

Social Studies Education: A Veritable Tool for Achieving Value Re-Orientation and Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

Education has been viewed by the international community as a fundamental human right and key development index. A key to sustainable development, peace and stability within and among countries. The rot in Nigerian society has affected the standard of value and moral character formation, greatly. This has manifested in so many anti-social vices exhibited by the Nigerian citizens. Antisocial vices exhibited include violent crimes, lack of accountability, greed, indiscipline, corruption, disrespect to constituted authority and a host of other vices. These have posed a serious moral problem for the Nigerian state and have set back all sincere efforts targeted at achieving sustainable development goals by 2030. This paper is out to examine how social studies education can serve as a veritable tool in achieving value re-orientation and sustainable development in Nigeria. The paper adopts descriptive approach and content analysis as its methodologies. Using a systematic random sampling method, a total of 100 respondents from five secondary schools in the two local government areas within Oyo metropolis was used. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The paper concludes that the problem is not lack of wealth but lack of essential value system in Nigerian society and that re – orientation in educational system would lead to redemption, and as well salvage the national character and image, which would lead to vibrant economy and sustainable development. The author suggests that the re - orientation of positive values through social studies education would promote national image, respect for human and corporate values while faithful and honest individual children and citizens should be rewarded and celebrated. It is high time the Nigerian

government shunned the idea of celebrating mediocrity.

Keywords: Nigeria, social studies education, sustainable development

1. Introduction

Education remains the potent tool for sustaining the development of the nations of the world. It is for total development whereby no one is expected to be educationally deficient in term of individual unique interest in learning and functionality (Oghenekowo, 2005). Education is the aggregate of all the process by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour of positive values in the society in which he lives (Fafunwa, 1991). Education is a great tool of positive social change which trains young ones for adaptability so as to enable them to move with the changing world. Education enables individual to understand the demands of the society. It frees up people's minds allows opportunity for creativity and innovation, new prospects and ideas. This explains why every society provides education in one form or another to socialize its young into its desired ways of life.

Education has been viewed by the international community as a fundamental human right and key development index. A key to sustainable development, peace and stability within and among countries. With the advent of western education in Nigeria, the development of sound values and moral character remained a cardinal national objective of education. It is in order to impress sound values in the minds of Nigerian students, that most institutions adopt complementary slogans as their institutional mottos such as 'ProbitasDoctrina' (knowledge and character), 'RecteSapereFons' (fount of correct knowledge) etc.

Consequently, as is obtainable in all human societies, education is as old as human existence in Nigeria. In the pre-colonial Nigeria, education particularly through apprenticeship system was a powerful vehicle of equipping the child (in terms of skills, ethics, moves, customs, traditions and values) for effective participation in the society.

Learners all over the world need a unique and peculiar type of education which will enable them participate effectively in life. In order to find solutions to problems and make decisions on social issues, learners need this education to guide and help them in enquiries, investigations, discoveries, discussions and experimentation. The appropriate school subject that is able to help the students fulfill the above need is Social Studies education (Mofoluwawo, 2013). This is because Social Studies is concerned with the study of the social, economic, political, cultural, religious and technological activities and problems of mankind.

Many scholars have come up with different definitions of Social Studies. Adeyemi (2000) opines Social Studies is the studies of people, how they live, behave, socialize and are organized in groups; the relationship and interactions they have with their physical and social environments. It is an integrated subject which focuses on the study of man's environmental relationships for the purpose of citizenship education (Okunloye, 2001). National Council of Social Studies (NCSS) (2002) gave the Social Studies definition as quoted by ELISO (2002) as the "integrated study of social science and humanities to promote civic competence within the school programme. Social Studies derives its contents from related areas in economics,

geography, history, law, philosophy, political sciences, psychology, religion and sociology as well as from the humanities and natural science. The primary purpose of Social Studies education is to help the young people to develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse democratic society in an independent world” (p.3).

Prior to 1977, when the schools were taken over Validation Decree was promulgated which enabled the Federal and State governments to take over the total ownership and control of schools from the missionaries, it was always an accepted truism, filled with longing by the then school leavers, that the then schools and their management really tackled the issue of discipline as their anchor for good values and mannerisms (Igbaniho, 2011). The products then actually shone like the northern star in all their endeavours in life. Universally accepted values such as respect for elders, honour, helpfulness, truthfulness, kindness, generosity were seen in the characters of these students. That does not mean that there were not bad eggs among them, but the issue at stake is that character education was seen as the main plank that was infused in the learners by the mission schools so that these students will be the cynosure of all eyes in all their endeavours in life. For instance, Fafunwa (1991) said “missionaries were strong disciplinarians and they had abiding faith in manual labour and the rod as the cure to all ills-idleness, laziness, slow learning, truancy, disobedience and the like”.

Unfortunately, with the take-over of schools by the Federal and State governments in 1977 and whittling down of the powers of the missionaries in controlling the schools, character education and inadvertently value education were thrown to the back burner. This marked the beginning of debased value in Nigeria. Coupled with the above was the commercial sale of oil in the world market with the concomitant effects in respect of the gains of the petrol-dollars made Nigerians think of becoming rich as quickly as possible. This was the period when men and women left farms and fishing settlements with barely and requisite academic credentials and went into the world of businesses. As a result of this new development many Nigerians threw aside courtesy, decorum and honour in exchange for other negative means of becoming rich. Then in actual fact, rogues, criminals, fraudsters became highly respected. Unfortunately, these negative traits found way into the schooling system that culminated into bad mannerism, disrespectfulness, gangsterism, examination malpractices, robbery to mention a few that are the negative hallmark of public schools.

The decay in the Nigerian society has affected the standard of values and moral character formation. This is demonstrated in the myriads of anti-social vices exhibited by Nigerian citizens. Antisocial vices exhibited include dishonesty, greed, violent crimes, lack of accountability, indiscipline, corruption, disrespect for constituted authorities, laziness, and low moral courage among many others. All of these, pose a serious moral problem for the Nigerian state and continue to set back all sincere efforts targeted at achieving sustainable development goals by 2030. Hence, a greater and heavier demand is placed on schools, to develop and inculcate acceptable values in young ones for an auspicious future. The survival of value education becomes imperative because of nostalgia of the past, disappointed of the present and hope of the future generations. The poor condition of Nigeria and the inability of the leaders to provide condition necessary for national development since independence

demand serious concern by those who care about “the Nigerian project”.

In his own submission Dike (2005), the quest for national development is said to bring with it valuable and positive changes that improve the living standards of the people, create employment opportunities and reduce poverty among other things. Dike (2005) opines further that economic development increases the efficiency of a system in the production of goods and services to meet the basic needs of the people in the society. The attainment of self-sufficiency is greatly determined by the character and attitude of the leaders who are entrusted with the management of the society. Failure on the part of the leaders, sixty-two years after independence, to lay foundation for sustainable economic growth and development justifies the necessity for a national rebirth programme directed at ensuring ethical re-orientation for leaders and for the followers. Against this background, this paper is out to examine how Social Studies education can serve as a veritable tool in achieving value re-orientation and sustainable development in Nigeria. To this end the paper will look into conceptual clarifications of Social Studies Education values, Nigerian core values, value re-orientation and sustainable development. The paper will also examine how Social Studies education can help in re-orientating values in Nigeria for sustainable development.

2. Conceptual Clarification of Sustainable Development, Social Education Value, and Value Re-Orientation

Sustainable development according to Bruthland Commission (1987) is the “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs”. Sustainable development as opined by Ajayi and Afolabi (2009) entails better living conditions for all citizens; producing more nutritious and very sumptuous food for all citizens to eat; individuals living healthier, happier and more comfortable life; sound education and enlightenment among the populace; improved transportation and communication system; scientific and technological advancement, gainful employment for all citizens. United National Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) showed that countries lagging behind including Nigeria, were hindered by inability to deliver service effectively and efficiently to the grassroots or community level (Ejiogu, 2015; Ki-moon, 2015). Adams (2006) presented an illustrated definition of sustainability with special reference to the three pillars of social, environmental and economic sustainability.

According to Ban Ki-moon (2015), the MDGs No. 2 on achieving universal primary education has laid foundation for the new sustainable development goals (SDG) No. 4 on inclusive education for sustainable development. The country’s failure in the past twenty two (22) years is a direct result of poor leadership. Some indices of social sustainability in the country in the country are mortality rate (maternal and infant), unemployment, literacy rate, social and economic inequalities.

Social Studies education is an integrated body of knowledge formulated to equip the learner with significant values, attitudes, skills and knowledge in order to be productively functional in the society. In fact, Imogie (1993) stressed that it is the responsibility of Social Studies education to provide citizenship education to the youngsters.

Social Studies education was adopted as a national school subject for making Nigerian children develop the ability to adapt to their changing environment, become responsible and discipline individuals capable and willing to contribute to the development of their societies, and cultivate the right values. In the same vein, Social Studies curriculum is to make children develop a sense of comprehension towards other people, their diverse cultural history and those fundamental things that make them humans. Social Studies curriculum is designed to develop every child's capacity to recognize the many dimensions of human in different cultural and social contexts, and develop a sense of solidarity and sharing based on a sense of security in his own identity (NERDC, 2007).

Values as opined by Okoh, (2012) refers to what represents the quality of "worth" which people place on what they have in mind. In the words of Bolarin (2009), value is the worth, traits, practices, acts, ideas, beliefs, attitudes, merit or esteem given to a person or an object or an idea worthwhile, dear, acceptable and right. Values influences peoples' behaviour and serve as a yardstick for evaluating the actions of other people in the society. In the domains of education, values are very important as they are tightly bound to the general idea of education and operation of schools. Education must be something worthwhile which also has value implication. The acquisition of good values will enable the individual to determine how reasonable, right or wrong, true or appropriate his actions, attitude and relationship with others are. Hence, if all learning and training cannot make one of good value, then education is a failure.

The Nigerian society is characterized by high level of distrust and suspicion and nearly everybody has become a suspect of misplaced value. Immorality and lack of sanctity of life have increased. Vices such as murder, kidnapping for ransom and ritual have become the order of the day that pervades Nigerian society; with patricide, matricide, infanticide, fratricide and even suicide all in pursuit of materialism. Endemic corruption has polluted the character and personality of every Nigerian. The importance of positive value orientation for any nation's development cannot be over emphasized. For instance, one internationally accepted indicator of value orientation is corruption, because of its profound implication for education standard, terrorism and development.

Transparency international, the global coalition fighting against corruption, describes corruption as 'a crime against society' and therefore undertakes annual survey of corruption perception levels across nations of the world. Since its inception in 1995, the corruption perceptions index, transparency international's flagship research product, has become the leading global indicator of public sector corruption (Erezi, 2022). The index offers an annual snapshot of the relative degree of corruption by ranking countries and territories from all over the globe. In 2012, Transparency International revised the methodology used to construct the index to allow for comparison of scores from one year to the next. Nigeria has dropped five places in the 2021 corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) index, according to Transparency International (TI). Nigeria scored 24 out of 100 points in the 2021 index. Nigeria's current 154 ranking out of 180 countries in the 2021 corruption perceptions index is a drop from 149 in the 2020 index. Regrettably, vices have taken the place of virtues while merit is damaged or denuded. These negative values have replaced the positive values needed for sustainable

development of the society.

3. The Need for Value and Attitudinal Re-orientation through Social Studies Education

The need for attitudinal and value re-orientation has for long been recognized as the best way to address the myriads of societal problems confronting the Nigerian society. Consequently, successive administrations have articulated and pursued re-orientation programmes in one form or the other. It is regrettable, however, that despite all the attempts, programmes and interventions nothing can be seen in concrete terms.

To re-orientate is to turn something towards a more desirable direction. For instance when our television receiver becomes imperfect and start showing poor pictures due to poor reception, we naturally turn the antenna or other parts of the decoding equipment to a more appropriate direction to restore or enhance reception. Every reasonable individual or society gets to a time in life where there comes a rethinking about oneself and see if there is a need to change certain ways of doing things as they have been. Such a phenomenon has been called different names like moral re-enactment, ethical revolution or value re-orientation. National value orientation implies directing the values to a more desired national target. To rework or re-orientate national values as an activity pre-supposes therefore, that the present state of Nigeria's national values (that is their reorientation like TV receiver) lack the desired direction and target. Any value that does not yield to the attainment of the desired sustainable development required the necessary re-orientation (or re-working). How to re-orientate these national values through Social Studies education is therefore the hub of this paper.

Social Studies as a problem solving discipline and culture bound can play a vital role in ensuring peace, security and sustainable development. Social Studies is capable of producing effective citizens. Osakwe (1993) identified Social Studies as an avenue for reshaping society. Also, Osakwe (2009) agreed that the very nature and content of Social Studies makes it a viable instrument for developing a new socio-political order. The subject is geared towards building individuals and consequently nation. The potentials of Social Studies are yet to be fully exploited in our quest for a desirable socio-political and economic order. Social Studies is an avenue for providing young people with a feeling of hope in the future and confidence in their ability to solve the social environmental problems of individuals, their country, state or nation. Social Studies adopt a horizontal spiral approach in the analysis of its problems.

Social Studies is concerned with human relationships. The world is constantly undergoing changes and Social Studies remains a veritable instrument for examining these changes, whether positive or negative. It relies on its peculiar methodology using inquiring, topical, problematic project activities and other approaches to expose individuals to the pros and cons of various situations based on reasonable judgment. Social Studies deals with human relationships and help people in making a certain decisions that affect their relationship with other human beings. Through Social Studies, man is able to relate with other men and the environment making certain decisions that will bring about peaceful living which bring about national unity and development. Thus, Social Studies helps man to develop skills and spirit of cooperation that are needed in human relation. This objective can be achieved through the teaching of concepts such as cooperation, tolerance and integration in Social Studies

education.

In order to produce citizens that will promote sustainable development, there are attitudes and values which are considered desirable that a good citizen should possess. These include cooperation, comradeship and togetherness, honesty, integrity, hard work, equity and fairness, which were stated in the National Aims of Education and could be achieved through the teaching of Social Studies. Social Studies as opined by Mofoluwawo (2013) places much value on the affective domain in its attempt to promote good citizenship education in Nigeria. Social Studies is a discipline that if properly and effectively taught would help to solve some current social problems facing developing countries like Nigeria (Jekayinfa, 2014). In Social Studies for instance, the affective domain deals with the evaluation of the attitude and values that are developed or behavioural changes that are noticeable in the pupils after a course of study. The affective domain examines the behavioural changes in pupils like respect for elders and other constituted authorities such as parents, government, love of industry, dignity of labour and other positive attitudes and values.

The psychomotor domain of Social Studies emphasizes the development of skills both in theory and in practice, in its attempt at ensuring good citizenship education (Jekayinfa, 2014). Instilling of these desirable values into the students is doable through the process of value education that is embedded in Social Studies education. There should be therefore the need to give value education to individuals mainly in the place of learning environment, as students spend most of their time learning many things. Value education can equally be given or gained in any place like home, schools, colleges or universities, correctional centres, voluntary youth organizations or at many other places. The main aim of providing it to students in their educational institutions is to make them understand the importance of good values; use and reflect them in their behaviour and attitudes, and finally contribute to the society through good social responsibility and ethics which can result to nation building (Shittu & Gamde, 2021).

4. The Study

This study employed the descriptive survey research design to collect data from one hundred respondents. A systematic random sampling technique was used to select the respondents for this study from two local governments within Oyo metropolis. A ten items questionnaire comprising two sections on general information on social studies education as a veritable tool for achieving value reorientation and sustainable development in Nigeria was developed and analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The criterion mean is set at 2.50. Therefore any mean that is greater than 2.50 is significant, while any mean less than criterion mean of 2.50 is not significant. To this end, the following research hypotheses are germane for this study.

5. Hypotheses

- 1) Values in Social Studies education have no significant effect on sustainable development in Nigeria.
- 2) Value re-orientation among Nigerians has no significant effect on sustainable

development in Nigeria.

6. Discussion of Result

The analysis here is based on the two research hypothesis raised for this study. The discussion of the result are presented below.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation analysis of significant effect of values in Social Studies education on sustainable development in Nigeria

Variable	No	Mean	Standard deviation
Effect of values in Social Studies education on sustainable development in Nigeria	100	3.16	0.420

Table 1 above shows the mean of 3.16, and corresponding standard deviation of 0.420. Since the calculated mean is greater than criterion mean, this indicates that values in Social Studies education have significant effects on sustainable development in Nigeria. The finding is in line with Osakwe (1993), Jekayinfa (2014) and Mofoluwawo (2013) who submit that values embedded in Social Studies education for instance, in affective domain can ginger the evaluation of the values and attitudes that are developed or behavioral changes like respect for elders and other constituted authorities, love for industry, dignity of labour and other positive attitudes and values. Osakwe (1993) identified Social Studies as an avenue for reshaping society. Instilling of these desirable values into student is double through the process of value education that is embedded in Social Studies education.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation analysis of significant effect of value re-orientation on sustainable development in Nigeria

Variable	No	Mean	Standard deviation
Effects of value re-orientation among Nigerians on sustainable development in Nigeria	100	3.11	0.490

Table 2 above reveals the mean of 3.11 and standard deviation of 0.49. Since the calculated mean is greater than criteria mean, this indicates that value re-orientation among Nigerians has significant effects on sustainable development in Nigeria. This finding is in line with the

finding of Njoku (2015) who reiterates that the factors which enhanced the emergence of negative values need to be properly explained to the youths and children as the basis for negativity in value system in Nigeria if actually Nigerians want any sustainable development. The finding was also in line with what Huit (2003) corroborates as important values for successful living such as autonomy, honesty, accountability, courtesy, integrity etc. all of which need proper re-orientation among Nigerian citizens so that any development can be sustained.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

The problem of Nigeria is not much of lack of wealth but lack of essential value system in our society. Re-orientation process in educational system in Nigeria would lead to redemption and salvaging of the national character and image as well as leading to a vibrant economy and sustainable development. If the schooling process should nurture and entrench positive values in children, and their parent and teacher should function as role models, there would be an indelible positive values in the lives of the younger ones. Coupled with the above is the fact that if values embedded in Social Studies education are properly taught by the teachers of the said subject, one would notice that positive values would be internalized and developed in the school children. To this end, the paper recommends the following among others:

- As re-orientation of the positive values through Social Studies education would promote national image, respect for human and corporate value should be of paramount things to the school system.
- Our society through parents, mass media, radio jingle, religious institution should try and promote in our youth the idea of imbibing the culture of hard work and productivity, wealth creation, employment generation entrepreneurship, and tangible wealth competition.
- Faithful and honest individuals, children and citizens should be rewarded and celebrated. It is high time that Nigerian government must shun the idea of celebrating mediocrity.
- Corruption in Nigerian society should be reduced to the barest minimum, if not totally eradicated. Nigerians need the kind of leadership that would have the courage, integrity and ability to address once and for all those factors that allowed corruption and inequality to be institutionalized in the country.

All teachers should exhibit role-modelling behavior in the classroom for students to copy good behaviours and character.

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