SOCIAL STUDIES IN THE PAST, TODAY, TOMORROW AND CURRICULUM REVIEW

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Abstract
The study examined Social Studies from its background and development based on different perspectives of authors; how the subject evolved and was designed to incorporate other Social Science subjects like Political Science, Economics, History, Geography and all others. The study also examined the scope and objectives of teaching the subject as well as its uniqueness which has made it to be useful for realization of the national objectives of education through the implementation the National Policy of Education. It also examined the challenges confronting the subject with much emphasis on its curriculum that has suffered lack of review for many decades. The study suggested the way forward which includes periodic review of the curriculum, recruitment of qualified teacher and motivation among others. It was concluded that government should make education a priority so that the identified problems could be solved and teachers would be encouraged to put in their best to ensure achievement of the objectives of Social Studies through which national philosophy of education could be realized.

Keywords: Social Studies, Objectives, Curriculum, Problems, Curriculum review

Introduction

The National Council for the Social Studies (2015) defines Social Studies as the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Social Studies educates students on citizenship, providing them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help them to become competent and responsible citizens who are informed, thoughtful and participate in their community and exhibit moral and civic virtues. For example, students learn about voting as a form of political participation, and how they can exercise their right to vote in elections to choose leaders that they want.

Social Studies education is a subject that is taught right from basic level up to the tertiary institutions to help students understand their place in ·the world. Social Studies teaches citizens to know their roles and responsibilities particularly in relation to social and civic affairs. It helps students develop critical thinking abilities, prepares them to participate competently and productively as concerned citizens and also teaches them to address societal and global issues. Smith (2014) noted that Social Studies promotes religious tolerance; religious tolerance on the other hand is needed to develop national integration as it implies teaching one another in situation of peace or under provocation.

Social Studies education teaches students about history and enables them to understand how society has evolved. It places a strong emphasis on important and enduring ideas and events that affect peoples' lives. The subject not only offers students a strong knowledge content base, but it also helps them develop an ability to think critically about societal issues and learn how to address them based on acquired knowledge. It has been observed that Social Studies involve a number of subjects including History, Geography and Economics. Students learn how to integrate ideas from different disciplines to come up with reasoned decisions, and to make the connections between related concepts and ideas so that they are better able to identify problems affecting society. For example, investigating poverty in society requires knowledge in history, economics and politics. Students have to make the connection between ideas such as discrimination, resource allocation and political priorities to make sense of how poverty affects certain populations in the country.

Kalu, (2011) noted that the operational norm

of democracy in Nigeria is less about political competition, but is more about public accountability and active citizenship, and the ability to adhere to democratic development of the nation. Also, it is discovered that the inability of the political leaders to create an environment of shared ownership in the practice of governance and in the generation of ideas needed to govern as well as inability of the state to meet the challenge of rising expectations within the society. The increase in the gap between the rich and poor must be addressed and the Millennium Development Goals attained for government to be functional must be actualised. All these are actualized through the teaching of Social Studies.

Development of Social Studies in Nigeria

Social Studies as a subject in schools started in America and Britain in the 1920s. According to Saxe (2004) and Gibson (2010), the scope of the subject was narrowed down to history and geography. At the early stage of the subject, the curriculum was very narrow and teaching materials in terms of books, teaching aids and teachers were in short supply (Zhao, Huge, Choi and Lee 2005). However, towards the end of the fifties and early sixties, the subject became more popular. Zhao et al (2005) explained the rise of the fortune of the subject in developed countries thus, "the rise of research on education in 1950s and 1960s caused teachers to focus instruction more on delivery for the understanding of key concepts, simply delivering lessons that were designed to the impact mound of factual knowledge. In addition, the growth of professional organizations at both the state and national levels also began to play a role in establishing curriculum and teacher preparation standards.

In the early 1960s, an increasing number of teachers and educationists have firmly decided that the inclusion of some elements of the Social Studies would enable teachers to avoid the pitfalls of earlier Social Studies courses. The pitfalls, according to some scholars, included the very narrow scope of the subject, inadequate curriculum and lack of teaching aids and qualified teachers. The reference to the developed world, America and Britain is informed by the fact that the introduction of Social Studies to the shores of Nigeria coincided with the expansion or the scope of the subject in America. The development of Social Studies in Nigeria, like in many other countries that included Canada (Gibson 2010), China and many Africa countries was influenced by the development and popularity of the subject in America (Sofadekan 2012).

The development of the subject in Nigeria falls into phases (Adewuya 1992, Mezieobi, Raggie-Fubara and Mezeiobi 2008). The first phase was before 1963 and the other phase after 1963. Adewuya (2002) reported that prior 1963, an attempt was made in 1957 by Ohio University, USA to introduce Social Studies through a short in-service training scheme in Ibadan for teachers of Secondary Modern School and Teachers' Colleges. Sofadekan (2012) corroborated this when he made reference to the efforts of educators from Ohio University which sought to introduce the teaching of Social Studies into the Teachers' college in the former Western Region of Nigeria. He (Sofadekan) stated further that their efforts of 1958 served as a catalyst for the introduction of Social Studies into the school curriculum immediately after independence. The introduction of the subject in 1958 did not, however, yield fruits because it was considered an intrusion into the teaching and learning of History and Geography. It was not in the curriculum and teachers "had no schools to disseminate the rubrics of the subjects" (Adewuya 2002).

The second phase of the subject actually started in 1963. According to Makinde and Sofadekan (2012) the fortunes of Social Studies changed for the better in terms of curriculum development, training of teachers, government attention and methods of teaching in 1963. It was in this year that the subject was introduced again in Aiyetoro-Egbado Comprehensive High School, a Western State Government owned school. Immediately after independence, there were spirited efforts to change the education system after independence so that the curricula would be tailored towards national developmental goals (Opoh, Ldinyang and Ogbaji 2014). To reflect a new national orientation and self-discovery in the field of Social Studies, more integrated Social Studies

that included the study of History, Geography, Civics, Political Science, Economics, Sociology, Anthropology and Religion was developed. Thus between 1963 and 1968, experts from Nigeria, Britain and America were saddled with the development of curricula in subjects that included Social Studies; the type of curricula that would reflect the aspiration, goals and the environment of Nigeria. The Western Ministry of Education in Ibadan came up with the aim and objectives that reflect the new spirit of the subject and highlighted the aim thus, "making Nigerian students understand their environment and their relationship with the physical, economic, social and cultural environment, and to understand the same of other human beings, to develop, encourage and strengthen enquiring minds in pupils and students that can help to rediscover what has been neglected or forgotten."

It should be mentioned that the popularity of the subject was also enhanced by the Mombasa Conference of 1968, which led to the establishment of African Social Studies Programme (ASSP) in 1969. According to Sofadekan (2012), major aim of the association was to introduce an integrated Social Studies curriculum in Africa. Nigeria being a member of the association has continued to work towards the development of a well-integrated Social Studies curriculum that would promote the aim and objectives of the subject in schools.

The discussion of the development of Social Studies in Nigeria would not be complete without the mention of the activities of Ford Foundation of America and Nigeria Educational Research Council (NERC). Several workshops and conferences were sponsored by Ford Foundation to fashion out a comprehensive and an acceptable curriculum (acceptable in the light of the national agenda after independence) and the dissemination of the curriculum. Although the introduction of the subject in schools started in Western Nigeria, the efforts of USAID, NERC and other regional bodies in the nation helped in seeing that Social Studies become acceptable nationwide.

In Nigeria today, Socials Studies is well entrenched in the education system of the nation. The efforts of the Social Studies Association of Nigeria in the transformation of the curriculum and propagation of the values of the subject cannot be overestimated. Launched in 1971, the association has worked assiduously on the curriculum to reflect the goal and objectives of the subject. A major effort of the SOSAN in the 1970s included selling the subject to teachers in the classroom and government functionaries in the Ministries of Education and having the concept of integration clearly defined an appropriate curriculum produced" (www.sosan.org.ng). Through the efforts of the SOSAN, there are today textbooks and Journals (Journal of Social Studies Association of Nigeria) on Social Studies, improvement in the training and re-training of teachers of Social Studies, collaborating with government on the development of the subject, and organising conferences and workshops to promote the teaching and learning of Social Studies.

Objectives of Teaching and Learning of Social Studies Education

The proper articulation of the aim and objectives of Social Studies has continued to enhance the popularity of the subject. According to Makinde (2012), the Nigeria Social Studies programme was meant to realize the following objectives.

i. to improve and broaden the basis of Nigerian educational system which has been criticized from time to time as narrow and unimaginative;
ii. to help Nigeria teachers, pupils and students to discover what is good and unique in the physical, social, economic and cultural traditions which hitherto have been implied or neglected.
iii. to develop, encourage and strengthen enquiring minds in pupils and students.

In Lawal and Oyeleye (2003), the main goal of a Social Studies Programme should be to help students develop the ability to make decisions so that they can resolve personal problems and contribute to policy making processes. They went on further to argue that Social Studies is expected to help students to find ways of acquiring skills and values needed for dealing with and shaping the future, through the process of developing a positive perspective that will allow construction, planning, creativity and

innovation. Specifically, the goals would normally include:

i. Developing well informed and responsible citizen;
ii. Developing children who would possess the ability to deal with questions of 'what ought to be and what can I do about it?'
iii. Building attitudes and values that are consistent with society's desires;
iv. Developing in learners skills such as those involved in reporting, acquiring and classifying data (reflective thinking/ inquiring skills);
v. Developing the appreciation and understanding of learners cultural heritage and its role in contemporary society;
vi. Acquisition of academic knowledge and skills related to the study of the human actions, and their consequences as they live individually as well as in groups and societies, in a variety of places and timelines;
vii. Using the Social Sciences, humanities and sciences to describe social phenomena.

The objectives of Social Studies as highlighted above presuppose that it is a unique discipline that is meant to develop effective citizenship in learners. Social studies is in a significant position to ensure the attainment of the objectives of the national policy on education. In support of this, Yusuf (2017) submitted that a critical understanding of the objectives shows that Social Studies can be a vehicle to achieve the under listed philosophy of the nation in the following ways:

a. Free and democratic society: It would help to ensure the acquisition of that relevant body of knowledge and information with essential prerequisite to produce individuals with relevant knowledge, well-informed in societal matters equipped with positive initiatives who can have a say in the society and contribute to the advancement of the society in which they live.
b. A just and egalitarian society: It is an objective of social studies to develop in the students positive attitudes of togetherness, comradeship and co-operation towards a healthy nation, the inculcation of appropriate values of honesty, integrity, hard work, fairness and justice (at work and play) and to inculcate certain indispensable virtues, which help the individual have the right attitude to life.
c. A united, strong and self-reliant nation: Social studies intends to develop a capacity to learn and to acquire certain skills, inculcating not only those of listening, speaking, reading, writing and of calculation but also those skills of hand together with those of observation, analysis and inference which are essential to the forming of sound socio- economic and political judgment that would fit them into the world of employment through which they can make meaningful contribution to development of themselves and the society.
d. A great and dynamic economy: Social studies helps to create awareness and an understanding of our evolving social and physical environment as a whole in its natural man made, cultural and spiritual resources together with the rational use and conservation of these resources for national development.

Problems of Teaching and Learning Social Studies

Different scholars have identified problems militating against the effective teaching and learning of Social Studies in both primary and secondary schools. Even when efforts are made to remedy them, they persist in one form or the other. Some of the problems are discussed in detail below:

Curriculum Review

Curriculum is essential to effective teaching and learning in any discipline because it captures the basic essentials in the teaching and learning of a subject. Tyler (1949) defined curriculum as all of the learning of students which is planned by and directed by the school to attain its educational goals. This definition implies that a curriculum spells out the subject matter and other activities required to be properly executed for teaching and learning to be effective. Abubakar (2014) opined that curriculum combines objectives, subject matter, learning activities and evaluation technique as components that together serve as contributors

of educational value. It serves as a guide for school to instill in the learners the desired knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits accepted by the society. Curriculum gives the direction of learning in the sense that it spells out the subject matter, the needed activities on imparting the subject matter and the techniques for carrying out the activities. In as much as a curriculum is projected towards maximizing the gain of education in a society, it must be designed and structured towards giving the best form of education that will transform the individual to a full-fledged citizen built towards the transformation of the society. In this sense, therefore, a curriculum must reflect the educational principles and objectives of the nation. The National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) states that educational goals shall be clearly set out in terms of their relevance to the need of the individual and those of the society, in accordance with the realities of our environment and the world. The policy further enumerated some of the objectives of education in Nigeria to include the following;

i. Education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plans because education is the most important instrument of change.
ii. Education and training facilities shall continue to be expanded the response to societal needs and made progressively accessible to afford the individual a far more diversified and flexible choice.
iii. Educational activities shall be centered on the learner for maximum self-developments and self-fulfillment.
iv. Efforts shall be made to relate education to overall community needs.
v. Modern educational techniques shall be increasingly used and improved upon at all level of educational system.

Right from its inception, experts have continued to work and rework the curriculum of Social Studies for it to meet the national objectives of education. Mezieobi, Reggie-Fubara and Muzieobi (2008) contended that the curriculum of Social Studies as a school subject could be traced to 1842; this is because the education curriculum, as at the time, had elements of what is today referred to as Social Studies (Sofadekan, 2012). In the real sense of it, however, it was in 1971 that a curriculum for Social Studies emerged through the national curriculum workshop organized by the National Education Research Council (NERC).

Further efforts were made between 1972 and 1973 to fashion out a curriculum that meets the spirit of education programme in the nation (Ogundare, 2006, and Ezoba, 2012). Adewuya (2002) corroborated this when he said that "curriculum development in Social Studies received a further boost through two pronged approaches; one was when the Comparative Education Study and Adaptation Centre (CESAC) took off at the university of Lagos, the other was the development of National Education Research Council (NERC) or the secondary school Socials Studies syllabus covering classes I-IV as a means of complementing the books I & II of Aiyetoro project and the junior secondary schools embarked upon by CESAC."

There has been a continued revision of the syllabus. In fact Rakum (2014) reported that the Social Studies curriculum have been revised four times since 1971. This becomes imperative because as Adeyemi (2010) rightly noted, a curriculum cannot be static, a very good curriculum targeted at improved social and economic development of the nation must be subjected to a periodic review as emerging issues must form part or the curriculum. There has been that effort to produce a good Socials Studies curriculum which Adesina (2013) described as "one which helps young individuals to fully develop into human adults by relating them to their society by means of appropriate knowledge and experience selected from the social science (political science, geography, sociology, economics, and anthropology) and other disciplines such as history and religious studies." He went further to say that Social Studies curriculum should aim at bringing about "disciplined adults who would be able to maintain the principles of patriotism, moral uprightness, faithfulness, effectiveness and efficiency in all endeavours that may lead to national development"

While scholars agree that the Social Studies curriculum is integrative and reflects the aspiration of the nation in respect of educational

development as reflected in Adewuya (2002), Sofadekan (2012), Opoh, Edinyang and Ogbaji (2014) declared that there is a general consensus that the curriculum is inadequate and defective. This is largely because it has not been able to solve the social, economic and political problems of the nation Adesina (2012), Mezieobi, Fubara-Meziobi, Edinyang and Unimike (2013). Adesina (2013) made this remark, "there are Social Studies themes such as social value, world issue», peace and conflict which allow the teaching of the tenets required for the achievement of the goal (of the subject). It is however observed that the content of Social Studies is not adequate to achieve the goals of total integration. The curriculum content of the junior secondary school Social Studies was observed as been appropriate to provide equal access to qualitative opportunities for all action within and outside the formal school system as the subject is made compulsory for all students at the junior secondary school level. The curriculum is however not adequate enough to achieve these goals." The point being made by this scholar is that the curriculum has to be improved upon. It is true that it has merits as it captures some of the aim and objectives of the subject, it however leaves a number of issues out.

A well packaged curriculum that is properly designed to motivate the teacher and the learner has the potential of enhancing high academic achievement, (Luneburg 2011). If the curriculum spells out very adequately the content, the activities and the evaluation method, teachers would be able to prepare sufficiently to meet the demand of the learners, and the learners would be ever ready to learn. As scholars have pointed out, the curriculum needs revision to adequately capture the goal of Social Studies as a school subject. According to Falade and Ishola (nd), the curriculum should focus on current issues of local and national interest and mirror Nigerian society by diagnosing the society's needs and aspirations. Social studies, being problem problem-solving social engineering subject, should continually address the dynamic nature of Nigerian society.

Other problems include non-involvement of teachers in Social Studies curriculum planning and development, fusion of Social Studies curriculum into another subject thereby making its contents to be taught as a theme under the National Value Education which now makes time allotted to it as a subject to be shared among various subjects fused as National Values Education. Another notable problem is poor teaching methods adopted by teachers which are affecting effective teaching and learning of the subject as well as instability of government policies on education. According to Falade and Ishola (nd), abrupt changes in some of the government policies have not helped in the teaching and learning of Social Studies in Schools. Government, over the years, has not been so sensitive to the needs of the learners when their policies are being made. Daramola and Olanireti in Falade and Ishola submitted that political instability in the country over the years shows its devastating effects on the country's educational policies and programmes which have adverse effects on the teaching and learning of Social Studies. For instance, the sudden merging of Social Studies with some other subjects led to confusion and the non-availability of relevant materials for the teaching and learning of Social Studies.

The Way Forward

To guarantee the realization of the objectives of Social Studies and for it to take its rightful place among relevant school subjects in this digital age, the following could be considered:

Curriculum review- The curriculum of Social Studies must be reviewed to include realities of life as they unfold on daily basis in this dynamic world. This is to enable student to have adequate knowledge that is needed within and around the world According to Falade and Ishola (nd), Social Studies being a unique subject that focuses on solving problems and finding solutions to emerging issues in the society requires periodic review of its curriculum. They stressed that human society is dynamic, it changes from time to time and to address current societal needs, the Social Studies curriculum requires constant review.

Technological advancement- The curriculum of Social Studies must be reviewed to include technological advancement that will enable student to have adequate knowledge of what it

entails to be a global citizen. Oluwagbohunmi and Alonge (2023) were of the view that determination of what learners need to succeed and thrive in this dispensation of new knowledge, new normal and new skill should be the concern of teachers and other stakeholders in education. Falade and Ishola (2023) argued that in recent times students tend to lose interest in learning Social Studies because they do not find it engaging and interesting. With the world turning into a digital space, learning cannot be effective with the traditional chalk-and-talk method. Thriving of informational society necessitates that learners begin to use internet efficiently to become digital citizens in the world where nothing is guaranteed and anything can change at any time. For instance, with the emergence of COVID-19, many people lost their jobs whereas it marked the beginning of huge money making digital/online business for some. Robot is taking over manual work in offices in some foreign countries; the use of Automated Teller Machine (ATM) has reduced the workload of cashiers in banks, social media platforms has amplified online businesses, mobile banking has reduced the task of carrying huge sum of money for transactions among others. All these changes came as a result of colossal technological developments (Oluwagbohunmi and Alonge, 2023). Falade and Ishola (2023) reiterated that the government, educational agencies and institutions should organize periodic pedagogical training for Social Studies teachers in Junior Secondary Schools so as to equip them with relevant skills for adopting modern Social Studies teaching strategies and tools.

Possession of a teaching certificate or teaching license: This has been identified as one of the qualities that make a qualified teacher. It is argued that when a teacher possesses a teaching qualification such as Bachelor or a higher degree in the subject he or she teaches, it could enhance the level of academic achievement of students. On the other hand, non-possession of a teaching certificate in a subject one teaches could lead to poor academic achievement. Fakeye (2012) and Ewetan and Ewetan (2015) agreed that non-possession of teaching certificate in the English language by teachers of English language affected negatively the academic achievement of students in the English Language among students in lbarapa division of Oyo state and Ogun state respectively, In a related study Abe (2014), Masau and Abere (2015), and Nwoye (2015) also claimed that poor academic achievement in mathematics, science and technology is attributable to unqualified teachers who do not possess, teaching certificates in the subject(s) they teach. While it is highly held that teaching certificate in a chosen field is relevant to effective teaching in such a field, it is not the only variable that makes a qualified teacher. Aina and Olanipekun (2015) captured this when they said that "someone might have a teaching certificate at hand but without adequate knowledge of subject matter the individual has noteaching qualification". Because other factors go into the making or a qualified teacher on the one hand, and the academic achievement of students on the other hand, some researchers have argued that educational qualification of teacher is minimally relevant to academic achievement (Abubakar, 2011 and Mafthan, 2013).

Good knowledge of the subject matter: Teacher's good knowledge of the subject matter, attitude and disposition, experience, professional development and other relevant factors are also important as attested to by Agharuwhe (2013), Oluremi (20l3) Yusuf and Yinusa (2016) and Aina and Olanipekun ((2015). Talking on attitude and disposition in relation to the teaching, Shittu and Olanike (2015) opined that “personality traits of the teacher are more powerful than the course content or instructional strategies used in the classroom.” They claimed further that Studies have equally confirmed that lack of qualified teachers in the “if a teacher appears not interested or careful about a particular subject or students, he/she will be unable to foster a supportive learning environment”. In addition, teacher with negative altitude may not be as approachable as teachers who are positively motivated.

Teachers' Motivation: This is an important aspect that aids effectiveness of teachers of Social Studies. Ofojebe and Ezugoh (2010) claimed that teachers' motivation is a way of empowering teachers in their occupation and

involve the perceptions, variables, methods, strategies and activities used by the management for the purpose of providing a climate that is conducive to the satisfaction of the various needs of the employees so that they may become satisfied, dedicated and effective in performing their task." Even when a teacher is eminently qualified, and possessed the right attitude and disposition to work, if there is no motivation from the school management, the community and the government, the teacher may perform below the expected standard. Studies by Hung and Fan (2014), Obot, Essierr and Akpan (2014) have revealed that teachers develop the right attitude to work when they are maximally motivated. Obot et al (2014) stated that teachers proved effective in the reaching of Social Studies in Akwa-Ibom state of Nigeria due to good motivation. Hung and 'Fan (2014) made a similar report in respect of the teaching of Social Studies in Taiwan. On the other hand, where teachers are not well motivated in terms of payment of salaries and remuneration, provision of teaching materials, non-availability of re-training facilities, promotion as at when due', teachers are likely to the ineffective (Muranda, Neube and Mapolisa and Tshabalala, (2015).

Seminars and workshops: Regular seminars and workshops should be organized for teachers to keep them informed of latest techniques of teaching Social Studies. There must be regular follow-up and or supervision of the teachers to ensure the latest techniques are employed in the classrooms.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it can be concluded that Social Studies is a veritable tool for achieving some of the objectives of the national policy of education. It therefore becomes imperative that government wakes up to its responsibility of making education a priority so that the identified problems could be solved and teachers would be encouraged to bring into the teaching of the subject the right attitude and good disposition that can facilitate effective teaching and learning that will result in achievement of the objectives of Social Studies.

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