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**IMPERATIVES OF ADEQUATE SOCIAL STUDIES  
TEACHING METHODS AS A PANACEA FOR NATION  
BUILDING IN NIGERIAN BASIC SCHOOLS**

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**Abstract**

*This paper looks at Social Studies as a field of study aimed at developing relevant skills and cultivating values which are essential for Nation building. It places particular reference on Social Studies teaching methods which are as diverse as the sources from which the field of study draws it “raison d’être” (Okam, 2002). These Social Studies teaching methods are chosen and ordered, and performed so as to achieve and accomplish set objectives of instruction. These methods include presentation and construction methods, creativity and inquiry method, discussion and problem solving method, dramatization, and simulation and questioning methods. These methods are related to content, and ensure that learning ceases to be fragmentary and devoid of memorization of unrelated facts and concepts. The paper also looks at the role of Social Studies teachers in ensuring that they are able to implement the curriculum in a manner that will enable the development of such values that the individual needs for effective nation building. Thus, Social Studies teachers need to connect the content to the individual interest of the students thereby increasing students’ interest in the*

content and actively engaging students in the learning process (Jekayinfa, 2020). The paper then discusses the need for not just the development of the individuals intellectual capabilities but also focuses on the holistic development of the individual cutting across the three major domains of knowledge; cognitive, affective and psychomotor, with a view to developing in the individual Values, Attitudes, Skills and Knowledge (VASK) so that they will contribute effectively in nation building. The paper sees national building as a product of the development of the right kind of attitude in individuals so as to develop capabilities and contribute positively to the development of their immediate communities and the nation by extension. Furthermore, this paper looks at some of the challenges and successes associated with inadequate application of the appropriate teaching methods by teachers and the dangers it poses. It recommended that Social Studies teachers and experts need to employ relevant teaching methods and strategies to enhance effectiveness in the development of values necessary for nation building. Furthermore, the paper concluded that Social Studies teachers need to employ a variety of teaching methods in an integrated manner as the ability to use various techniques and methods will ensure the achievement of its objectives and enable individuals develop critical thinking necessary for nation building. Consequently, there is a need for professionalism among Social Studies teachers so as to increase Social Studies teachers' authority to emphasize content-relevant skills in their curriculum which will lead to the achievement of Social Studies objectives and would enable skill development which is necessary for the development of values which support nation building.

**Key words:** Social Studies; Teaching Methods; Values; Value Systems; Nation Building.

## **Introduction**

The turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, occasioned by the industrial revolution heralded a lot of interactions between peoples, increased access to communication and transportation with its attendant consequences, including population explosion, cultural integration, immigration and emigration, the rise of urban, semi-urban and suburban centers and an increase in trade and investments. It also increased scientific explorations and discoveries both within and outside earth's boundaries. As a consequence, people who were separated by physical distance ideology and other peculiarities came to live within same societies and engaged and interacted on a daily basis (Hobbs & Blank, 1986). This development meant that a lot of people were able to congregate in a specific place location or season in proportions hitherto unheard of. This increasing heterogeneity led to the development and establishment of new ethnic subcultures occasioned by rapid changes in cultural norms and values and a decline in the moral standards and ways of living. As a result, people began to develop new set of values, norms, attitudes and aspirations as against the old standards that had been in existence.

In spite of all these, the society needed to survive. The aims, goals, aspirations, expectations, cultural beliefs and values of the society needed to be transmitted to the younger generation in such a way that there will be continuity even for the generations unborn. To be able to do this, governments who were concerned with the development of their individuals and nations made concrete efforts at the establishment of institutions which would ensure the development of the appropriate kinds of values and attitudes which these societies young will need as they grow and become effective members of their societies capable of contributing towards the development of their society through critical thinking and decision making skills in a manner which will be acceptable. Thus the education system was built to embody the very attributes which the society expects its individuals to possess; such that it will enable them function effectively within the society. Consequently, Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977) in Smith, Palmer and Correia (1995) retrieved 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 observed that the citizens of the United States would need, however to be educated in the values and

responsibilities necessary for national cohesion and survival. This they felt would propel individuals and by implication the society as these individuals perform their civic and civil responsibilities effectively. It is against this backdrop that Social Studies Education was developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century thus, Saxe (1991) in Smith, Palmer and Correia (1995) retrieved 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 asserts that the foundations of Social Studies originated in Great Britain during the 1820 and quickly moved to the united states as an attempt to use education as a vehicle to promote social welfare.

Similarly, Social Studies was introduced in Nigeria school system against the backdrop of the inherited colonial educational system which was alien to the cultures and ways of life of the people, with a view of developing an indigenous curriculum which reflects the values, attitudes and aspirations of Nigerians for nation building. Therefore, it was meant to address issues of failing and declining values which had become endemic. In the regard Okam (2002) noted that the philosophy endorses that instructions in Social Studies curriculum be governed not only by the principles of immediacy and utility but also channeled to a major purpose of enabling young learners acquire desirable attitudes and attributes characteristic of effective citizens who are expected to function within the frame work of a democratic society. Accordingly, this philosophy visualizes the effective citizen as possessing certain desirable qualities and characteristics including the following: looking at things with a democratic slant; believing in decency and fair play, forbearance and respect for others; keeping abreast with the customs, traditions and nationalistic ideals of his country; believing in the idea of progressive improvement of society; subscribing to an earnest desire to promote the general welfare and be pledged to raise and safeguard standards of living for all; and possessing an ardent belief in universal education (Okam, 2002). These underscores the basis for the development of sound values in individuals who are expected to exhibit the acceptable values and cultures of the society while preserving, protecting and developing these in such a way that it will ensure the survival of the society. In this way, citizens will be able to passionately ensure the accommodation of diverse interests

and other peculiarities to ensure peaceful and harmonious living which are necessary for nation building.

To be able to do this, it is important that the relevant teaching methods and strategies are applied in classroom situations. This is because, Social Studies is an integrated curriculum that is potent for laying solid foundation for the perpetuation of democratic principles and building a just society while also positively influencing youths and students alike become committed to its ideals (Okam, 2002). Consequently, the Social Studies curriculum at all levels is expected to provide young learners with insights into the use of various knowledge structures and procedures that have relevance in modern civilizations (Okam, 2002).

Furthermore, value education is a core component of Social Studies. Its teaching within the Social Studies framework is informed by the need for individual and citizens alike to develop democratic values and principles which will enable them function effectively as members of their society. This is possible because Social Studies integrates knowledge from different areas or fields and goes beyond memorization of facts to looking at how this knowledge can be made functional and useful as the individual lives in, and interacts in the society. It enables citizens to be able to manipulate and use these knowledge acquired to solve problems they encounter individually and for the benefit of the society.

The fundamental ideas for the introduction of Social Studies in the Nigeria society is the inculcation and transmission of desired values, attitudes and beliefs capable of enhancing the continuous growth and development of the Nigeria society. In this regard, Social Studies in the society focuses on creating positive impacts on the behavior of the citizen as he addresses himself to civil, social, democratic and political affairs. The objectives of Nigerian Social Studies are developed to reflect the spirit of philosophy of education by laying emphasis on the integration of the citizen into sound and effective citizens (Godabe, 2016). To be able to do this, Social Studies integrates knowledge from the social sciences and humanities to ensure that the individual/citizen develops the skills that will enable them exhibit the values that would support nation building. This is why the teaching of Social Studies does not focus only on the

cognitive domain, but also on the development of the learner's affective domain, especially his values and attitude for self reliance. This is essentially important especially in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and heterogeneous society like Nigeria where interests and ideologies are deeply divided along these default lines. Social Studies has the capacity to expose citizens to the appropriateness and adequacy of the right kinds of knowledge which they will need as citizens to ensure nation building.

As a field of study, Social Studies seeks to promote civic competence and build democratic values (NCSS, 1994). Its philosophy seeks to equip the individual to be able to live work and effectively contribute towards the development of his society. To be able to do this, Social Studies teachers need the skills to be able to effectively teach the subject especially in a culturally diversified society such as Nigeria. As a result, Social Studies has been given a place of pride within the context of the Nigerian education system. Its philosophy in Nigeria derives from the philosophy of education in Nigeria where education is seen as a tool for development of the citizens and the society. Implicitly, it is expected that the individual will develop such values through education that will enable them to acquire or develop the capacity to contribute towards the development of the society.

In spite of these laudable objectives, Social Studies seems not to be achieving this goal. In recent times, there has been an upsurge in cases of anti-social behaviors including kidnapping, armed robbery, banditry, insurgency and terrorism and a lot of agitations across the country which is inimical to nation growth. As such, why is Social Studies not achieving its objective of developing values and sound morals which is necessary for nation building? Is there a problem with the method of Social Studies teaching and learning and is the method employed appropriate to transmit the desired skills that will help individuals to develop the norms and values relevant for nation growth?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The ultimate aim of this study is to ascertain the imperatives of adequate social studies teaching methods as a panacea for nation building in Nigerian basic schools the specific objectives are to;

1. ascertain the teaching methods employed in the teaching and learning of Social Studies education.
2. determine the adequacy or appropriateness of Social Studies methods to achieve its curriculum objective of nation building

### **Guiding Questions**

The following questions have been formulated to guide the study

1. What are the teaching methods that are prevalent in the teaching of Social Studies in basic schools?
2. How adequate and effective are the relevant teaching methods for achieving of curriculum objectives in Nigerian basic schools?

### **Conceptualizing Social Studies**

There has been a lot of controversy surrounding the definition of Social Studies since its introduction over 50 years ago. So much so that Lockstone (1996) in Barr (1997) writing in the New Zealand Education Review (1996) argued that Social Studies is not a real subject, its aims are grandiose and ill-defined, the content is superficial, anyone can teach it because you don't have to know anything and that Social Studies teachers are dangerous subversives whose real aim is to manipulate the minds of young New Zealanders. In his support, Rodney Hide asserted that Social Studies is a list of politically correct topics without any knowledge base or understanding of how the real world works (Barr, 1997). This is a misconception which has continued to relegate Social Studies to the background despite its laudable objectives. Although Social Studies education differs from country to county, most are similar in terms of aims, pedagogy and structure, (Barr, 1997) in (Saxe, 2004). However, most of what it represents centers on an understanding of the world and participating in society as responsible citizens. In practice, Social Studies education content is drawn from the whole of human experiences and is purposely not

tioned to any specific content area. It differs from other studies by reason of their social content rather than their social aim (Saxe, 2004). The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) (1994) defines Social Studies as an integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. within the school program, Social Studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of Social Studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an independent world. This broad definition has two main characteristics which distinguishes it as a field of study. It is designed to promote civic competence and it is integrative, incorporating many fields of endeavor. (NCSS, 1994). Furthermore, Meziobi, Fubara and Meziobi (2008) define Social Studies education as an integrative field of study which probes man's symbiotic relationships with his environment, endows man with the reflective or contemplative capacities, intellectual, affective, social and work skills, to enable him understand his world and its problems, and to rationally solve or cope with them for effective living in the society. Alternately, the National Educational Research Council (1978) as cited in Irmiya (2007) defines Social Studies education as an integration of experiences and knowledge concerning relations for the purpose of citizenship education. All of these definitions focus on man and his predispositions, and his ability to develop into an effective citizen capable of making informed and rational decisions after critical thinking and a careful consideration of the alternative options to arrive at a decision which will be generally acceptable. They also focus on the development of the skills that will provide the individual with the knowledge or information, skills, attitudes and values which are necessary for national development (Okam, 2002).



### **Social Studies Methods**

As Ivowi (1993) in Irmiya (2007) observed, methods set the guidelines and defines the approach to be adopted in order to explain a subject matter to a group of learners. Similarly, Meziobi, Fubara & Meziobi (2008) see teaching methods as chosen, systematized and ordered correct way through which the 'art of teaching' is performed in order to accomplish the set objectives of instructions. This means that the right way in which the desired positive changes in the learner is brought about, or learning is induced to occur (Meziobi, Fubara & Meziobi, 2008). For Social Studies, it is particularly important that the methods used for teaching are designed to expose and prepare learners for active participation in the society. In other words, these methods should not only depend on facts but should be structured in such a way that it will also look at what value such fact (knowledge or information) is to the learner and the society, and of what help such an information will be to the learner. It should also consider how the learner can apply such information, under what conditions or situations to be able to solve his immediate challenges and those of others and the society leading to growth and national development. In this vein Kazi (2008) sees Social Studies as both value free and value laden. This implies that Social Studies has the tendency of making individuals and students aware of, and enables these individuals to act on information from a position of awareness while making the right decisions. Thus, it is not enough to 'know' or have information about anything, but of what value is such knowledge or information to the individual and in what ways should the individual make use of the information?

It follows therefore that a mastery of appropriate teaching methods will enable learning to take place, save time, make learning simple and easy and pleasantly implant what is learnt. It will also help to keep learners alive, focused and interested and reduce learner's disruptive behaviors while also helping the teachers say professional amongst other things (Meziobi, Fubara & Meziobi 2008). These teaching methods according to Meziobi et al (2008) include: Presentation Method which involves lecture, storytelling, illustrated talks, demonstration, use of resource persons etc.; Inquiry Method which includes social survey, opinion polls, experimentation,

field trips, case studies, interviews and the use of questionnaires; Problem-Solving Method which comprises of quizzes, puzzles, sorting out and work cards; Simulation Method which includes simulation games; Discussion Method which includes panel discussion, devil's advocate, brainstorming, debate; Dramatization Method which comprises of miming, role playing, playlets, dialogue and monologues; Creativity Method where drawing and painting apply; Construction Method which comprises of physical construction, exhibition, and Questioning method (Meziobi, Fubara & Meziobi, 2008). It is important to note here that these methods bring out the most desirable type of behavioral change and exposes students and individuals to real life experiences where problems presented can be solved and the solutions to these can be applied to everyday life experiences. In this way, learning becomes permanent and the student/ individual will be able to demonstrate this repeatedly and continuously.

### **Values for Nation Building**

Individuals are expected to play certain roles within any society. These roles determine to a large extent what becomes of societies, whether the society continues (continuity) or whether the society ceases to exist is dependent on these roles. Park (1950) in Hobbs & Blank (1986) noted that everyone is always and everywhere more or less consciously playing a role... it is in these roles that we know ourselves. As a result, life should have some pattern or meaning for those who participate in their society's culture. Consequently Industrial societies rely on formal and very specialized education in order to teach specialized skills (Hobbs & Blank, 1986). Values can be defined as the moral codes of a society (Hobbs & Blank, 1986). It is through these moral codes that individuals acquire these things that are necessary for them to be able to interact, demonstrate, replicate, protect, defend and ensure the survival of the society. Through these codes, they learn patterns of behavior, relationship, leadership, followership and all the while developing strong values of honesty, resilience, obedience, hard work, patriotism and civility. More so, values are collective conceptions of what is considered good, desirable, and proper or bad, undesirable and improper in a

culture. In an article shared by Puja Mondal on [www.yourarticlelibrary.com](http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com) retrieved 27<sup>th</sup> September 2020, Murkerjee (1949) defines values as socially approved desires and goals that are internalized through the process of conditioning, learning or socialization and that become subjective preferences, standards and aspirations. Thus a value is a shared idea about how something is ranked in terms of desirability, worth or goodness. As a result of constant practice, students/individuals learn what is worth achieving; they learn what must be done to acquire self-respect and the respect of others (Hobbs & Blank, 1986). This forms the basis for what they turn out to be, and the reason for their strong desire to contribute towards the development of their society. Through practice and consistency, they develop strong value system which will enable them to be actively involved as nation builders and carry out socially acceptable actions.

### **Issues of Nation Building**

A nation is a stable community of people formed on the basis of a common language, territory, history, ethnicity, or psychological make-up manifested in a common culture. A nation is an organized community within a certain territory; or in other words, there must be a place where its sole sovereignty is exercised. This implies that a nation has a collection of people who have decided to stay together with common purposes and who intend to work together towards the protection, preservation, promotion and continuity of such a society.

Consequently, nation building may be defined as the process through which the boundaries of the modern state and those of the national community become congruent. The desired outcome is to achieve national integration (Mylonas, 2017). Nation building is a multidimensional concept, and it involves the active participation of its citizens in various walks of life (Passi, 2018). Therefore, a strong and powerful nation is built on the dedication and hard work of its citizens and some amount of smart planning by the government. In this way, the government will be able to tap the potentials of its human resource, reduce social and economic disparity that exists

in the society and create enabling environments wherein individuals can live freely and attain their best in life.

For this to be achieved there is a need for citizens to develop values and attitudes which will enable them act accordingly. This is a primary focus of Social Studies education as a result; Okam (2002) noted that one of the major developments associated with the Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE) (1981) is the place of pride it has given to the Social Studies curriculum. The policy endorses that the teaching of Social Studies curriculum in our schools must be seen as one of those avenues of establishing strong bases for the production of effective citizens and of forging a cohesive society that will support a notion of nation-building. Thus Social Studies students are to be the major or key players as the nation seeks to or aspires to chart a course and strong basis for national development, nationhood and nation building.

### **Adequacy and Appropriateness of Social Studies Teaching Methods**

The approaches to the teaching and learning of Social Studies differ significantly based on the needs, aspirations and goals that education seeks to achieve. It is uniquely different also because Social Studies derives its contents from a variety of field including social sciences and humanities as a result its teaching and learning should reflect these peculiarities. To be able to do this, Social Studies employs a variety of teaching methods so as to unlock the skills and develop in the individual and citizens appropriate values.

These methods enable learning to take places and ensure that Social Studies objectives are achieved (Meziobi, Fubara and Meziobi, 2008). They cover all aspects of the development of the individual from the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains thereby developing citizens and individuals in sound knowledge, morals and values, and develop skills to be able to manipulate the resources available in the society for the growth and development of the society. In so doing, these individuals will ensure nation building. These methods are chosen and organized in such a way that Social Studies contents are delivered with ease, pleasantly and interactively such that new facts and concepts are transmitted from simple to complex

and with such mastery that encourage assimilation (Williams & Stewart, 2010).

### **Challenges Facing the Teaching of Social Studies in Schools**

Social Studies largely derives its contents from the social sciences humanities and physical sciences. Beyond this Social Studies Education also seeks to target particular problems which are particularly relevant to specific societies. Depending on the particular need of the society, Social Studies can be tailored to fit such need. This means that individual societies have to grapple and solve their problems according to their peculiarities. There are problems associated with the teaching of Social Studies. These cut across almost all facets of the field of study. Okam (2002) citing studies carried out by Funtua, 1980; Corbin, 1981; Agboola, 1985; Obemeata, 1983 & Okam 1988 posit that traditionalism has bogged down effective teaching of Social Studies. In this regard, the use of traditional teaching methods most of which only encourage rote learning and memorization of facts, without giving any room for creativity and a consideration of the needs of the learner negatively affect the teaching and learning of Social Studies. Consequently, these methods restrict the learner and his needs, makes content taught cumbersome and generally alienates the learner from real life experiences. In the end, such education becomes dysfunctional. This will then lead to the non-achievement of Social Studies objectives. Accordingly, Okam (2002) further posit that a consideration of teaching Social Studies from a single subject approach or a compartmentalized view of knowledge tends to negate the holistic view of knowledge and also a failure to capitalize on the need for curriculum integration for teacher education. This has seriously handicapped an employment of new instructional strategies (methods), concepts, devices and new methods, including evaluation devices.

Furthermore, Meziobi, Fubara and Meziobi (2008) see the problems associated with teaching Social Studies as many folds. As a result, Social Studies has failed to live up to its bidding though it occupies a place of pride in all levels of the Nigerian education system

and the National Policy on Education giving it a prominent place of pride as the vehicle which will launch Nigeria's growth and development. Thus, Meziobi, Fubara and Meziobi (2008) capture these factors in a broad sense to include: human factor, government factor, the teacher factor, the school factor and the community factor. These factors in one way or another play very significant roles in handicapping the achievement of Social Studies objectives.

Furthermore, Stearns (2019) observed according to a recent schools and staffing survey conducted in 2011 in American schools that, third graders in American schools spent less than 10 percent of their time learning Social Studies. By the eighth grade, students spent only 4.2 hours per week in a history or Social Studies class as compared to 6.5 hours in English or language art, 5 hours in math and 4.3 hours in science. Consequently, what changed is that Social Studies and history as a discipline became the bottom rung of the educational ladder for many schools and there for the first core academic subject to be modified or reduced to increase minutes in other subject areas or to be scrapped completely (Stearns, 2019). This is a major problem of Social Studies as can be seen in the modification and reassignment, relegation and renaming of the subject especially in Nigeria.

## **Conclusion**

Social Studies teachers need to employ a variety of teaching methods. The ability to use various techniques and methods will enable individuals develop critical thinking. In this way, they will be able to connect content to their individual interest while engaging these students in the learning process. In this way they will be able to develop skills that will equip them with the values necessary for nation building.

Furthermore, Social Studies differ from other subjects and courses of study by its nature. Because of its uniqueness, it is important to use in an integrated manner different methods of teaching the subject so as to aid in the achievement of its objectives. These teaching methods, including Presentation Method, Inquiry Method, Problem-Solving Method, Simulation Method, Discussion Method, Dramatization Method, Creativity Method, Construction

Method, and Questioning method will make the achievement of Social Studies objectives both for the individual and society.

Moreso, there is a need for professionalism among Social Studies teachers. They need to master the content through training and retraining. Professionalism would increase Social Studies educators' authority to emphasize content-relevant skills in their curriculum and to incorporate opportunities for students to experience what it means to be a professional. This would result in clear skill development among students which would transcend the problem of content variability and in the end lead to nation building.

### **Way Forward**

For Social Studies to take its rightful place in the education system in Nigeria, concerted efforts need to be made by all Social Studies professionals. In this regard, Okam (2002) opines that the problem student's encounter in visualizing the curriculum content of Social Studies as an important area of knowledge designed for social living depends very much on how they are made to perceive the subject in the classroom. Accordingly Edem (1973) in Okam (2002) stresses that if students desire for success is closely linked with their interests, targets, attitudes and aptitudes, the onus lies on the teacher to identify these important variables and to relate teaching methods, instructional materials and resources including equipment and physical working conditions in Social Studies to them. Consequently, these variables represent needs which must be met by the teacher if he is strongly concerned with the quest for effectiveness in classroom pedagogy of curriculum contents in Social Studies Education (Okam, 2002)

Moreso, Stearns (2019) posit that prioritizing Social Studies should not come from state or federal mandates nor should it. It needs to come from the grassroots by encouraging increasing professionalism among those who teach Social Studies. Professionalism would increase educators' authority to emphasize content-relevant skills in their curriculum and to incorporate opportunities for students to experience what it means to be a professional. This would result in clear skill development among students which would transcend the problem of content variability

– a problem that has contributed to its decline (Stearns, 2019). At a time when it seems the only path to a subject's legitimization is whether it is tested, professionalism would help teachers gain recognition for their content mastery while also reinforcing their ability to develop student's critical thinking skills (Stearns, 2019). Stearns (2019) further suggested that the means of professionalization for Social Studies teachers can and should vary by individuals, but there are several readily accessible pathways including content-driven professional development, advanced study and networking with professionals.

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