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INCORPORATING THE NEW NATIONAL VALUE  
CURRICULUM INTO THE INTEGRATED NATURE OF  
SOCIAL STUDIES IN NIGERIA

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**Abstract**

*The purpose of Social Studies in Nigeria among others is to inculcate in the learner the desirable Nigerian values that adequately addresses present and future aspirations of the people and their society. This paper therefore, takes a critical look at the meaning, nature and scope of Social Studies. It examines the inclusiveness of Social Studies curriculum on the premises of those factors that necessitated its incorporation into Nigerian educational system especially after the civil war. The paper also argues that rather than expending time, energy and resources on narrow curricular venture as in the National Value Education curriculum, efforts should be geared at improving the shortcoming(s) of the broad spectrum of Social Studies curriculum and its innovative pedagogical strategies to cope with our dynamic national values and challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore, to ensure Social Studies fulfill the dream of its founding fathers, the paper recommends among others the need for evaluation of learners to be inclusive of the three educational domains*

*as well as the need for innovative and learner-centre approach in teaching and learning of Social Studies.*

**Keywords:** Social Studies, National Value Education, Curriculum, Inclusiveness

### **Introduction**

Extant literature reveals that debates, opinions, discussions and researchers are abound the issue of inadequacy in the Nigerian educational system in general and Social Studies in particular as an attitudinal engineering school subject, charged with the responsibility of preparing productive and conscientious citizenry. One of the purposes of Social Studies in Nigeria is to inculcate in the learners desirable Nigerian values which adequately addresses the present and future aspirations of the people and their society. Although due to some overt or covert reasons, some set goals of Social Studies have not been fully attained, however, the revision of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Curricula in August 2014 which brought the new curricula that dismally removed Social Studies as a discrete subject area and made it just a part of the new Religion and National Values curriculum with other four component parts which include civic education, security education, and religion (Christianity and Islam) is a more challenging factor than the plague the subject had faced for many decades.

The merging of these subjects into only one will beyond any doubt affect their contents, teaching strategies, teaching-learning activities, teaching resources, classroom usage and assessment procedure. It should be noted that the present curriculum review indicates that the curriculum planners not only defused the importance of Social Studies, but also showed their lack of understanding of the philosophy of Social Studies. In view of the above therefore, this paper intend to showcase the desires and intentions of the founding fathers of Social Studies in Nigeria in the inclusiveness of Social Studies curriculum content as it affects man and his multifaceted aspects of life.

**Nature and Scope of Social Studies**

Social Studies have been defined by different scholars from different perspectives. For Mezieobi (1991), Social Studies is a formalized, correlated or integrated study of man and his environment which imbues the learners with the cognition, skills, values, attitudes, abilities and competencies that will enable him become an informed, rational and analytical participative and functional citizen. In a similar thought, Tikumah (2009) view Social Studies as an integration of relevant learning experiences derived from the various aspects of human thought for the purpose of finding concerted solutions to societal problems.

From the foregoing, Social Studies can simply be described as a practical subject that focuses on acquisition of knowledge, functional skills and the development of desirable attitudes and values for purposeful life. This is to say that Social Studies impacts on all aspects of man's life concerning the relationship human beings have with each other, their world and themselves (Kissock, 1981). It is important to note that values orientation in Social Studies is not excluded from this all-encompassing development of the learners in the teaching and learning of the subject.

Social Studies according to Tikumah (2009), is an indigenous educational programme. The author explained that Social Studies is rooted from the ideas and perceptions of some African leaders who received colonial education and discovered that the contents of such education were an extension and instrument of European imperialism. It is important, therefore, to note that Nigerian Social Studies derives her contents and ingredients from the vast cultural values and norms of the Nigerian society.

The nature of Social Studies is classified into uni-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary or integrated perspectives. However, Ololobou (2010) identify the essential features of Social Studies to include: the integrated study of concepts and issues; man in the environment; Social Studies is value-based; it is a problem-solving subject; it is learner-centred in approach, and citizenship education. It is clear from the above analysis that the flexibility and dynamism in integrated form of Social Studies makes it adaptive to the ever changing scientific and technological world.

It is thus; suffice to say that in terms of coverage, Social Studies curriculum is comprehensive in depth and breadth. The level of content coverage depends largely on the maturity, age, interest and needs of the learners. The scope of Social Studies is ever-changing in tune/line with the prevailing factors such as space, time and human development (Tikumah, 2009, Ololobou, 2010). Social Studies curriculum is by nature spiral. The scope continues to expand as the learner moves from one level to another in a bid to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. For example, concepts such as family is taught at all levels and stages, however, learning contents and outcomes varies from one level to the other.

In view of man's scientific and technological advancement, the scope of Social Studies is determined by the societal goals and aspirations as highlighted by Ololobou (2010):

The scope of Social Studies covers socio-cultural, historical, political, geographical, economic, scientific and technological issues. Contemporary public issues which are increasingly affecting the well-being of man are also built into the scope to equip the learners with survival skills to make valuable contributions for the upliftment of society..... The essence of this wide focus of human activities is the promotion of good citizenship (P4)

Although, the example above reflects the scope of Social Studies at tertiary level, the concepts could be taught at any stage provided the learning process is pedagogically handled by inspiring Social Studies teacher.

### **Rationale for Social Studies in Nigeria**

Social Studies have been used by nations of the world to address varied problems. For instance, Social Studies was introduced in United States of America (USA) to solve some domestic problems such as poverty, pollution, inflation and crime (Fagge, 2009). According to Fagge, the purpose of Social Studies in USA among others include the development of critical thinking, respect for other

people's culture, provision of fundamental basic skills and effective citizenship. Similarly, the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970) threatened the corporate existence of Nigeria. The seed of hatred started to germinate giving room for suspicion among various groups within the country. This led to the introduction of Social Studies into the school system to "catch the learner young" and to foster unity and continuity of the Nigerian project. As a core subject at basic education level in Nigeria, Social Studies' broad-based learning process provide the learner with knowledge of man and his environment, covering the three educational domains; acquisition of knowledge, development of functional skills and the formation of desirable attitudes and values. The five main national goals of Nigeria as a Nation-State which serve as basic foundation for her educational policy can only be realized through teaching and learning of Social Studies as explicitly highlighted in the policy document (FRN, 2014) as: the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity; the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society; the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

The purpose of Social Studies most especially at the elementary level is to shape attitudes and values of its client. In line with the above, Ahmed (2007, 2009, 2016) submits that the purpose of Social Studies in Nigeria is reflected in: promoting responsible, effective and functional citizenship; acquiring knowledge, functional skills and the development of right attitudes and values for a meaningful life; developing the power evaluating facts and of critical independent thinking and judgment; promoting the transmission of cultural heritage within and without the immediate community; inculcating in the learners the virtuous spirit of altruism, patriotism, honesty, truthfulness, accountability and probity; creating awareness in the learners about their surroundings (Okonkwo, 2004); developing skills that are essential in democratic dispensation (Ololobou, 2007); development in learners' knowledge and

understanding of the environment; and the acquisition of relevant and practical skills for survival and inculcation of right values, attitudes and actions (Ololobou, 2010).

In the same vein, Okam (1998) saw the purpose of Social Studies as: acquisition of certain attitudes, feelings, and sensitivities including a development and acceptance of certain beliefs, interests, outlooks and predispositions; acquisition and development of skills particularly social skills, which are very necessary for an effective use of knowledge gained through learning process; and acquisition and fostering of values including a number of deeply held commitments, supported when necessary, by appropriate action.

Values education on the other hand can be defined as a multifaceted process of socialization in schools, which transmits dominant social values in order to provide and legitimate the necessary link between the individual, the group and society (Zadja, 2014). Similarly, Kumari (2013) defines Value Education as a process of developing moral, cultural, and spiritual as well as the ability to make proper value judgments and internalize them in one's life. It can also be described as the development of a child's personality in its physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects.

It is pertinent at this juncture to take a cursory look at the following purposes of values education as identified by Zadja (2014), Lakshmi and Paul (2018): helping learners to appreciate one another's cultural differences; teaching learners to avoid using language that is insensitive, offensive, embarrassing or damaging; to help learners adopt multiple perspectives, conceptualizations and behaviors; to help learners to be respectful and tolerant of other students with different backgrounds and beliefs; helping learners to understand that social responsibility extends beyond local and national boundaries; helping learners or children to develop an independent way of thinking and living; and helping learners or children to make moral decision on the origin of healthy moral principles.

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that Social Studies is broader and comprehensive in nature and scope than values education. As an integrated discipline that draws its concepts and generalizations from different fields of human endeavour, Social

Studies teachers can adequately and effectively inculcate value-based concepts, skills, attitude, and actions through religious, spatial as well as cognitive, conative and affective dimensions (Bello, 2017). The subject is capable of engineering the learners' moral character and attitudes that would invariably inculcate in them positive value orientation. This assertion is supported by Okam (1998) when he argues that Social Studies affection is intended to encourage positive feelings of contentment and discourage undesirable emotions or feelings in its clients.

In terms of goals and objectives, Social Studies is by far more inclusive as it covers the three educational domains of cognition, affection and psychomotor. Social Studies pedagogy emphasizes that since man is the focus of its activities, he therefore deserve to be educated in a holistic learning process that prepares him for challenges of the present and the future in any given environment and situation. Teachers of Social Studies are inculcating values related traits in their students through value clarification, value analysis, infusion and discussion of moral issues. Simulation games in which rewards and punishments are built, such that players will reject undesirable attitudes and values are some of the ways values can be taught through Social Studies instruction (Ololobou, 2003). Social studies provide a broad knowledge of social issues as it relates to man. This equips him to adequately apply a holistic approach in solving his numerous problems through systematic, creative and critical thinking.

The discipline is also concerned with the development of citizens who are morally, professionally, ethically sound, culturally and spiritually buoyant and socially and scientifically functional and efficient. As an attitudinal engineering process, Social Studies inculcates positive values in learners such as loyalty, honesty, love, patriotism, truthfulness, sincerity, etc. These virtues are indeed the focus of citizenship education. As an orientation process, the subject is committed to transmission and formation of values essential to learners in their practical approach to issues which may arise in the process of decision making in terms of scientific knowledge, ethnic, philosophical, religious and social considerations.

It is clear from the above discussion that Social Studies occupy an important place in the transformation of a society. The focus of the discipline on knowledge, affection and skills acquisition makes it indispensable to human resource development as rightly identified by Okam (1998):

Social Studies as a discipline, derives a good deal of sustenance and nourishment from the tenets that give substance to the affective domain. It cannot afford to relegate the tenets of affective domain to background and continue to survive as a subject area (P.14)

### **Pedagogical Constraints of Social Studies in Nigeria**

The following are some of the challenges militating against the effectiveness of Social Studies in respect of values orientation and character formation and development:

Improper understanding of the philosophy behind teaching and learning of Social Studies. Majority of Social Studies teachers do not recognize the significance of the subject as a tool for promoting effective citizenry (Okam, 2011). As such the purposefulness of the curriculum is not adequately pursued. The affective and skills development are not efficiently inculcated in the learners in practical terms.

Inadequate use of learning resources in teaching and learning of Social Studies. Sometimes, resources are not appropriately selected to teach certain concepts in Social Studies. For example, certain topics or concept that are supposed to be handled by experts or specialists (resource persons) are carelessly treated in the class by teachers who do not possess sufficient knowledge and expertise skills in such area. Instructional technology resources such as ICT facilities, overhead projectors, community resources and public address systems (PAS) for large groups are necessary for Social Studies classes.



Exclusive evaluation tools of Social Studies learning content is a major challenge in accomplishing the goals of attitudinal change desired in the learners. The emphasis, today in Nigeria is very much on cognition (Ololobou, 2010). Neither affective nor psychomotor domain of Social Studies curriculum is evaluated to form the final grades of Social Studies learning process.

Professional incompetence of some Social Studies teachers also militate against inculcating desirable attitudes through the teaching and learning of the subject. A reasonable number of teachers of Social Studies in Nigeria cannot effectively and efficiently use inspiring and innovative teaching approaches such as inquiry, discovery, and study technology among others to stimulate and motivate the learners. This is supported by Mezieobi (1993:) when he observe that:

no matter how well designed the Social Studies curriculum is, no matter how well intentioned the objectives of Social Studies curriculum are, no matter the wealth of the available Social Studies curriculum resources for effective instructional delivery, the core of the success of the Social Studies curriculum rests with the professionally trained and qualified Social Studies teacher who must translate the programme in to action (P148).

The above observation on Social Studies equally applies to values education in the context of the current education system in Nigeria. At present no any other trained personnel to teach or handle values education in Nigerian schools other than numerous Social Studies teacher available in society. It is the view of this paper that replacement culture is more costly than maintenance. The advocacy therefore, is for retraining and effective supervision of instructional activities in schools as well as reversing the challenges identified above.

### **Refocusing Social Studies Pedagogical Process in Nigeria**

For Social Studies to assume its character formation role in the curriculum there is need to critically re-assess the existing pedagogical approaches. First and foremost, Social Studies teachers must endeavor to update their professional competencies. This calls for continuing professionalism through attendance of workshops, seminars and conferences where innovative ideas and current research findings are disseminated. This is more important now, that, there is paradigm shift from teacher-centred approach to learner driven and focused.

The use of relevant learning resources especially those that have direct bearing on affective education such as family, mass media, peer group and religious bodies. The influence of these agents tremendously instills the principles of affection in the young learners. Therefore, the Social Studies teacher is expected to make the subject matter of Social Studies relevant to the needs and aspiration of his students. The learning content should have both intellectual and emotional bearing the learners (Okam, 1998).

Other activities that would facilitate desirable attitudes in the learners are attitude acrostics, attitude inventory and turn-it around attitude activity. In addition, learners should be allowed to express their feelings whether positive or negative whenever they come up. Desirable behaviours and actions are to be motivated and rewarded. Inculcate in the learners appreciation of hard work. Above all, the Social Studies teacher is expected to serve as a mentor or good model to his students.

### **The Way Forward**

In order to fulfill the dream of the founding fathers of Social Studies, the following suggestions are advanced:

Evaluation of learners should be inclusive of the three educational domains. Equal emphasis should be placed on each of the domains. The affective aspects of the subject have been neglected most especially in terms of evaluating learning outcomes.

There is the need for innovative and learner-centre approaches in teaching and learning of Social Studies. Learning approaches such as inquiry, problem solving, study technology, Socratic Method, etc are much more effective in teaching and learning of Social Studies. Grouping of learners in Social Studies classes have become a necessity, as learners' population is on the increase. Activities or tasks are assigned to various groups to accomplish within a stipulated period of time.

Family values and morals which form the bedrock of a disciplined society should be inculcated at the family level by parents and other siblings. This is because children spend more time at home than school.

Periodic supervision of teachers at work will go a long way to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Nigerian schools. This is the secret behind the success of many schools that are reputable in scholarship.

### **Conclusion**

There is no doubt that Social Studies have been an active subject in shaping the attitudes and values of the teeming Nigerian learners most especially at the basic levels. It is obvious that its curriculum comprehensively covers the totality of man's interactions with the various spectrums of his environment. The affective perspective of Social Studies does not only reflect on the behavior of the students but also culminates in their individual and collective personalities. To ensure that this continues, the integrated nature of the subject should not be undermined in the process of any form of educational review.

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