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Social Studies Education for Sustainable Democratic Governance and Development in Nigeria

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Abstract:

This paper focuses on Social Studies Education for sustainable democratic governance and national development in Nigeria. Social Studies is interested in the process human development both physical and social, and how the socio-physical activities influence and being influenced in the decision-making process. Social Studies is concerned with the inculcation of knowledge, skills and desirable attitudes cherished by the society into the learners. The fact that democratic governance as a political system has come to stay in Nigeria underscores the role of Social Studies in broadening the horizon of political participation among the citizens for national development in Nigeria. In view of the above expositions, this paper discusses concept of democracy, peace and security, national development, concept of education, Social Studies and democratic governance, challenges and suggestions such as provision of adequate financial support to provide more infrastructures and required aids to enhance teaching and learning process as well as recruitment of qualified Social Studies teachers in the Nigerian institutions.

Keywords: Social studies education, democratic governance and development

1. Introduction

There is no doubt that national development in the world over revolves around effective governance. National Development is all encompassing in nature. It occurs as a result of careful and purposeful plan of action. Development is a socio-political and economic phenomenon that distinguishes between the traditional pattern and modern ways of life. Development is a gradual process of improvement and advancement in human endeavours. Agada and Ogah (2012) posited that development is a many-sided process that takes place at the level of the individual, social group and society. According to Abimiku in Tinja, Bulama and Tijani (2013) development is a process of raising real per capital income of a nation which is evident in reduction of income inequalities and the attainment of the preferences of the entire masses. Manebete (2002) believes that when improvement in peoples' living conditions is manifested in areas like availability of food, water, shelter, good road network, medical care, road and rail transportation, national development is said to have taken place.

Tijani and Yaro (2019) perceive national development as an indication of economic, socio-political progress, unity in diversity, employment opportunity, good governance, industrial growth, good road, good communication network, display of desirable attitudes among citizens, social adjustment within the school system and adequate utilization of national resources for the benefit of the citizens. National development in the opinion of Tijani, Goro and Muhammed (2013) does not only confine itself to social, political and economic progress in the society but embraces quality character or attitude that promote common good of human existence in the society. In addition, national development is not static, but dynamic. According to Tijani and Yaro (2019) development is a product of the following: -

- Individual activities that promote progress of mankind
- Leadership qualities and good governance
- A mutual understanding between the rulers and the ruled.
- Quality decision making and political will to advance the course of mankind.

The above expositions underscore the world's acceptance of democratic rule as opposed to dictatorship system of government. Hence, democratic governance is a system that bridges the gap between the ruler and the ruled or the government and the governed as it broadens the horizon of participation in governmental affairs. Democratic governance, by popular definition, refers to government of the people for the people and by the people. Democracy is a political system that is highly inevitable in nation building as it accommodates factors prerequisite for national growth and development.

Democracy aims at ensuring people-driven governance, social justice, equality and peaceful coexistence in a particular society. Democracy is the basis of political system not only in Nigeria, but the world at large. To build a nation is to build all spheres of human endeavor in line with the political, economic, cultural, social and technological realities of a democratic society. Thus, a democratic society is guided by constitutionalism, rule of law, freedom of expression and the supremacy of the judicial system that guarantees human rights and responsibilities. (Nwaokugha & Anagwo, 2018 in Usman, 2019). Democratic governance, in the real sense of it breeds peace, security and economic stability that is devoid of over dependent of foreign goods. Hence, economic development implies the effective coordination of both human and material resources to improve the living standard of the citizens. Democracy ensures citizenship development, active participation of the citizens in governmental affairs, unity in diversity, religious tolerance, fundamental human right, justice and fairness within the confines of the law. At this juncture, it is imperative to state unequivocal that democracy cannot survive in the atmosphere of unstable peace, insecurity and poor judicial system.

The term peace means different things to different people depending on situation the term is used. Thus, Usman (2019) perceived peace as tranquility, restfulness and lawfulness of individual's mind, group or nation. Kalu (2013) argued that peace can represent the following:

- Selfless act of love
- Absence of war
- Absence of violence or of evil; presence of justice

Aja (2006) contended that peace does not mean total absence of conflict but it is the capacity to bring conflict indicators or conflict situation under control without destabilizing the system. Tijani, Abubakar & Dahun (2018) perceived peace as a phenomenon of human creation that is globally recognized as an instrument for effective social interaction necessary for nation building. Ngada (2019) asserted that peace is essential in attaining nation/s development goals. Presently, in Nigeria, poverty, unemployment, high rate of school drop outs, bomb attacks from terrorist groups, lack of social infrastructure, poor medical facilities in hospitals, cases of abduction from kidnappers, cases of assassination and rigging during election, violent conflicts emanating from various groups have led to high level of insecurity that has made it difficult for any meaningful development to thrive in Nigeria.

Insecurity is a state of uncertainty, fear and lawlessness which poses threat to people's live and properties. National security on the other hand, according to Tijani, et al. (2018) can be seen as the protection of both lives and properties of the citizens of a nation against any form of internal and external military and civil attack. National security can be categorized into two, even though they are intertwined, as social security and personal or life security. The former has to do with the job opportunities and provision of health care facilities for taking care of all sort of human illnesses, reduction in maternal mortality death, adequate provision to take care of the vulnerable citizens such as people with disabilities and the destitute, which in turn enable them contribute maximally to nation building. While the latter, is concerned with the provision of adequate security for lives and properties and clear state of harmony. (Tijani, and Muhammed, 2019). Ojebode and Apeh (2014) in Tijani et al. (2018) sees security as follows: -

- Stability and continuity of livelihood
- Predictability of life (knowing what to expect)
- Protection from crime (feeling sense of safety)
- Freedom from psychological harm (safety protection from emotional stress which result from the assurance that one is wanted, accepted, loved and protected in one's community or neighborhood and by people around)

Judiciary is the third arm of government that is saddled with the responsibility of strengthening and interpreting the rule of law, ensuring compliance with legislation and settling of disputes among the three organs and tiers of government. The Judiciary is the guardian and custodian of the constitution. The judiciary also serves as checks on the power of both executive and the legislature. Therefore, the judicial system guarantees fundamental human rights with a view to deepen democratic governance in Nigeria. Hence, a clarion call for the independence of the judiciary.

It is the responsibility of a responsible and responsive democratic government to provide adequate security and guaranty fundamental human rights for its citizenry through the apparatus of law with a view to enhancing national growth and development. Peace and adequate security in democratic governance will make Nigerians see themselves as an indivisible human being and work together for unity and progress of their country. In addition, peace and security have become fundamental and invaluable tools that make democracy thrive as they prepare grand for socio-economic transformation of a given country. In the light of the above expositions, this paper discusses concept of education, Social Studies education for sustainable democratic governance and development in Nigeria.

2. The Concept of Social Studies Education

In the first instance, education is a multidimensional concept which can be described as the inculcation of adequate knowledge, skills and desirable attitudes cherished by the society. Education engenders mass mobilization of citizens as well as human capital development of a nation such as Nigeria. The federal government of Nigeria in its national philosophies as encapsulated in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) states thus: -

- A free and democratic society
- A just and egalitarian society
- A united, strong and self-reliant nation
- A great and dynamic economy and
- A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens

The above national objectives speak volume of the Nigeria's educational system and the expected socio-economic benefits. Thus, the attainment of these is hanged on viable educational system. Hence, education is an indispensable and potent instrument for a country's development in all ramifications. In recognition of the role of education in national development, every political dispensation takes education as its priority and as such, embarks on reforms to make education relevance to societal needs. David (2008) believed that educational system and governance are inseparable phenomena in the society. Since government is the principal transmitter of values to all sectors, educational problems can be traced to what government does or fails to do. The Nigeria's National Policy on Education recognizes education as not only the greatest force that can be used to bring about redress, but it is also a greatest investment that the country can make for the quick development of its economic, social and human resources (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014).

It was the realization of the above mission statement that Social Studies education was born. As a branch of education, Social Studies is concerned with human beings and his or her relationship with the socio-physical environment and their influences of the socio-physical environment on human decision-making process in terms of general and specific problems and prospects. Social Studies lays more emphasis on desirable attitudes and worth-while values of the society. This is because attitudes and values are prerequisite for effective citizenship and socio-civic orientation as invaluable for democratic governance and national development in Nigeria.

In view of happenings in Nigeria and in an attempt to make educational system functional to solve varying degree of socio-economic challenges, citizenship and civic education were fashioned out of Social Studies curriculum with a view to address the security, economic and political upheaval. Adigun and Bolanle (2018) posited that citizenship education via Social studies is a veritable tool employed by various communities, states and nations to improve the qualitative and quantitative political participation of the citizenry. Citizenship education involves the recognized means, methods and tools of intuiting the citizens in order to bring out the desired change in them vis-à-vis civility, morality, humility, self-reliance, collective work, dignity and so forth. In addition to the above, to further strengthen the tenet of democracy in Nigeria, Federal government as a matter of priority fashioned a subject out a Social Studies curriculum called civic education which is made compulsory for all secondary schools at both WAEC and NECO irrespective of the subject combination. Thus, knowledge of citizenship and civic education using the instrumentality of Social Studies education makes citizens respect one another in spite of political and cultural differences. This subject area is capable of equipping the learners in the following ways: -

- Inculcation of worthwhile attitudes and values desirable for propagation of democratic ideals in the Nigerian society such as tolerance, hard work, respect for constituted authority, self-control, honesty, patience, humility perseverance, kindness, simplicity, self-confidence, truthfulness, harmonious co-existence among other behaviours acceptable for political stability and development.
- Inculcation of skills: Social Studies imparts civic and citizenship orientation that bring Nigerian citizens close to democratic tenets through the inculcation of leadership skills, communication skills, anger management skills or people management skills, resource management skills, listening skill, critical thinking skills, analytical skills, decision making skills and brainstorming skill, among other skills required for good governance and national development. Kalu (2013) opined that when people imbibe those skills then rationality becomes part of them thereby making them agents of peace and development.

3. Social Studies Education and Democratic Governance

The beauty of democracy lies in its flexibility that allows active and effective political participation of the citizenry in governmental affairs. However, the Nigeria's democracy has been threatened by the caliber of politicians who failed to play the game by its rules thereby turning the government treasury to a national cake. Nwaokugha & Anagwo, 2018 cited in Usman (2019) opined that there are those who participate in politics for purposes of amassing wealth, and corruptly enriching themselves through diverting state property into private use. Because of juicy nature of Nigeria's democratic system, political participation has been misconceived to be a do or die struggle. Hence, the process is characterized by violence, destruction of lives and properties, rituals, hate speeches and character assassination through the instrumentality of the social media. In view of the above expositions, sustainability of democracy in Nigeria is without doubt lies on the education and educational development of the citizenry. This is premised on the fact that education is the only potent of human development known in the history of mankind. Education liberates the citizens on the need for effective democracy in Nigeria.

Similarly, Baba (2019) believed that Nigeria needs the right education to overcome the Boko Haram insurgency and the terrorism that bedevil the entire country. In the world's political landscape, attention has now been shifted towards using education as an institution to achieve democratic rule and national development. The responsibility of formulating policies that guide the socialization of learners in readiness to achieve the objectives of the state lies with political class, and the testing of the workability of such policies lies with education and educational institutions. The supply of right personnel who have the critical know-how to engineer new political values for sustaining the political system is also the responsibility of education. Similarly, educational policies and activities are products of politics and political decisions. (Usman, 2019)

The above submission has a far-reaching implication in national development. In a democratic epoch, education instills good values that help mould the character of man. These values are not confined only to moral values but also good behavior character that will help citizens to live and coexist harmoniously. The right type of values if instilled into the minds of citizens will help to form their perception about life (Baba, 2019). Similarly, education enables individuals to acquire moral values, norms, etiquettes, proper code of conduct, decency and effective communication. It also provides

means for conflict resolution, managing social diversity and ensuring tolerance among multi-ethnic, heterogeneous and culturally-diverse nation. (Usman, 2019). The above task is only achievable through effective citizenship and civic orientation carefully packaged in Social Studies curriculum as a branch of educational system in Nigeria.

In addition, Social Studies education avails the learners the opportunities to acquire worth-while knowledge, skills and desirable attitudes and values through diverse teaching methodologies like role-play, discussion, inquiry, demonstration and other recognized instructional methods. Therefore, in a democratic era, Social Studies education provides socio-political socialization for the citizens in Nigeria to be well informed about the activities of political parties such as political campaign and voters' registration. Social Studies education provides a platform for political education which can be referred to as the process of orienting citizens on their rights, duties and responsibilities to empower and motivate them to identify what areas of the political and governance processes they can effectively participate in and what they can do to influence political outcomes thereby improving the quality of governance at both local, state and national levels with a view to achieve the ideals of democracy in Nigeria.

There are people whose participation in politics is anchored on their conviction to introduce new political values into the system simply because of their level of education. The knowledge that comes from the process of education will enable citizens to maintain system stability, tolerance, peace and conflict resolutions. (Aja, 2006). This implies that with adequate knowledge, skills and worthwhile moral values, citizens can tolerate one another and able to resolve their differences without resulting to bloodshed. Oyekan (2000) opined that the contemporary Nigeria needs an extensive change in orientation as a means to achieve a comprehensive improvement in capacity building, democratic governance, economic diversity and quality of human life. Otherwise, the growing children and youths may be destined to inherit the profligate values and destructive mindsets of our showy leaders, and bear the brunt of our collective inaction, incompetence and impunity. In Oyekan's (2000) opinion, young people are the vibrant conscience of the dynamic world being the active drivers of social change, cultural heritage, national economy and democratic polity for shared prosperity and harmony in any progressive nation. In this line of thought, Kazi (2007) listed Some of the values of Social Studies that are fundamental and invaluable to be imbibed by the Nigerian youths to enhance democratic governance and national development as follows: -

- Loyalty to Nigeria as a nation;
- Willingness to live together as a people and not minding the divisive concepts "like indigenes" "setting", "hosts", "guest", "immigrants", "sons of the soil", "Daughters of the soil" to name a few which tend to tear the citizen apart
- Subjugation of local ethnic loyalty to those of the nation as a sovereign state;
- love of one's country and rendering selfless service to it;
- placing of the national well-being above personal gains;
- avoidance of various forms of corruption and examination malpractice;
- broadmindedness and tolerance with fellow citizens;
- rational utilization of both human and material resources; consideration for others;
- Cooperation with other citizens; and change of attitudes from those of traditionalism to modernity, and payment of taxes to name few among others. (p51)

However, Social Studies education is bedeviled with some challenges hindering its instructional objectives in schools. Some of these are discussed below: -

3.1. Poor Funding

Money is not everything but is something. Education cannot survive without adequate financial support to provide required aids to enhance teaching and learning process. In recognition of the above, the National Policy on Education (2014) stated unequivocally that "Education is an expensive social service and required adequate financial provision from all tiers of government for successful implementation of the programme". The level of infrastructural decay at all levels Nigeria's educational system leaves much to be desired as the government fails to allocate 20% of its annual budget to education. This affects educational development generally.

3.2. Population Expansion

Population explosion in Nigerian institutions without commensurate number of teachers/ lecturers to handle the ever-increasing number of students remains a greater concern. This has contributed greatly to low quality of teaching and learning, inadequate classroom management, and examination malpractice among other academic crimes in Nigerian educational system

3.3. Insufficient Qualified Teachers

The fact that education system cannot be above its teachers speaks volume of the expectations of the Nigeria's system of education. However, Nigerian schools are be deviled by inadequate qualified teachers in Social Studies education most especially at the primary and secondary education levels. This is inimical to the educational development of the citizenry in general and socio-civic orientation in particular.

3.4. In Adequate Monitoring of the Teaching Process

The erroneous belief that education is the responsibility of the government has given rise to lack of effective monitoring of teaching and learning activities in Social Studies and education in general by heads of schools such as

principals and head masters Thus, some primary and secondary schools are being turned to a mini market where they were buying and selling pure water, ground nut, zobo and so on. This is detrimental to educational development of the Nigerian child.

4. Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion, it is deduced that Social Studies is a programme of schools representing a broad field of knowledge that deals with mankind holistically. Its concern is effective utilization of knowledge, skills and values for human development in his socio-physical environment. Thus, the concern of this subject area is fostering mutual relationship between man to man and man and environment socially, politically, economically and culturally. Therefore, Social Studies teachers are expected to provide children with insight into the use of various knowledge and worthwhile information capable of fostering adequate peace and security through the inculcation of desirable virtues for sustainable democratic governance in Nigeria.

5. Suggestions

In view of the discussion, the following suggestions are made

- Education cannot survive without adequate financial support to provide required aids to enhance teaching and learning process. Therefore, government at all levels should allocate adequate fund for infrastructural development to facilitate effective teaching of Social Studies education in Nigerian schools. Hence, inadequate teaching facilities would be a thing of the past if 20% of Nigeria's annual budget is allocated and effectively utilized by both the federal and state government.
- Federal and State government should also provide more infrastructures to cater for the ever-increasing enrolment population so that the behaviour modification mission of Social Studies can be achieved. Social Studies teachers should not limit themselves to one pedagogy 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 of piety and harmonious relationship into the students in the subject area.
- Government at all levels should employ qualified Social Studies teachers to manage the affairs of the discipline across the Nigerian institutions of learning. This will not only enhance instructional quality in the subject but facilitate the inculcation of the desirable virtues into the learners to appreciate the problems and prospects of other citizens and realize the independence of man irrespective of tribal and religious differences.
- Adequate monitoring: The responsibility of providing effective education in Nigeria does not only lie on the federal and state government, rather, it is a collaborative effort. All stakeholders need to play their role as expected. Hence, all heads of institutions like principals etc. should be responsible for monitoring the process of teaching and learning so as to achieve the desired result.

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