



## Social Studies Education as a Panacea for Building a Secured and United Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This paper, social studies as a panacea for building a secure and united Nigeria, is all about what social studies, as a course of study does to making us have and live in a secure and united country. The paper talks about approaches and methods used in Social Studies to indicate values, norms, beliefs, traditions, etc into the learners that make them useful to the society they live and to equally make the society a better place to live. These Social Studies does by using some methods and approaches in teaching the course. Some of them as mentioned in this paper are discussion method, inquiry method, role play/dramatization, problem solving technique, etc. If these are properly learnt, assimilated and demonstrated, Nigeria will be a secure and United Nigeria. Recommendations were also made as to what we need to do to make proper implementation of these methods and approaches.

**Keywords:** Education: Social Studies: Norms: Traditions: Beliefs: Values: Nigeria.

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### 1.0 Introduction of the Study

Children, pupils or students when adequately trained in the societal norms and values make for effective future development and advancement of the society. Education is an indispensable tool for training children in the societal norms and values. It is the corner stone for individual development and societal advancement. That is why Nwaubari (2008) maintained that education is universally perceived and acknowledged as an effective tool for meaningful development, in every society; be it social, economic, technological and political. Education is for the development of individuals into sound and effective citizens for social advancement. Indeed, the Nigerian philosophy of education is based on the need to “develop individuals into sound and effective citizens” (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004:7). Accomplishment of this philosophy led to the adoption of the Nigerian national educational goals among which are the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity and the inculcation of right types of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society (Mezieobi & Edinyang,

2013). The quest for actualization of the afore stated national goals of education precipitated the introduction of some new school subjects and curricular offerings in Nigerian education system among which was Social Studies Education programme.

## **2.0 The Concept of Social Studies**

Social Studies has become a veritable too not only for instruction but also for nation building. The admiration placed on it designated it for the training of Nigerian children to become good citizen capable of contributing meaningfully towards national development (Mbaba & Omabe, 2012). Social Studies however, deal on societal values and cultures. Mbaba, (2008), observed that social studies tries to promotes and sustain cultures and values in the society. However, the dealings of social studies on diverse societal environments, values and cultures led to its diversified conceptualization by scholars. Hence, Danladi (2005) noted that there have been long standing contradictions on the definitions of Social Studies as social studies vary from people to people and country to country. According to Nwanna-Nzewunwa et al. (2007), “Social Studies is a subject matter that is related to the organization and development of the human society and man as member of social group”; Social Studies by this focuses on man’s life and how he structures his society as he interacts and relates with each other in his society. Social studies in the views of Lawal (2011) is

“A discipline which attempts to modify or change the learners’ behaviors in the directions of acceptable values and attitudes through a process of studying human relationship with the desire to provide solutions for various contemporary problems in order to ensure his survival, having been equipped with necessary tools such as values, attitudes, skills and knowledge”.

This definition pre-supposes that Social studies mostly concerns itself with the provision of necessary and desirable knowledge, attitudes, values and skills that will make the learners tolerant of other people, culture, religion, etc that will further lead to nation building, a secured and unified Nigeria.

Kissock in Kazi (2007) defined Social Studies as a programme of study which a society uses to instill in the learners the requisite skills, attitudes and actions it considered important concerning the relationship human beings have with each other, the world and themselves. Similarly, Dubey in Kazi (2006) opined that Social Studies Education is a process of education which utilizes the study of human life for the purpose of solving problems of crucial importance for both individual and the society. Social Studies is discipline that is environmental and societal in nature. It is environmental in nature as it deals with people’s immediate and far environments making them to be aware of what happen within their environments as well as those things that happens in the environment beyond them.

Social Studies is societal focused as it seeks to achieve the goals defined by different societies (in their peculiar ways) Okonkwo (2012). Every society however, seeks for solutions to their societal problems and needs through Social Studies in schools. Learners in different societies are imparted with the knowledge, attitudes, values and skills for solving their societal problems. Agreeably, Nwagu (2004) & Ayinde (2006) perceived Social Studies as a study of problems of survival in all environments and how to find solutions to them. In the same vein, Ezegbe et al.

(2012) maintained that Social Studies helps individuals to understand their environments; find out the problems of their environments as well as solve existing societal problems. No wonder Nwoji (2006) acknowledged Social Studies as a living subject. Social Studies continually is an integrative course of study as most of its contents and ideas were drawn from social sciences, Arts and Humanities. It borrows most of its contents, methodologies and theories from other social sciences, Arts and Humanities such as Economics, History, Psychology, Geography, Religion etc. Numerous conceptions of social studies by some scholars proved this beyond reasonable doubt. Hence, National Council for Social Studies as;

The integrated study of social science and humanities to promote civic competence; within the school programme, Social Studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as Anthropology, Economics, Geography, History, Law, Philosophy, Political science,, Psychology, Religion and Sociology as well as appropriate content from Humanities, Mathematics and Natural sciences.

Social Studies is a holistic study which focuses on the complete study of man, his interaction and activities in his physical, social, cultural and technological environment (Akenlaye, 2003). Man is a complete being who needs complete knowledge of his entire life to enable him tackle all his problems in his society. As man is the central focus of Social Studies, Social Studies tries to study man in a de-compartmentalized way in order to fully impart into him, all the requisite knowledge and skills that he needs for his survival in his society. That is why Social Studies draws all its ideas and contents from social science, Arts and Humanities that study man in discrete units and blend there separate ideas as to give man complete knowledge and skills geomane for his survival and living in his environment. Against this background, Mezieobi (2010) maintained that one of the major emphases of Social Studies Education is to make the leaner develop an integrated view of reality that would enable him make well-thought out and national suggestion geared towards national development after viewing the world as an integral or in a holistic frame and not as a separate fragments. Well-articulated proposals for national development cannot result from the perception of knowledge or the society on compartmentalized frame but rather as an integral whole.

Social Studies is an important field of study that is highly cherished not only in Nigerian educational system but in other countries. It's much emphasis on inculcation of desirable values, skills and knowledge for societal advancement makes it a core subject of study in various countries' educational system particularly in Nigeria. National Council for Social Studies (2011) noted that Social Education was introduced in America with the aim of promoting civic competence. Its introduction in Britain was to serve as agent of social change. In Nigeria, social studies was introduced to heep generate and develop intelligent responsible and self-directing citizens who are expected to positively explore opportunities to develop their own potentialities and to contribute their maximum efforts to the improvement of group living within the societal framework of the nation (Okam, 2007). Similarly, Constance (2011) noted that Social Studies was introduced in Nigerian schools to enable students to explore how people relate with each other and also what the consequences of these relationship will be. Jekayinta (2001) & Jekayinta (2007) by this noted that the overriding goal of Social Studies syllabus appears to be the

provision of knowledge to produce informed citizens who would translate knowledge and attitudes into desirable socio-civic behaviour.

## **2.1 Nation Building**

Early conceptions of Nation defined it as a group or race of people who shared history, traditions and culture, sometimes religion, and usually language (Wikipedia, 2018). A nation is described as a large group of people who live in a country and share similar tradition and culture. It is the collection of people within specific political entity. So Nation building is contributing or structuring a national identity using the power of the state. Nation-building aims at the unitization of the people within the state so that it remains politically, stable and viable in the long run. Nation-building includes the creation of national paraphernalia such as flags, anthems, national days, national stadiums, national airlines, national languages and national myths. At a deeper level, national identity needed to be deliberately constructed by molding different ethnic groups into a nation, especially since in many newly established states where colonial practices of divide and rule had resulted in ethnical heterogeneous population (Wikipedia, 2018). Nation-building can be seen as a political aim economic concept, synonymous with citizenship. Nation-building is two dimensional in nature; first, it is concerned with loyalty to the constituted authority and respect for national constitution, while the second segment of nation building bothers on general acceptability of all ethnic group in a state as vital elements of the country that must live together and work together for the achievement of common goal of mankind. Nation-building connotes cultivation of culture of tolerance in all facets of life and mutual understanding among the diverse cultural groups within the nation. This is therefore fundamental to national unity and productivity (Tijjani & Yaro, 2018). Accordingly, Abiodun (2011) as cited in Tijjani & Yaro (2018) lamented that an average Nigerian does not have the instinct sense of social cohesion that prevails in developed nations such as England, France and Germany. In the light of this exposition, Nation-building is focused on the principles of patriotism and effective citizenship. This is why all efforts have to be made to develop the Nigerian citizens with effective citizenship orientation beginning from all educational institutions. With this, we can have a secured and united Nigeria where peace reigns.

## **2.2 Effective Lesson Delivery in Social Studies that Guarantees Secured and United Nigeria**

Teaching can be seen as active communication of specific information or ideas between a teacher and the learners in an organized environment. It is a dissemination of knowledge, skills and competencies contained in the educational document (curriculum) from a professional teacher to the learners in a formal environmental setting (classroom) (Tijjani & Tinja, 2018). According to Mu'azu (2015) teaching is an active and constructive process in which the teacher assumes the role of a strategic planner and making decision about the contents and the appropriate instructional strategies. From above, it is deduced that effective teaching in Social Studies in concerned and hanged on careful selection of curriculum contents, appropriate application of instructional method, adequate teaching resources and evaluative procedure which must take cognizance of capabilities and weaknesses of the individual learners. Hence, the main purpose of teaching Social Studies is modification of mal-adjusted behavior in the learners with the purpose of them becoming good citizen and by developing in them needed competency, self-dependency and social responsibilities as framework for nation-building, secured and united Nigeria. Effective lesson delivery in Social Studies demands adequate preparation of social studies

contents and topics in specific and behavioral term in order to prepare citizens or pupils for building a secured and united Nigeria. In achieving this, social studies utilize various approaches and methods in classroom dissemination of knowledge, such as;

**2.2.1 Discussion Method:** this is one of the effective approaches of teaching Social Studies Education; it is a method that constitutes the hart of teaching process in Social Studies Education in Nigerian schools. This according to Ogunbuyi (2002) is characterized by reflective thinking, inductive, deductive reasoning, discovery and guide to effective learning. Discussion can be used in the classroom dispensation to sensitize the learners on the problems associated with lack of peace and security and the need to shun actions capable of creating pandemonium in the society. This can be done through grouping the students for discussion on the meaning of nation-building and factors that constitute threat to nation building, peace and security, importance of peace and security and the behaviors that constitute threat to national transformation. In this context, teacher becomes passive and a guide while learners take active role in learning discovery.

**2.2.2 Inquiry Methods:** This simply connotes an investigation into a problem or events. It is a problem solving and students-centered approach in Social Studies. It is a source of gathering information with a view to solving a problem. Inquiring method is instructional strategy that is packaged in such a way that gives freedom to the students to showcase their thinking capacity (Tijjani & Yero, 2016). In the scope of this study, assignment can be given to students to investigate historical events such as causes and effects of the Nigerian civil-war. This will provide a platform for teachers to make appropriate behavior modification in a bid to prepare students so that they can be part of nation-building and to ensure a secured and united Nigeria.

**2.2.3 Role-play and Dramatization:** As the name implies, deals with a acting a play. It refers to a process whereby learners are given opportunity to express themselves in a creative or artistic manner. It involves drumming, singing, dancing, running and other related activities that can bring excitement to people. It involves actors, actresses and spectators. According to Okam (2002), dramatization method represents a most effective technique for stimulating and building up the interest of pupils in terms of their learning activities. In this technique, pupils are immediately involved, their attention heed by the situation or event played out in the classroom requires adequate preparation of the desired objectives are to be realized. Social Studies teachers can initiate a play on national peace, security and nation building for role play/dramatization by the students followed by the class discussion of both positive and negative implications of the play to the students with a view to enable them see the need for nation building and to have a secured and united Nigeria.

**2.2.4 Problem Solving Methods:** Problem solving methods are designed to help learners focus and identify problems in the environment with a view to finding solutions to them. The methods encourage the learners to get involved in the inquiry process and develop the spirit of research in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of problems.

### **3.0 Conclusion of the Study**

In conclusion, and from the above discussion, Social Studies Education is a school programme that represents a broad field of knowledge that equips the learners with adequate knowledge,



skills, competencies and worth-while values with the aim of making them responsible citizens, responsible and informed leaders as well as nation-builders. Therefore, Social Studies teachers are expected to provide children with insight into the use of various knowledge and worth-while information capable of fostering unity in diversity. Finally, if Social Studies Education curriculum and programmes are properly implemented as seen above then we will have a secured and united Nigeria and Nigeria as whole will be a better place to live. In view of the above discussion, the following recommendations are made; Government should employ qualified Social Studies teachers to manage the Nigerian institutions of learning. This will not only enhance instructional quality in the subject but facilitate the inculcation of the desirable. Teaching and learning demand conducive atmosphere. Therefore, government at all levels of governance should provide adequate funds to education so that it can be used as instrument of positive change in Nigeria. Let there be an enlightenment campaign by the agencies concerned the need for tolerance irrespective of our religions and ethnic background so that we can make Nigeria a secured place to live. Social Studies teachers should not limit themselves to a few methods, rather they should explore the potentials of many methods of instruction in the subject area for the benefits of improving the academic standard and inculcate desirable virtues and harmonious relationship into students. Our political system should be overhauled completely to avoid thurgery, killing, etc. if we want to really build Nigeria and to have a secured ways of life. Moreover, our leaders should imbibe the spirit of leadership and not ruler-ship if we want a secured and united Nigeria.

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