
**ROLE OF ICT AS AN EDUCATIONAL AID
IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF
SOCIAL STUDIES IN NIGERIA: A
HISTORICAL SURVEY (1925-2020)**

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Abstract

The 21st-century world is a digital era, no doubt. The era has given birth to the invention and reliance on the powers of technology-driven Information and Communications Technology (ICT). Following the ground breaking historic technological breakthrough created by this human ingenuity, numerous technology-driven electronic infrastructural facilities got adapted as classroom educational tools. Remarkably, the continued adaptation of technology-powered facilities into tools of classroom education in schools and educational institutions in Nigeria impact the qualities of teaching and learning provided to young learners in schools. Remarkably, the adaptation of modern ICT facilities into classroom educational aids continues to challenge both teachers and learners to begin to readjust their attitudes to learning, which demanded a switch-over from the analogous and traditional patterns of education, into the 21st-century era of ICT-related educational facilities when the powers of

technology have successfully bridged all geographical gaps and reduced the entire globe to a micro village where knowledge could be accessed and shared with ease. In this paper therefore, it is the primary target to discuss the crucial role played by the numerous facilities of the ICT in enhancing the qualities of teaching and learning provided in schools in Nigeria. In doing that however, relevant background information should be created from the historical narrative which introduced the dire need for the teaching and learning of Social Studies in Nigeria's colonial era schools, starting from March, 1923 when the Education Policy in British Tropical Africa was formally endorsed.

Keywords: ICT, Aid, Teaching, Learning, Social Studies, Historical, Survey

Introduction

Nigeria, located in the west coast of the African continent, was a British colonial territory until political independence was secured on 1st October, 1960. History informs us that Nigeria's colonial encounter with this imperial government started in the historic year of 1861 when British firms occupied parts of this overseas geographical estate, which was later christened Nigeria by the then Governor-General – Frederick Lugard, following a successful amalgamation of the southern and northern territories this massive territory which was dominated by black peoples with countless cultures and multiplicity of distinct languages. As a territory under the colonial occupation of the imperial regime of the British government, Britain conceded to herself the responsibilities of civilizing, and evangelizing the peoples of the territory under occupation. As was the case, the tasks of attaining these objectives were pursued through the auspices of education, which were spearheaded by a number of European Christian missionaries who also accepted it as their God-given mandate to evangelize the people and impose their own types of religious doctrines, which were of course considered to be superior to the

already existing traditional forms of worship and supplication to God which the local populations had earlier owned and practised (Lugard, 1922; Fafunwa, 1974; Phillipson, 1948).

As the project of spreading the gospel of Christianity was being spread to parts of the massive multicultural Nigerian territory through the active participations of various Christian missions from the continent of Europe, the project of introducing the peoples of the territories to education followed too. This project manifested itself in the erection of schools and literacy centres which stood alongside the Christian missionary outposts erected by the missionaries too. Thus, starting from the historic year of September, 1842 when English speaking missionaries from Europe arrived Badagry, in the present day Lagos State, the project of evangelizing and education the peoples of Nigeria took a new dimension. Historians capture this mission as the 2nd missionary journey of evangelization in the territory of Nigeria. This was based on the historical evidence that some Portuguese merchants had earlier arrived Nigeria in 1472, and visited Lagos and Benin areas where they exchanged greetings with the Oba of Benin. This resulted to a trade agreement between the merchants and the Oba of Benin, with the result that trading activities flourished between the merchants and the Binis during the period. This contact led to the arrival of Portuguese Catholic missionaries who joined their merchant cousins in the Benin project in 1515. This resulted to the establishment of a school at the vicinity of the Oba's palace, mainly for the training of the sons of the Oba and his chiefs (Fafunwa, 1974).

However, between 1515 and 1552, intensive commercial activities, flowed between the Portuguese and the Binis, while on the other hand, the education and evangelization of the peoples of the area suffered setbacks. Unfortunately, slave trading constituted one major item of trade that was highly patronized by the Portuguese because of the huge economic gains it offered. However, owing to the inglorious image created as a consequence of the Portuguese engagement in the nefarious trade on human beings, language problems, poor public image, and enormous

logistic complications, the Portuguese mission in Nigeria ended. That was the situation that was facilitated by the abrogation of all slave trading activities by the British government in the historic year of 1807. This development marked the end of the 1st Christian missionary enterprise which was led by the Portuguese Catholic missionaries in Nigeria (Fafunwa, 1974; Omolewa, 1986).

It was the unceremonious end of the 1st Christian missionary journey into Nigeria that ushered in the commencement of the 2nd attempt to capture Nigerians for Christ. That took place on the historic day of 24th September, 1842 when English-speaking missionaries of the Methodist Mission, led by Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman, son of a blackfather and an English mother, and accompanied by William de Graft, one of the foremost educated Ghanaians, arrived Badagry – from Britain. Proposed to take the bulls by the horns, this team of missionaries embarked on the project of transplanting and cultivating the gospel of Christianity onto the waiting hearts of the peoples of Nigeria. That was the huge project of converting the heathen peoples of this massive colonial territory into the Christian faith. Consequently, the successes recorded in this herculean effort opened the corridors for the involvement of the other Christian missions who joined the race later (Walker, 1942; Ajayi, 1965; Fafunwa, 1974).

Meanwhile, it might be important to appreciate the historical narrative which confirms that the thought of planting the seeds of Christianity in Nigeria was conceptualized by the missionaries of the CMS mission in London (United Kingdom) and Sierra-Leone in West Africa, but it was the Methodists that actualized the project before other Christian missions began to join in. at the forefront of this project was the famous Niger Expedition which was despatched by the British government in 1841, with the mandate of penetrating into the hinterlands of Nigeria, while also planting the seeds of Christianity and western education along the various routes they traversed. Remarkably, the mission was constituted of 144 Europeans and 1 African, Samuel Ajayi-Crowther, a former Yoruba slave, who embarked on the journey. Unfortunately, out of this number, 48 of them died of malaria and other illnesses in the

course of the journey while the remaining members of the team arrived Lokoja in the present day Kogi State, from where they spread out to other towns and villages in the southern areas of Nigeria. Meanwhile, the mission reached Abeokuta in 1846 where they established schools and missionary outposts (Fafunwa, 1974).

It is quite remarkable to observe that it was from Lokoja and Badagry, and most especially, Badagry, near Lagos, that several other Christian missions took off on their tasks of evangelizing and educating the peoples of the Nigerian colonial territory. Prominent among them was the Methodist Mission which established the first school in Nigeria, which was located in Badagry in 1844. The school was known as the Nursery of the Infant Church. According to resource data, the school's population of fifty pupils was largely made up of the children of Sierra Leonean emigrants, plus those of a few local converts. The source adds that the CMS mission also made some remarkable impact in the education sector during those earlier days when she also established two schools and a missionary outpost in 1845. Both projects were at the instigation of a team of American ship, the *Adaric*, which brought in a formidable team of missionaries which, which included Mr and Mrs Samuel Ajayi-Crowther, Rev and Mrs Townsend, Rev and Mrs Gollmer, Messrs William March, and Edward Phillips (who were teachers by profession. The source concludes that among the team were also four carpenters, three labourers, two servants, and one interpreter (Ajayi, 1965; Fafunwa, 1974).

Other Christian missions that joined in the evangelization and educational project in Nigeria after necessary permissions were granted by the Baptist Mission (1854), Roman Catholic Mission (1868), Church of Scotland Mission, United Presbyterian Mission, Qua Ibo Mission (1887), Primitive Methodist Missionary Society (1892), and Basel Mission, etc. Weighing heavily in the hands of the various Christian missions who volunteered to engage in the 'spiritual scramble' for Nigerian souls was the project of converting the people to the Christian faith through the auspices of education, which was an indication that the British influence which had

started since 1861 failed to address the educational challenges faced by the peoples of the territories of Nigeria under their control. By implication therefore, the British commitments in the areas of education were quite minimal, and unable to touch communities and populations of Nigerians who needed the intellectual skills offered through the attainment of Western education. Having conceptualized the lights of Western education as a quintessential ingredient required for conversion to Christianity, as well as an aid to future human capacity development, it became incumbent on the missionaries to engage in the educational project, through the establishment of schools and literacy centres in various towns and villages encountered on their routes into the hinterlands of Nigeria. Confronted with this enormous challenge, the missions erected schools, provided forms of literacy, and adopted the various educational curricula which were approved by the British government (Lugard, 1922; Ajayi, 1965; Nkokelonye, 2005; Omolewa, 2006; Iwunna, 2011).

Unfortunately, the British colonial government, starting from her earliest years of colonial contact with Nigeria in 1861, was neither interested, nor committed to the educational development of the peoples of the territory under their occupation. Rather, their primary interest was in the areas of commerce and exportation of raw materials into their factories in Europe and other parts of the world. The areas of development which attracted their interests and fiscal commitments were the areas of commercial activities which impacted their revenue earning powers. Meanwhile, host Nigerian communities which produced those agricultural materials that were highly needed by European factories suffered severe levels of infrastructural development, endured poverty and human degradation created by poverty, health challenges, and lack of skills, as well as abject illiteracy and lack of awareness (Sagay, 1970; Onwubiko, 1973; Fafunwa, 1974).

Worried about the impact of these unwholesome complications, and perturbed by the British government's lack of investment and laissez-faire attitude in the education sector in her numerous colonial territories in Africa, the Phelps-Stokes Fund,

established in 1911 under the sponsorship of an American philanthropist known as Caroline Phelps-Stokes rose to the occasion. It was the gory findings of this philanthropic organization that compelled the British government to set up an investigative commission on 24th November, 1923. As was expected, the commission was mandated to understudy the level of the British government's commitment in the educational development of her colonial territories in West, South, and Equatorial Africa, Nigeria inclusive. Considered as an advisory committee to the government of Britain, the commission's report which was submitted on 13th March, 1925 compelled the British government to create the popular Education Policy in British Tropical Africa (Advisory Committee on Native Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies (ACNEBTAD, 1925; Fafunwa, 1974).

Among others, the Advisory Committee advised the British government on the key areas of educational development which required serious consideration. That included the curricula contents of subjects approved for school education within the colonial territory of Nigeria. In accordance with this development therefore, the committee made a number of subject areas which guided the British government's engagements in the education sector. Thus, it was the recommendation of the committee that 'education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of the various peoples, conserving as far as possible all sound and healthy elements in the fabric of their social life; adapting them where necessary to changed circumstances and progressive ideas, as an agent of natural growth and evolution.' The report recommends further that 'its aim should be to render the individual more efficient in his or her condition of life, whatever it may be, and to promote the advancement of the community as a whole through the improvement of agriculture, the development of native industries, the improvement of health, the training of the people in the management of their own affairs, and the inculcation of true ideals

of citizenship and service' (ACNEBTAD, 1925; Federal Government of Nigeria, 2014; Onwuka&Enemuoh, 2014).

Putting these into perspectives therefore, the basis for the creation of Social Studies as a school subject in Nigeria could be deduced. The core objectives which drive the adaptation of this subject into the curricula of school education in the country could be established. Even at that, the curricula contents which form the focus of this subject could be successfully traced back to the reports of this commission. In which case, the historical narrative behind the formation of the curricula contents of this essential school subject, which is studied all over the country's educational system, could be traced back to the colonial era when it was conceded as the educational ingredient required for the effective empowerment of young learners with the relevant personal traits, strong behavioural attitudes, sound commitments to national growth, positive citizenship roles in Nigeria, adaptation to healthy cultures and cultural practices, and fundamental duties owed to fatherland, among others. Thus, the inclusion of this subject among the list of subjects approved for schools in Nigeria was necessitated by the need to create better citizens, identify citizens' roles required for the building of a better Nigeria, define those values which promote peace and unity, empower citizens with the awareness of the various professional skills needed for effective nation-building, as well as impart Nigerians with the intellectual knowledge and moral values required for positive future leadership roles in the society, among several others (Obeta, 1996; Njoku, 1999).

Coming from this background therefore, the curricula of Social Studies at the primary school levels introduces young learners to the numerous values, behavioural patterns, life preparation techniques, and accepted societal norms which the nation expects them abide with. It also educates them on the numerous environmental and healthcare related behaviours which they are expected to maintain. Similarly, at the secondary school and tertiary levels, young learners begin to be introduced to, among all others, their roles as leaders of families,

communities, and at the national levels. The education received at these levels equips them with the intellectual and professional skills needed to enable them perform good leadership positions at various capacities within the society. These are informed by the need to drive corruption and its numerous negative vices which have bedevilled the nation since the attainment of political independence in 1960. Thus, it is expected that through the teaching and learning of this subject, its curricula contents could arm learners with the fundamental intellectual and professional empowerment they require to function as nation-conscious citizens whose love and commitment to the unity and oneness of Nigeria could not be undermined (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2014; Onwuka, & Enemuo, 2014).

Putting these into context therefore, there is no doubt that Nigeria's school-going children desperately need the intellectual empowerment offered by this essential school subject in order emerge as informed and empowered nationals. Nigeria's children in schools desperately need this academic awareness to be able to withstand the temptations of engaging in activities which are detrimental to national growth, national unity, and love for nation. As a matter of fact, it is quite obvious that the intellectual knowledge conveyed by this essential school subject, which is taught and learnt at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of the nation's educational system could guide learners' conducts in the community, inform their resilience to contribute genuinely to national growth, and challenge their resolve to appreciate Nigeria's unity and oneness as a precious legacy that must be preserved. Through the teaching and learning of this subject too, it has become quite relevant that those core objectives which informed the inclusion of this subject among the list of subjects approved for study in schools in Nigeria should be sustained.

Hence, there is the need to examine the key roles which the infrastructures of the ICT could play in improving the quality of education provided in the teaching and learning of Social Studies in schools. It has therefore become imperative to identify the greater roles which these electronic devices could perform in

enhancing the quality of education received by young learners on this essential subject. This is an indication that both teachers and learners require some additional training on the handling of the various technological devices of the ICT to equip themselves with the technical skills required to be able to handle the devices, which include laptops, IPADs, Android mobile phones, audio visual devices, electronic boards, video recorders, flat screen television devices, electronic recording devices, laptops, internet facilities, and uninterrupted power supply services, etc. Towards improving the qualities of teaching and learning of this subject impactful in schools in Nigeria therefore, there is need for the government to digitalize the country's educational institutions with modern ICT facilities. In doing this, Nigeria's march towards the comity of world nations that have keyed into the modern facilities of the digital era could be attained in due course.

Social Studies as a school subject in Nigeria

Social Studies counts among the subjects taught in primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions in Nigeria. According to sources, this subject was first introduced into Nigeria's school system on an experimental basis at the Aiyetoro Comprehensive High School, Ogun State in 1963, with the financial assistance of the United States of America Agency for International Development (USAID), the Ford Foundation, and the Ohio State University. Notwithstanding its late recognition and formal inclusion in the curricula of school education at all levels of the country's educational system, its influence as well as its contents have been part and parcel of the country's educational curricula starting from the pre-colonial years of Nigeria's existence as a nation. Dating back to the earlier years of the British colonial regime in Nigeria, its contents were adopted as educational lessons which could assist the citizenry emerge as good citizens, empowered citizens, informed nationals, patriotic sons and daughters, peace loving persons, and economically relevant individuals (Lugard, 1922; Njoku, 1999; Omolewa, 2001; Omolewa, 2006).

From that humble beginning however, Social Studies eventually emerged as a subject approved for inclusion in the list of subjects taught in Nigeria's schools. Obviously, this decision was adopted by the government in view of the greater roles which its contents were expected to perform in the overall development of young learners all over the country. This was based on the understanding that knowledge gained from this subject could impact the quality of the citizenry the nation is able to produce. Thus, the consideration was that through the teaching and learning of this subject in Nigeria's educational system, learners could be inculcated with the right attitudes about their physical, social, economic, cultural, environmental, and professional developments (Njoku, 1999; Omolewa, 2001).

In view of this development therefore, the considered import and relevance of this subject as a school subject was granted further prominence at the conclusion of the 1969 Educational Curricula Conference which held in Lagos. Following its upward review and approval as a veritable and crucial school subject, its relevance to national development and citizenry intellectual growth was emphasized. On the strength of this recommendation therefore, Social Studies was approved as a compulsory subject in schools, while the position of History was downgraded to the levels of an optional subject in schools. This seemed to accord the teaching and learning of this subject some edge over its counterpart – History, a development that is being carefully deployed as a political tool in the hands of the country's politicians since the past decades. Despite all the political manipulations deployed by some uninformed politicians who attempt to displace one subject in favour of the other, the fact still remains that both History and Social Studies are still relevant for effective national development, consolidation of national consciousness, and the inculcation of the right values into Nigerians, most especially in this digital era when criminality, terrorism, and kidnapping for ransom seem to go viral in an attempt to dampen the resilience and efforts of the government to accord Nigerians the safety and security they truly deserve (Omolewa, 2001; Danbatta, 2017; Eze, & Agada, 2018).

The role of the ICT in the Teaching and Learning of Social Studies

The role of the ICT in the teaching and learning of Social Studies in Nigeria's educational systems shall be discussed briefly under the following subheadings:

Information dissemination

As already mentioned, the world is currently in a digital era. This is an era when the powers of technology are able, capable, and programmed to disseminate information simultaneously to the entire universe within a period of a few mini-seconds. The world has attained an era when all geographical distances worldwide have been broken down completely, and persons are able to connect to all parts of the world, without having to fly in the air, sail on boats, or even engage in any hazardous road trips. Through the digitalized facilities of the ICT infrastructures therefore, people are able to circulate crucial information effortlessly, retrieve information with ease, source for information from the comfort of their homes, as well as reach out to colleagues and other contacts anywhere on planet earth through the powers of the various media of the ICT. Thus, the implication is that information on all subject areas bothering on Social Studies could be sourced from the internet, for instance, stored electronically, circulated digitally to clients all over the globe, and at the same time share information and knowledge on this subject, irrespective of whatever geographical gaps that may exist among the persons involved (Etebu, A. T. (2010); Danbatta, 2017, Mohamedhbai, 2020)

Source of Educational and Research Materials

Connected to the technological powers of the internet through any of the ICT facilities, access to all sorts of information, data, and resource materials on any subject area, and in this case, all aspects of Social Studies, are feasible. Unhindered entry into websites which provide valuable information on all aspects this school subject are readily available and accessed with great ease. The

indication is that researchers, scientists, authors of all sorts and divergent opinions submit valuable contributions which could assist learners deal with any complications and academic challenges they may be encountering on this subject. Thus, with the availability of inexhaustible information base on this subject on the internet, the days of embarking on dangerous journeys to faraway distances in search of research data are long gone. From the convenience of one's room, office, or any public space, access to the internet or the worldwide web (www) could be attained without unnecessary challenges (Danbatta, 2017; Mohamedhbai, 2020).

Open access to all Teachers and Learners

Access to the internet is never discriminatory. Logging into the worldwide web does not discriminate or segregate among users and numerous clients. The worldwide web accommodates all, shares all opinions, disseminates all sheds of opinions, and grants all clients seamless access into their information storage banks. Thus, access to the technological devices of the ICT are open to all, accessible to all, and accommodating to all. By implication therefore, teachers, students, researchers, professionals of all sorts, and freelance operators, all have equal opportunities to browse and access any information of their choice. All that is required however is that customers are required to procure enough data that would cover the period of time they wish to spend on the web while sourcing for information. It is therefore an indication that both teachers and learners are at liberty to exchange information on the internet, or share same with their friends and colleagues anywhere in the globe. By that, it is without doubt that both teachers and students share equal and unhindered access to information on any crucial area of concern on Social Studies on the internet (Omeke, 2015; Danbatta; Eze, & Agada, 2018).

Converts the Globe into a minute Geographical Space

Through the technology-driven powers of the ICT, persons all over the globe could meet and interact among themselves within a few seconds. With the aid of relevant ICT facilities, it is practically possible for persons from Nigeria to connect with friends, colleagues, business associates, and facilities in Bangladesh, Namibia, faraway India, Japan, Belgium or even Canada within a few short fractions of a second. The bottom line is that the power of technology has converted the entire globe into a mini-village, a little supermarket, and hot hub where valuable contacts could be made without having to sweat over it. With the aid of ICT facilities therefore, all geographical boundaries are broken down, all travel expenses are cut off, visa procurement protocols to overseas nations are eliminated, while unnecessary risks of making dangerous road travels are eliminated. At that, precious lives are saved, and economic resources are maximized, most especially at this time when the dreaded Covid-19 pandemic is still on the rampage, while kidnappers for ransom, robbers, and other criminal elements operate openly in different parts of the country (Pember, & Humbe, 2013; Danbatta, 2017; Mohamedhbai, 2020).

Challenges users to acquire Technological Skills

No one would wish to be left behind in this era of adaptation to the various skills required to become digitally relevant. Since the arrival of the ICT infrastructures, users and numerous clients have also re-aligned their hands and knowledge, to be able to be digitally relevant to themselves and others. Several other persons have also gone to the levels of undertaking some technological education, all with the objectives of acquainting themselves with the techniques of adapting to the demands of the various technological devices of the ICT. Some persons trained as computer operators, web designers, computer programmers, software engineers, computer maintenance professionals, and several others. Armed with such skills, opportunities of earning extra income, turning oneself into an employer of labour, and escaping from the traumatic crutches of poverty and undue

economic dependence on the generosity of others have been eliminated in most homes. The implication is that the availability and accessibility to various facilities and services of the ICT to teachers and young students have impacted their earning powers, improved their ability to browse and access crucial information on Social Studies on the web, as well as enhanced the quality of the teaching and learning they are able to impart or acquire (Omeke, 2015; Kpokpo, Anyamele, & Nwafor, 2018; Nkwocha, Iwunna, Njoku, & Dimonye, 2021).

Easy adaptation to the ‘New Normals’

During the Covid-19 pandemic era, the entire globe was challenge to adapt to some new ways of doing old things. Through the powers of ICT’s technological devices, the entire world was forced to work from the home, study from the home, attend conferences from the home, and attend lectures or lessons from the home. No doubt, students and teachers were not left out in these developments. The situation became so much compelling at the time when the rampaging Covid-19 pandemic was attempting to turn the world upside down, and schools were kept under strict lock and keys. As a possible option, the alternatives of teaching and learning from the comfort of our different homes became the only workable option. Confronted with this challenge, teachers and students keyed into the ‘new normals’ and adjusted their teaching and learning apparatuses in line with the demands of the period. The result of this adjustment saved millions of lives that could have been lost to the dreaded Covid-19 pandemic (Iwunna, Dimonye, Nwokeji, Abubakar, Okoro, & Alison, 2021).

Conclusion

This paper concludes on a very brief note. The 21st century Nigeria has been facing desperate security challenges. There are threats to national security, threats to economic survival, and threats to the safety of citizens, which impact food insecurity in Nigeria. These dangerous situations obviously affect economic development and threaten the unity and oneness of the country. Confronted by these

precarious challenges, which are man-made, it seems eminent that the curricula of education on Social Studies be reviewed further in line with the 21st century challenges facing Nigeria. At that, it has become crucial that the relevant educational curricula which could encourage young Nigerians to commit themselves sincerely to genuine national development, make strong resolutions to love fellow citizens, shun all attitudes of corruption and embezzlement of public funds, as well as empower citizens with the appropriate intellectual strength needed to reject corruption and abuse of office at whatever capacities they may find themselves.

The Way Forward

It is considered important to observe that the curricula contents of Social Studies should be regularly reviewed, and developed accordingly to be able to accommodate the 21st century challenges faced by Nigeria in the current times. Teachers and handlers of class lessons on this essential school subject should be trained and equipped with the technical skills required to handle various ICT-related facilities designed for classroom education. There is every need to make Social studies a compulsory subject in all schools in Nigeria, most importantly at the secondary and tertiary levels. In addition too, teachers and handlers of Social Studies should be supported with continued training and re-training exercises in order to sharpen their professional dispositions in handling the curricula contents of this subject.

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