

**Teaching to Achieve Social Studies values: A case of re-education of
teachers**

By

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Abstract

Social Studies as a discipline involves experiences which deal with the problems of human relationship in the school and the larger community. It also includes human relationships with other culture. These experiences and their rightful application form the values which control the social relations of each individual. It is believed that the school should teach the children to learn their roles as leaders, parents, group members, members in the family, in the community and so on. The teacher should also adapt the lesson to the environment of the children. The children should be informed about the society in which they live. Considering National Policy on Education FGN (2004), the 2nd national educational aims and objectives of Nigeria stated inter alia "the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigeria society". This paper therefore explores some issues that are associated with teaching values in Social Studies Education. The most significant of these are: what values should be taught? How are values learned? How should values be taught? What is the best approach? What should the role of the teacher and the school be in the process. To this end, answers will be given in order to understand how the discipline in discussion unlocks the doors of values systems in Nigeria setting.

INTRODUCTION

The field of Social Studies has come to stay in our primary and secondary schools in Nigeria. The importance attach to its studies cannot be exaggerated. It is believed to be the correct drug that could be used to heal the ailment of moral decadence and instil in the youth a sense of decent behaviour. To this end, the objectives of Social Studies specifically are to make the children according to Obidoa (1991) to:

1. develop an understanding of their immediate surroundings;
2. develop certain skills which will enable the children to deal with and manage the forces of the world in which they live; and
3. learn how to live harmoniously in a society where many different groups co-exist. (p. 198).

Along the line, Social Studies could be seen as a programme of study in our schools which is used to inculcate in the learners the knowledge, skills, attitude and actions considered important in human relationship in the society. CESAC (1993) defined Social Studies as a subject concerned with the way man lives in and interacts with his Social and Physical environments and how science and technology help him to live well in those environments. Adaralegbe (1978) opined that Social Studies is basically the study of Social Science as separate discipline with a view to familiarizing students with the basic concepts of the discipline and with the methods of inquiry and modes of thought of the scholars in those disciplines. It is against this background that made Adaralegbe (1978) CESAC (1993) Obidoa (1991) to explain the following as some of the reasons why we study Social Studies in Nigeria.

1. Social Studies is meant to teach and train Nigerians to be good citizens and nation builders
2. It enables Nigerians to know and use the resources of their physical environment very well
3. It helps young people and adults to understand the modern world.
4. Social Studies trains people to be effective leaders and good followers.
5. Through Social Studies, we learn about our inheritance and our past and present experiences and how to use these to solve our present problems
6. It makes people understand their own culture and the cultures of other Nigerians. Thus Nigerians can appreciate their differences and the need to live together as one society.
7. Social Studies helps us develop a good sense of moral and social responsibility.
8. Through social studies we develop a curiosity about our environment.
9. The subject makes people realize the need for honesty, hardwork and cooperation with others in society.
10. Social studies is one of the subjects by which the Nigerian national objectives in education can be achieved.
11. It helps people to acquire different kinds of skills, for example, reading, listening, observation and analysis.
12. It provides a good means of achieving the pledge to Nigeria as one country: to be faithful, loyal and honest, to serve the nation and to defend and uphold its unity, honour and glory.

13. Through Social Studies students learn to work with people and not for people at all levels, be it a local community, local Government council, state government or the Federal Government.

The general belief of curriculum planners for Social Studies is to provide a forum whereby children would be taught how to imbibe the values in Nigerian society. The provisions and objectives set for the accomplishment of social goals are worthwhile enough to achieve the set goals. The objectives are laudable enough to bring about a worthwhile end. The values emphasized in the current curriculum of social studies are those ones which are important to get across the school children. With the values and attitudes for survival, aimed at in this national guide, it is hopeful that students at the end of the courses should be able to develop the right type of attitude and learn more about their society and others of the right type of value that needs to be imbibed.

Problems of underachievement of Social Studies values

The question of underachievement of the goals of inculcating the right type of values and behaviours by the school graduates and students needs to be addressed. To this end, pertinent questions that need to be asked are:

What values should be taught?

How should values be taught?

What is the best approach to teach values?

To a greater extent, Social Studies has the problems of achieving goals of teaching morals, or right type of values and behaviours in Nigeria. This is because, evidences, have shown that social vices rock the Nigerian society. There are vices

such as examination malpractices, certificate racketeering, smuggling, ritual killings, looting, arson, problem of political upheavals, alcoholism, rape, diseases and fall in the standard of education and living standard. There are problems of intra and inter ethnic groups conflicts; election rigging, problem of population counts, academic disturbances due to incessant strikes, fuel shortage, social insecurity fraud in work places and act of indiscipline among people in general and specifically among the law enforcement agents. These and more are clear evidences to show that the aims and objectives of Social Studies are not achieved. The values and behaviours taught to students are not imbibed or made use of.

Efforts towards Reducing Ills in Nigeria

According to Mainasara (1982), the ostensible reasons usually given for staging military coups d'etat are to eradicate bribery and corruption; put an end to tribalism, regionalism or sectionalism; free the masses from misery, poverty and squalor; end drift in the country and provide purposeful leadership; enhance image of the country in the eyes of the international community etc, while more problems (juvenile delinquency, women marginalization, political bigotry economic dependency and poor health condition) rock the Nigerian society. It therefore becomes of paramount importance to bring about the type of curricula and teaching that would reflect the areas that need to be addressed. The areas are the values that need to be emphasised and the problems to solve in our society constitute the value.

With the numerous problems in this society, efforts should be geared towards solving the problems. One of the viable means of reducing this society's problem via academics is the reconstruction of the school curricula. Poverty-the source of all menace needs to be reduced to the minimal level. A way of reducing poverty-using

education is the application of the proactive Empowerment Model developed by Ehindero and Adesina (2007). The model seeks to eliminate poverty at its root rather than simply reacting to the manifestation and products of poverty. According to the model, there is need for the fundamental rethinking of the three major dimensions of empowerment – Social, Economic and Political. These three dimensions are predicated on a qualitative empowerment basic education programme, which emphasises the role of education in promoting economic sustainability. The model is predicated on eliminating the fundamental cause of poverty-ignorance and illiteracy by radically restructuring existing curriculum of the school within a neo-liberal humanistic restorative and sustainable philosophy. This model emphasizes the continuation of poverty reduction programmes of the government and non-governmental organizations. Education programmes need to be restructured to emphasis pragmatism as against the conventional theoretical acquisition of knowledge. Economic empowerment programmes must be encouraged, adequately funded by the government (especially) and non-governmental agencies and gives space in the school curriculum. The effect is to reduce dependency of young graduates on government jobs. Self employment and sustainability is the watch word. The model emphasises political, citizenship and Moral Education as moral decadence increases at all levels of our society. It could be added here that the model caters for the necessary values which are needed to bring about peace and development to the Nigerian society.

Social Studies tends to incorporate the teachings of moral in Nigeria. The main question is, why is moral decadence the major problems in our society despite

the long years of teaching this subject. This paper therefore explores some issues that are associated with teaching values in Social Studies.

Values identified for teaching

The values identified in this paper include the teaching of tenets that could bring about unity in diversity; issues of poverty and means of eradicating it, peace and social security. These essentially call for the embracement of Economic Programmes such as learning trades, commercial activities and professions that could give room for creativity. By these efforts, Social menace would reduce, enough job would be created and poverty would be reduced to the minimal level. It would reduce social ills.

Problem Associated with Teaching Values

How then are these values learned? They are learnt in the centers especially school allocated for the different levels of education. The teaching can be done using academic officers or artisans with good knowledge of the subject matter. Values could as well be imparted into learners by decent families who uphold the ideals of good citizenship, religious homes, other secular institutions and associations of subjects, age and professional groups in the society could as well teach the ideals in respectful societies. Social studies has these tenets incorporated in its syllabus. The issue of approach towards teaching these values need to be re-examined. Evidences have shown that many problems face the teaching of social studies in our schools. The problems therefore cripple this subject from achieving the set goals. The implication is that an effort to correct social menace and bring about peaceful co-existence of persons as a result of poor teaching becomes futile.

Adesina (2003) explained that students have been found to perform poorly in Social Studies over the years using the yearly results of students of Social Studies to support his assertion. There have been complaints on this poor performance both from Social Studies teachers, the Social Studies Associations of Nigeria. And the National Teachers Institute. Adesina (2003) explained that from his personal interaction with many students, it is the general feeling that most students feel inadequate in this subject area and often complain that it is complex and difficult to understand. This feeling seems to have justification in poor academic performance of these students as evidenced by the increased in failure rate recorded in annual promotion examinations. The situation calls for concern because the implication is that the students cannot retain relevant knowledge in the subject area necessary for successful academic performance and participation as members of the society.

Other problems that face the teaching of Social Studies in schools include the problem of getting current textbooks and teaching resources, inability of students to have financial backing to provide for themselves for the materials needed for effective learning, the problem of getting qualified teachers to teach Social Studies and the inability of practicing teachers to refresh their memories using seminars, conferences, symposia, Workshop and other relevant academic gatherings.

It is against this background that the National Teachers' Institute in Nigeria under a Millennium Development Goals Project (MDG) organised a re-training programme for Primary School Teachers throughout the Federation in April 2006. According to NTI (2006), the programme (Social Studies) is expected to make good citizens and patriots out of the youths of Nigeria. Incidentally, the programmes of Social Studies in schools have been implemented for many years now without

success in terms of inculcating the values of good citizenship among the youths. The youths are rich in knowledge of Social Studies concepts and facts but deficient in expected social values, attitudes and behaviours that commensurate the subject taught and learnt in the classrooms.

NTI (2006) went further to explain that the teaching of Social Studies has relied on conventional methods of teaching such as, the lecturer method, dictation and note taking, which are not interactive. These methods are inadequate to facilitate optimal learning in pupils and modify their behaviour positively.

The teacher has been blamed for this seemingly poor outing of Social Studies as a school subject. The teacher is accused of using inappropriate pedagogical approaches like lecturing, dictation and note copying for a programme that requires interactive techniques in a conducive social environment for the development and sustenance of desirable social skills, attitudes and values. Furthermore, the teacher concentrates on only available instructional materials provided by the school, tests and written assignments for deriving achievement measures for evaluation (NTI 2006: p. iii).

The institute therefore developed a manual for the retraining of primary school teachers to teach Social Studies using innovative techniques to improve the quality of learning. The techniques itemized and used for the retraining are: inquiry, guided discovery concept mapping, games, story telling, discussion, resource persons, role play and debate. One of the techniques of teaching that facilitates learning in Social Studies is the Advance Organizers Learning Strategy (Adesina 2003); Adesina & Ogbondah (2005) and Odejebi & Adesina (2005), Adeyemi (2005).

CONCLUSION

While it is evident that most teachers of Social Studies are not specialists in the field, the training and re-training of teachers is of vital importance. The training and re-training exercise should be mounted for Secondary School and Teacher Training College teachers of Social Studies. The implication of this is that, the professionals and non-professional teachers of Social Studies would be acquainted with new teaching methods and instructional materials that would undoubtedly aid learning.

The re-structuring of the general curriculum in secondary schools would bring about economic empowerment, the benefit which would allow school learners to be trained in one job or the other of their interest which could be later developed by school learners and rely less on salary jobs. It would bring about economic sustainability of individual school learners. The later effect is the reduction in social ills which may arise as a result of lack of job opportunities and poverty.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are therefore recommended as a result of this study.

- A re-training programme for secondary school teachers of Social Studies should be organized.
- Techniques of teaching such as those recommended by NTI (2006) should be taught to the practising teachers and teachers in training
- Learning resources should be provided in our schools and the use of computer would help in this area.
- Teachers should be trained how to use computer to facilitate learning in their schools

- The curriculum of secondary schools should be re-structured to include economic empowerment programmes for sustainability and full employment in the society.

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