

SOCIAL STUDIES AS A VERITABLE TOOL FOR NATION-BUILDING IN NIGERIA: THE STUDY OF EMERGING ISSUES AS THE WAY OUT

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Abstract

This paper agitated for using emerging areas of studies in social studies for promoting genuine nation-building in Nigeria. It traced the origin of disunity of the country known as Nigeria to pre-colonial and colonial era of struggle against ethnic and economic domination. It supported the processes of nation-building with the theory of unity in diversity of four stages which Nigeria is yet to arrive at the fourth stage of coalescence. It is therefore recommended that the use of emerging studies like Sustainable Development Education, Peace Education, Drug Abuse Education, Value Education, Family Life Education, Character Education, Entrepreneurship Education etc. in Social Studies would go a long way to fasten the march towards nation-building.

Key Words: *Social Studies, Nation-building, Veritable tool, Emerging issues.*

Introduction

Nigeria as a creation of the British colonial master began its wobbling journey since the amalgamation of 1914. It would be recalled that the so called Nigeria nationhood was a unification of multi-nation states such as the Sokoto (Hausa/Fulani) caliphate, the old Oyo kingdom, the Ijaw, Ibibio and Itsekiri confederacies etc. Each of these nation state was independent of one another but with some regional relationships cutting across commerce, cultural exchanges and occasional military conflicts.

The intention of the British government for amalgamating the multi-nation states together (which today is referred to as Nigeria) was purely for selfish commercial interest of using the resources of the coastal south to supplement the deficit in the North for Nigeria's administrative system to be sustainable. Thus, in the views of Tamuno (1989), the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates of Nigeria by the British administration was to end the financial difficulties being experienced in its Northern governance.

As if Nigeria was not having a common enemy in the name of the colonial master, it took the two defunct protectorates more than five years to agree to free themselves from the

colonial bondage. While late Chief Anthony Enahoro had declared a motion for self – government in March 1953, the North declined its readiness for fear of Southern political domination; only to agree to it in 1959 (Olusanya, 1980). During this period of 'domination suspicion', the North had wanted to secede from Nigeria but was only persuaded by the colonial master not to do so (Olusanya, 1980). Thus, the mentality of economic manipulation coupled with political ethnic suspicion were problems created by the colonial masters' amalgamation of multi-nation states in 1914 leading to the attendant difficult march towards Nigeria's nationhood.

Hardly had Nigerians settled down with democratic independence of 1960, then the various national leaders withdrew to their regions to whip-up ethnic sentiments to capture political power at the centre. According to Adetoro (2015), the need to capture the national cake therefore became the target of all politicians leading to politics of election rigging, embezzlement, unbalanced resource allocation, nepotism, bribery and corruption. This was the situation that led to the federal election crises of 1964/65, the Western region election crises of 1966, the first military coup of January, 1966 and the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970.

The return to the civilian rule in 1979 was equally truncated by the 1983 military interface which accused the politicians of election rigging, nepotism and corruption. This era of military in political toga whose unitary rule was seen as self-serving, nepotism, with high sense of corruption between 1983 to 1998 actually knocked-down the Nigerians' sense of patriotism and nationalism. The climax of these political mess was the annulment of the presidential election of 12th June, 1993 which was adjudged the freest and fairest in the political history of Nigeria. This was seen as the greatest democratic rape against the Southerners with the people of the middle belt and the South-South hoping to have their own shot at presidency one day.

This dream came after the regime of former Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo and Late Musa Yaradua when Dr Goodluck Jonathan ascended the presidency first through the 'doctrine of necessity' and later through the ballot box. These regimes faced a lot of agitations on marginalization and restructuring with the later regime being castigated for lack of capacity to tame corruption and terrorism. The question this paper therefore attempts to answer are:

1. What constitute nation-building as a struggle?
2. What is the stake of Social Studies and its emerging issues for nation-building?
3. How can Social Studies help to galvanize Nigeria's march towards genuine nationhood?

Nation-Building as a Struggle

Every multi-ethnic nation always pass through a lot of struggle to achieve unity in diversity. Therefore, Nigeria cannot be an exception. Indeed, Nigeria's march towards nationhood has been characterized by religious and ethno-regional struggles. Earlier, Awolowo (1947) has described Nigeria as a "mere geographical expression" while Adetoro (2015) refers to it as a "multi-nation states". This is simply because of persistent ethno-religious crises that had consumed so many lives and property. The wanton loss of lives and property due to

insecurity all over Nigeria has become weekly affairs through kidnapping or armed banditry in the South and cattle rustling/Bokoharam terrorist attack in the North. As the 2019 electioneering campaign was gathering momentum, the future of the country was being challenged more with a lot of social disorder that characterized the earlier elections in Nigeria. The post-election comments were full of fury and contentions such that they generated more tension, kidnapping and banditry activities.

A Theory of Nation-Building

In reality, unity in diversity is the best answer to nation-building in a diversified society like Nigeria. As nebulous as the theory of unity in diversity is, it is the most commonly adopted theory for a plural society. However, for a multi-ethnic society to achieve unity in diversity according to Professor Ali Mazrui as pointed out by Eliagwu (1985) it would have to pass through four stages thus:

Stage 1 (Coexistence): This is the first stage where various ethnic groups only coexisted within the same borders without much knowledge of each other's existence. This could be regarded as the initial era of the various kingdoms and dynasties existence before the trans-saharan and trans-atlantic trade.

Stage 2 (Contacts): This second stage is characterized by multi-ethnic nations' interactions leading to conflicts and hostilities as witnessed during the trans-saharan and Atlantic trades dove-tailing into early colonial era in Nigeria. It was also the era when the two foreign religions had contacts with the people of Nigeria leading to the jihad of Usman Dan Fodio of 1804 and other conflicts prelude to colonial era in Nigeria.

Stage 3 (Compromise): This third stage is where dealings between various ethnic groups usually and sufficiently become complex, more diversified and interdependent to require a climate of peaceful reconciliation between conflicting interests (Eliagwu, 1985:465). Indeed, this was

the period between 1951 and 1960 in Nigeria when ethnic politics was suppressed for national aspiration towards independence.

Stage 4 (Coalescence): This fourth stage is where the multi-ethnic society is supposed to be technically complex and functionally integrated such that national solidarity, values of patriotism are inculcated and exhibited by all citizens. It is a stage where ethnic interests and identities are suppressed for national loyalty like in America.

Unfortunately however, Nigeria has not coalesced but always at the stage of compromise since independence due to the innate greed and nepotism of man. With a defective constitution, coupled with selfish political leadership, ethno-religious jingoism with agitations for federal restructuring and wealth redistribution, the journey to nationhood in Nigeria seems very long. However genuine Social Studies education with its multifaceted emerging issues appears to be a veritable tool that can shorten the journey.

Social Studies and its Emerging Issues for Nation-building

In the spirit of nation-building, Social Studies can be defined as a multidisciplinary and integrated study of the humanities and social sciences for producing informed, responsible and active citizens (National Council for Social Studies-NCSS, 1994) for sustainable development. It does this through emerging studies like Citizenship Education, Civic Education, Social Entrepreneurship Education, Environmental Education, Population and Family-Life Education, Multicultural or Intercultural Education, Peace Education, Character Education etc.

Social Studies as a way of living is to promote better human relationship for the purpose of nation-building. This is achievable through effective citizenship education which is responsible for:

- Provision of societal awareness and understanding.
- Development of love and responsibility to the nation.

- Inculcation of values of loyalty, honesty, integrity, hardwork, fairness, tolerance, respect for constituted authorities etc.
- Building the spirit of national consciousness, togetherness, unity and patriotism.
- Transmitting cultural heritage.
- Preparing the young peoples' sense of social justice, effective and responsible citizenship.
- Encourage sympathetic appreciation of the diversities and interdependence of local, national and international communities (Adeniran & Olugbuyi, 2013; Akpan, 2015)

In the views of Paulley and Adeyinka (2019), citizenship education in Social Studies is to promote tolerant and broadminded individual who believes in equality of mankind and have courageous principles to maintain inter-group understanding without any prejudice and with true sense of good followership and leadership. This is why quoting from citizenship transmission perspective of Barr, Barth and Shermis (1977); Adetoro (2015: 1) agreed that Social Studies is an integration of experience and knowledge concerning human relations for the purpose of citizenship education.

On the value of civic education in Social Studies for nation-building, Mofoluwawo (2018) citing Niemi and Jumu (1998) submitted that it is to produce enriched and politically knowledgeable citizenry who will be inspired to produce good government and protect the legitimacy of democratic regimes. This is why Social Studies is known for promoting socio-civic development in the society (Okam & Lawal, 2011; Adetoro, 2018; Ogundare, 2019). In order to promote nation-building, it is expected that civic education would inculcate effective political education for active democratic attitude and participation. It would also enrich peoples' knowledge of voters' education in order to minimize the usual attendant electoral violence in the country. It will equally promote effective leadership training in order to produce patriotic and responsible leaders. It will further promote good governance with accountability and corrupt-free

society. While acknowledging the role of civic education in nation-building therefore, Sofadekan (2017) highlighted the following:

- Installing a reputable democratic electoral process.
- Promoting patriotic and transparent leadership.
- Enthroning democratic stability through national consensus.
- Enlightening citizens on their civic obligations.
- Promoting political socialization.

Indeed civic learning, civic values and civic participation that are the products of civic education in Social Studies are to promote men and women of integrity in governance. This is achievable through promotion of concern for public good, rule of law, justice, equality, diversity, truth, patriotism, federalism and separation of powers (as inculcated by civic education) for nation-building in Nigeria (Olademeji, 2017). Consequently, in the views of National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) (1991), Social Studies as an integrated study of humanities and the social sciences is to promote “civic competence” in a culturally diverse, democratic and interdependent world.

In this modern era of business enterprises, Social Studies also inculcates the spirit of enterprise through social entrepreneurship. According to Ogunyemi (2008), the drive for ‘social impact’ ‘sustainable resources’ and ‘business spirit’ makes social entrepreneurship education in Social Studies very relevant in nation-building. The whole idea is to provide social problem-solving in the areas of man’s critical needs. In doing this, the social entrepreneur is equipped with the spirit of ‘business plan’ writing in order to provide solution to social problems such as refuse disposal, traffic control, drainage clearing etc. Quoting Mair and Marti (2005), Ogunyemi (2008) further opined that the study of social entrepreneurship in Social Studies is to

promote innovative use and combination of resources to pursue opportunities to catalyze social change and or address social needs, He argued further that although social entrepreneurs can make some profit in the course of their service delivery but such profit are ploughed back into the work of the organization rather than being shared among the shareholders. Thus, the relevance of social entrepreneurship in nation-building is to fire the ‘creative potentials’ and ‘mobilize resources’ of the citizens for infrastructural development (Ogunyemi, 2018).

The relationship of man in his or her environment demands the need for environmental education as a subset of Social Studies. The environment is the home of man and it is so much abused that it becomes detrimental to nation-building. Thus, according to Oduwaiye (2018), environmental education is necessary to bring permanent positive change in the behaviour of the individual and community towards hygienic and sustainable nation. The issues of land, air and water pollution and their harmful concomitant effects on human health, plant and animal demands individual to be ecofriendly for sustainable nation-building. Thus, the need for environmental conservation through re-forestation and natural resource conservation would help to guarantee future generation’s survival for nation-building. The knowledge of environmental education would also help the individual to acquire the right attitude to stem-down ozone layer depletion, thereby decreasing the evil effect of climate change on the nation.

Population and family life education are two interrelated emerging aspects of Social Studies which are concerned with creating peoples’ awareness and making them to acquire the right type of attitude toward healthy sex education, family planning, responsible parenthood and improved quality of life. Quoting Sowummi (1998), Adetoro (2015) opined that the relevance of population and family life education in Social Studies for nation-building is to guide or pilot the young ones about family mannerism and

responsibilities, home-keeping, reproductive health and good living. Thus, the function of ethics of good parenthood is to produce functional and integrated family that would promote responsible citizenship for nation-building.

Multicultural Education as an emerging issue in Social Studies is acknowledged as a way of breaking the barriers to cultural integration for nation-building. In the views of Ajitoni, Salako and Oyedepo (2012), multicultural or intercultural education is essential to lay the foundation for societal transformation and elimination of oppression and injustice. As Nigeria is a multiethnic, multilingual and multicultural nation, it is expected that intercultural studies in Social Studies would help to reduce the tension created by ethnic hatred, foster unity and cultural integration of societies across boundaries.

Multicultural education is not only to promote intercultural awareness and consciousness but also a process of global thinking and global integration, as it would reduce all forms of prejudice and stereotype (including racism, xenophobia and Afrophobia) drastically. Thus, according to Bennet (2007) in the work of Ajitoni, Salako and Oyedepo (2012), multicultural education in Social Studies would help the individual to:

- Strengthen cultural consciousness.
- Strengthen intercultural competence.
- Develop multiple historical perspectives.
- Combat racism, sexism and other forms of prejudice and discrimination.
- Increase awareness of the state of the planet and their diversities.
- Build social action skills for nation-building.

Consequently, multicultural or intercultural education in Social Studies would not only quicken the attainment of unity-in-diversity in Nigeria but also promote effective global citizenship.

Peace education studies is a prerequisite for achieving the culture of peace and non-violent society. Indeed, the justification for study of peace education in Social Studies programme for nation-building can be

appreciated from the admonition of the United Nation that every country should ensure that children from early ages acquire knowledge on how to resolve any dispute peacefully and in the spirit of respect for human dignity and tolerance (UNESCO, 1998 cited by Aghulor & Iwegbu, 2010). Equally, Ogunyemi (2006) cited by Adetoro (2014) believed that peace education is to promote 'learning to live together' with conflict resolution skills. It is even about educating people to understand that appropriate limit should be applied to certain types of behaviour. This is because peace education teaches the values of cooperation, tolerance, mediation, negotiation, reconciliation, respect, compromise, social justice with 'constructive response to human tension and violence' (Adetoro, 2014). Consequently, peace education is a cooperative pedagogy in Social Studies to foster peaceful relationship in a non-violent manner for nation-building.

Character Education is one of the latest emerging issues for teaching ethical and moral competence in Social Studies (Omiyefa, 2016). Along the same discovery, Adebayo, Olatunde and Obaje (2016) in their empirical studies found a significant relationship between character education and the promotion of greater productivity in Social Studies as well as social values. The importance of character education for human development and nation-building can be appreciated through the following quotation as assembled by Josephine (2013).

- "Of all the properties which belong to honourable men, not one is so highly prized as that of character"(Henry Clay)
- "When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost" (German Proverb).
- "Personality can open doors, but only character can keep them open" (Elmer G. Letterman).

These quotations attest to the fact that there is the need for character education in order to cultivate good virtues in the individual for nation-building. Such virtues according to Kristo (n.d) are wisdom, justice, fortitude, self-

control, love, empathy, compassion, integrity, kindness, generosity, dignity, sacrifice, service delivery, hardwork, loyalty, patriotism and forgiveness which are necessary ingredient for human development. As a matter of fact, character education in Social Studies for nation-building is about “knowing the good”, “desiring the good” and “doing the good” for the purpose of producing responsible citizens for national development (Howard, Berkowitz & Schaffer, 2004). This is to state that the purpose of character education as studied in Social Studies is to develop the virtue of human excellence in the individual for nation-building. Indeed, there is hardly any national question that cannot be answered by either one or combination of the emerging issues in Social Studies

Recommendations

There is no doubt that social studies is a compulsory reforming tool for all Nigerians. As a veritable tool for nation-building, there is the need for Faculties, Institutes and Colleges of Education to emphasize the studies of emerging issues in Social Studies.

Regardless of the envy and politics, Social Studies experts must continuously forge ahead to promote the breaking of new knowledge to find solutions to national problems. Specifically, Social Studies researchers must use new pedagogical approaches in different emerging issues to tackle obstacles to nationhood thus:

- The spirit of nationalism, loyalty, tolerance, patriotism and solidarity as against ethnic parochialism should be inculcated through critical engagements in civic, character and peace education at all levels of education.
- Responsible citizenship should be inculcated through active family life, population and citizenship education.
- Respect for the rule of law, elders and authorities should be taught through critical moral, ethical and value education.
- Population and Environmental Education should be integral part of Junior

Secondary School Social Studies for sustainable development and environmental cleanliness.

- Ethno-religious harmony should be promoted through critical intercultural and multicultural educational dialogues.
- Drug abuse education should be integrated into the basic education structure of Social Studies to checkmate drug addiction and abuse. There is also the need for migration and trafficking education to stop the menace of human trafficking and its attendant problems.
- Life Skill Education and Social Entrepreneurship should be taught as practical aspects of Social Studies to promote the spirit of hardwork, creativity and self-employment.
- Above all, human greed, nepotism, armed banditry, kidnapping, terrorism, bribery and corruption that are pervasive in Nigeria are to be checkmated through critical Citizenship, Civic and Value Education engagements. This is what Adetoro (2018) rechristened ‘Socio-Civic Education’.

Conclusion

While this writer appreciates the need to further explore the potentialities of emerging issues in Social Studies for quickening the march towards nationhood in Nigeria, it nevertheless detests the disarticulation of some of the issues from Social Studies especially up till the senior secondary school level. Rather, what is being recommended is further researches to expand the needed horizon and scope of Social Studies at that level. At the post-graduate levels, the potentialities of the emerging issues in Social Studies should be critically and actively explored for the benefit of updating knowledge for nation-building. After all, the beauty of Social Studies is in its dynamism and ability to cope with the momentum of national struggle and nation-building.

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