects on the school time-table, Social Studies education places much emphasis on the development of desirable attitudes and values (Ajiboye, 2009). But, this aim can only be achieved by monitoring the progress or otherwise of these attitudes in learners through evaluation. In Social Studies, evaluation in the cognitive domain continues to dominate teachers' instructional evaluation to the detriment of other domains. Evaluation focuses on the measurement of the extent to which young learners retain facts or memorize someone else's ideas. Many teachers do not know how to evaluate affective instructional objectives (Okafor & Arinze, 2011). That a student defines honesty, obedience and patriotism correctly does not indicate that he is honest, obedient and patriot. That he is able to list traits of a good citizen correctly does not guarantee that he possesses such traits. So, we have had over the years Social Studies

without social responsibility (Iyamu, 2016).

Another issue involves non-participation of stakeholders – teachers, students and community members in the design and formulation of Social Studies curriculum. Curricula implemented in Nigerians' classrooms are centrally developed by the Nigerian Educational Research Development Council (NERDC) established by the Federal government (Idowu, 2015). Hence, making top-down educational decisions which make stakeholders like teachers objects rather than subjects (active participants) in curricula development. The non-involvement of Social Studies teachers in the planning and design of Social Studies curriculum is vividly shown in the content analysis of the revised Social Studies in the Religion and National Values curriculum for JSS 1-3 conducted by Falaye and Okwilagwe (2018). For instance, under the topic session, JSS 1 is to be taught 'History of Nigerian Social Studies Education'. At JSS 2 – 'General Objectives of Social Studies' and at JSS 3 'Contents of Social Studies'. The students of JSS 1 are supposed to be introduced to the objectives of the subject before its historical background. Moreso, at the JSS 3 level, students are expected to be rounding up the course contents for the JSS programme, and not being introduced to the contents of the subject. Moreover, the JSS 3 students are not supposed to have the largest work-load compared with that of JSS 1 and 2 work-load. The final (JSS 3) level of Junior Secondary level of education suppose to be more of revision than introduction to the contents of the subject. Still on the findings from the content analysis of the current Social Studies curriculum, it was discovered that the subject's curriculum has been 'watered' down and thereby causing some important issues such as environmental education, citizenship education, national economy and some emerging issues such as corruption, poverty, among others, to be apparently missing. To this end, many of the stated objectives of the subject are not captured by the subject's contents.

The Nigerian society itself is another constraint to the potency of Social Studies as a tool for fostering civic and moral values among the learners. Azeez (2015) observes that younger generation particularly, the school-going children are born and grow in a society

where its values degenerate on daily basis. Vices such as corruption, kidnapping, assassination, ritual killings, internet fraud, robbery, political thuggery, electoral malpractices, vote selling and buying, banditry, insurgency, to mention few have become the order of the day. The lack of exemplary conducts from the adults in our respective communities, states and country has made it cumbersome to transmit civic and moral values to the growing generations (Mohammed, Muhammed & Yahaya, 2020). The negative societal attitude to civic and moral values tends to clash with the values of patriotism, honesty, human dignity, unity in diversity, hardwork, peaceful co-existence, integrity, among others, which Social Studies tries to inculcate in the younger ones. Thus, what Social Studies teaches in the schools run parallel to what is happening in the society. Things work out well if the values taught in the school are the same as those desired and most importantly practiced in the society. Where this is not the case as it is in Nigeria, the potency of Social Studies in developing desirable values in students who are from such society might be low (Iyamu, 2016). Hence, disarticulating citizenship contents from the Social Studies curriculum with the reason attributed to the unwieldy scope of the subject's curriculum leading to its failure in achieving citizenship goals might not be the actual reason as civic researchers in their respective findings are of the view that young learners are yet to internalize civic knowledge and skills as evident in their low civic dispositions to political institutions, civic duties, political participation, tolerance, trust, inter-relationship, respect for authority and self-discipline despite the introduction and the teaching of civic education contents (Falade, 2011, Kehinde-Awoyele & Jekayinoluwa, 2012, Idowu, 2015).

Conclusion

Generally, many developing and transitional democracies like Nigeria are facing various citizenship issues and problems such as political apathy, political unrest, value degeneration, ethnocentrism, banditry, insurgency, and other anti-social behaviours leading to decline in citizenship commitment to public affairs and national issues, low

civic dispositions and hitherto, hindering nation building and national development. Education, especially Social Studies education which should have been used as a tool for equipping individuals with the necessary wherewithal not only for cultivating civil responsibility but also for creating avenues and opportunities germane and compatible with human and social development becomes a victim of policy inconsistencies and professional lapses leading to the re-emergence of Civic education which was an integral part of Social Studies curriculum before. From the study, it is evident that a reviewed Social Studies curriculum is potent enough to produce all round citizens (a total child) than Civic education which provides only a political knowledge. Civility means more than political literacy.

Suggestions

For Social Studies education curriculum programme to surmount socio-political issues of effective citizenship, government must display the right attitudinal political will towards the subject. The foundational aim and objective of Social Studies (education for effective citizenship) should not be forgotten by the government. Sequel to the aforementioned point, Social Studies curriculum should be reviewed. The severed citizenship education contents should be re-included, and more contemporary citizenship issues added to Social Studies curriculum. Social Studies teachers should be aware of the fact that Social Studies is a value-laden discipline hence, value-oriented methods like value clarification, value analysis, problem-solving method, value identification, among others, should be used in teaching Social Studies topics. Moreso, affective evaluation instruments such as socio-metric scale, anecdotal record, observation technique, checklist, to mention few, should be applied when evaluating affective domain in Social Studies classes.

In order to reduce overloading the school time-table with subjects which are even similar in contents and objectives, the curricula of Social Studies and Civic education should be integrated to form new integrated Social Studies curriculum, and introduced into the

senior secondary school curriculum as a compulsory subject. Both the school and society should share and promote the same values. There is need for a better synergy between them so as to create the enabling environment for the teaching of Social Studies in schools to make the desired impact on civic and moral values among students in the school and Nigerian society as a whole.

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