
**REVISITING SOCIAL STUDIES' DEFINITION AND
OBJECTIVES AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE
PRESENT AND THE FUTURE SOCIAL STUDIES**

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Abstract

Education is the process of training the mind in developing the natural and human resources in any environment. At advent of Social Studies in Nigeria, there was an indigenous social studies programme in this country, which was society-centered. The curriculum was concerned with helping the learner to understand himself, discover their capabilities within the context of the society. Social Studies face challenges like definition aim/objective content, and concept placement methodology problems. As a 19th century subject that deals with the environment that culture and religious norms has been put in place; with science and technology made it to face challenges. The subject started with non-professionals in the early 19th century. They defined the subject with personal ideas. The subject is made up of professionals now, the definition should be revisited to suit the subject and as study of the environment while the aims and objectives should be redesigned to meet the societal needs.

Keywords: Revisiting, Definition, Objectives, Implications, Present, Future.

Introduction

Education is the process of preparing the mind towards human and societal development. Each school subject is planned and organized to address certain human needs. This is accomplished through fostering consciousness, experience and knowledge that helps people uncover their inner being, both at the personal and communal level. Nigeria implemented Social Studies as a subject in order to effectively democratize the learners (children) (Ebegha, 2013).

There was an indigenous Social Studies curriculum in Nigeria that was focused on societal wellbeing, prior to the introduction of Social Studies as a distinct school subject. The curriculum was focused on assisting the student in coming to terms with themselves and learning about their talents in relation to Society. Kolo (2007), states that during this period, Social Studies encouraged students to have a sense of unity in order to survive the physical, geographic, economic, and cultural condition. The indigenous Social Studies curriculum seems to foster skills that help young people handle the social, cultural, and physical challenges they must contend with. Social Studies goals of instilling the spirit of nationalism and patriotism in the Nigerian learner will be realized. It is democratic in its content; the basic education learner is a social being who forms social relationship with other human beings through interaction. They defined the subject with personal ideas. The subject is made up of professionals now, the definition should be revisited to suit the subject and as study of the environment while the aims and objectives should be redesigned to meet the societal needs. This paper therefore canvassed for revisiting Social Studies' definition and objectives and its implications for the present and the future Social Studies.

Revisiting the Definition of Social Studies

The introduction of Social Studies in the 19th century forced it to confront academic difficulties. As a 19th century subject, its definitions, aims/objectives, concepts/content placement, methods, etc. deal with the society setting where cultural and religious standards have been in place with science and technology.

Social Studies has been defined in several ways by academics and other individuals based on their respective specialties. In the early 19th century, amateurs were the first to study the subject. They came up with the following definitions of the subject. The purpose of Social Studies instruction in Nigeria is to prepare students to be good democratic citizens who claims that social studies is a subject taught for both discipline and intellectual development. Students learn about civic education and reflective inquiry in Social Studies classes. Social Studies examines how people interact with their physical and social contexts and how science and technology have made it possible for people to live comfortably in these situations. Social Studies is an interdisciplinary subject where people may learn about issues related to survival in their environment It is a study of how people interact with their physical social scientific and technological contexts. Social Studies is a “offshoot of the social sciences” Social Studies also promotes the social science concepts that have been chosen and implemented in the classroom.

Social Studies is the study of man in relation to his natural and social surroundings. Social Studies focuses on teaching students about people, where and how they live, how societies are formed and run, how they govern themselves and meet their physical and emotional needs, why and how they fight, and how they use and abuse the resources of the planet they call home or habitat. Social Studies examines how man structured culture, economics, politics, history, and geography as well as other social components of society. Social Studies are a kind of civic education meant to instill in people the ideal standards, beliefs, and attitudes that would make them excellent citizens. Social Studies is a part of education that aims to provide students the knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and values required to be accountable citizens in a free society. Social Studies are the catalyst for the development of rich, multifaceted personalities with practical knowledge and values that may succeed in altering society, a complicated aspect of the world.

The emphasis of Social Studies, according to NERDC which was created in 1988 as a result of the merger with NERC, is on man’s survival issues, including how he affects his environment and how

that environment affects him. By doing this, Social Studies teaches students, how to cultivate positive social behaviours, accredit values, and develop practical problem-solving skills. These intellectual and manipulated skills are now essential for an individual's survival in his social, political, economic, and physical spheres of existence.

Social Studies has been challenging for academics to conceive, nonetheless. This results from varying interpretations of what Social Studies is and ought to be. In reality, scholars do not agree on what Social Studies should be. It cannot be contested that the goal of Social Studies has always been to address societal and human concerns. With regard to whether social sciences and humanities instructors can effectively execute Social Studies objectives in upper elementary education courses, there is a fundamental disagreement among the subject-matter specialists. This is as a result of their lack of the education and credentials required to teach Social Studies. Experts in the area support the continued search for a clear understanding of social studies because of its distinctive character (Ireyefoju & Ireyefoju, 2010). Danladi (2005) noted that Social Studies have been widely described in educational literature, regardless of the conflicts over the concept of Social Studies that have recently been included into the educational curriculum in Nigeria.

Despite this conceptual disagreement among social studies scholars, it is widely agreed that the Nigerian Social Studies Programme (NSSP) is an integrated field of study that explores man's relationship with his environment and develops in him a high level of intellectual and social skills toward resolving issues that confront man in the environment and enhancing his quality of life (Mezicobi & Onyeausi, 2011; Umudi, 2012; Oganwu, 2018). In order to increase social, economic, political, scientific, technical efficacy and efficiency, Social Studies is thus concerned with the linkages, interactions, and interrelationships between human blessing and their environment.

The fundamental goal of Social Studies is to impart specific social skills, beliefs information and attitudes that will benefit both individuals and society as a whole. The overall goal of Social Studies

is to change society and human behaviour while fostering survival skills so that students may overcome obstacles in the physical, geographical, social, cultural, economic, political, and technical worlds. The educational implication is that Social Studies is designed to support intellectual growth, citizenship education, the development of social skills, environmental management, and the cultivation of moral values for the stability of the Nigerian state on all fronts -social, economic, political, cultural, scientific, and technological (Ireyefoju, 2010).

The Spiral of Change

When the National Policy on Education (NPE) was adopted in 1981, it put social studies with other subjects in the Junior Secondary School (JSS) curriculum in Nigeria, which was a watershed moment in the discipline's history. According to the National Policy on Education, Social Studies is a subject that must be studied in all primary, secondary, and teacher preparation.

It integrates Social Studies into standard social science curricula. In conclusion Social Studies is an integrator because it engages the learners practically in critical thinking and gives them the values, abilities, attributes, and knowledge they need to discover knowledge. Social Studies is environment-focused, so as a result, its subject-matter is dynamic and meets current societal needs. It encourages civics education.

Social Studies examines how people interact with their surroundings. Environmental science is what it is known as. Social Studies examines the physical and psychological needs of people in their environment, their relationships with one another, how they use and abuse the earth's natural resources-which they have made their home-and how they run their households and organize the society.

The objectives of the Nigerian Social Studies program are taken from the primary national goals, educational philosophy, and national education goals with the approval of the junior secondary school curriculum and the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 educational policy (FGN, 2014). As a result, the following are the

goals and objectives of Social Studies:

Social Studies encourages the learner to become aware of the connections between human knowledge and life, develop human judgment and critical thinking skills and develop a civically engaged mindset and the desire to contribute positively to a flourishing, unified Nigeria.

Social Studies give sufficient knowledge and information about man and society, aid man in the development of worthwhile and accepted ideas, thoughts, and ideologies, help man acquire practical, manipulative, and creative abilities and make the learner aware of the importance of the cooperative and interdependent spirit in community life.

Man should be made aware of society's problems and how to use his intellect, feelings, and will to address them, making man capable of evaluating his own conduct and pointing out where others have erred would help him understand what society expects of him and support the development of critical thinking, analysis, and selection skills so that one can distinguish between substance and shadow.

Conclusion

Based on the study's results, the researchers came to the conclusion that Social Studies has several professional problems, which is one of the main causes for the subject's lack of clarity and poorly developed methodology when compared to other school disciplines. Social Studies should be taught using a method that departs from the usual conventional approach since it is a subject from the 19th century. Social Studies should get special consideration since they deal with the environment and how the environment affects people's lives. Acquiring the one relevant body of knowledge and information, since it is a requirement for both individual knowledge and making a positive contribution to the betterment of mankind.

Suggestions

Social Studies should be given special methodology. Social Studies scholar should agree on one or two special definition, only

professionals should teach the subject.

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