

The Roles of Social Studies in Sustaining Community and Family Participation

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Abstract

Social studies is a subject that studies man and his activities in relation to his social, economic, political, cultural and physical environment. It is a training and orientation that prepares man for his fully participation in the community affairs. This paper attempted to explain the concepts of 'family' and 'social studies', objectives of social studies were highlighted; some roles of social studies in ensuring and sustaining community participation, its limitations and some recommended ways for sustainable community participation were discussed.

Keywords: Family, types of family, social studies, objectives of social studies and community participation.

1. Introduction

Family and community play integral role in the development of societies. This is in the sense that, in order for them to enhanced community participation, they render the role of training children to show love and affection toward members of the society, this helps greatly in teaching and aspiring for the overall unity of members particularly where there is diversity in tribes and interest; Thus, individuals learn to develop human feelings and appreciate the need to show concern for what happen to others. The characteristics of these fused together and prepares individuals for life in the community which without there might be a poor performance on the part of the individuals when they are expected to fully integrated into the social, economic and political life of their societies, since there is no society that would want to be associated with failures. Therefore families and communities take tasks of preparing community members for their future self-reliance which in turn would be of great benefit to the community at large. For this, attention was focused on the roles of social studies toward ensuring and sustaining full and active community participation.

2. The Concepts 'Family' and 'Social Studies'

FAMILY: According to encyclopedia Britannica (2008), family is the oldest and the most universal system both in an animal kingdom and social system. It is a basic unit of every society and it is dynamic. It is defined as a group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, or adoption, constituting a single household and interacting with each other in their respective social position, usually, as spouses, parents, children, and sibling. At its most basic, then, family consists of two married adults usually a man and a woman (almost always from difference Lineage and not related by blood) along with their offspring's, usually living in a private and separated dwellings. George Murdock (1965) sees family as a social

group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It contains adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults.

Family is the first unit an individual gets in contact and spends a good portion of his time with. Both psychologists and sociologists maintain that the family is crucial in the personality development of an individual, because it involves the training to imbibe appropriate acceptable manners as selfless service to the society that will help the individual to live happily in the society i.e. community participation.

3. Types of family:

Traditionally there were basically two most major types of family, the first is specially known as Nuclear Family, which is believed to be the oldest of the various types of family in existence. It comprises of adult man and woman with or without children leaving in more or less matured permanent relationship that is approved by the society as marriage. The family arrangements that include not only the parents and their unmarried children living at home, but also children that have married, their spouses and their offspring, and possibly elderly dependency as well, is called an extended family.

But of recent, the family structure like society itself has undergone significant changes. Most of the time when a person imagine of the definition of a family, the figure of a mother, father and children is what comes into the mind. The form or structure does not show how healthy then it is or how they function. Structures are the substantial makeup of the members in relationship to each other without respect to roles and functions. There are famous four types of a families structure; Nuclear, Single Parent, Extended, and Childless. These four types of family structure give the variety of forms they may appear to.

The first structure from the four types is Nuclear. A nuclear family consists of a mother, father, and their biological or adoptive descendants, often called the traditional family. This is the most admired from the four types of structure. It is a fostering environment where there is hosting of children as there is love, time spent with children, emotional support, low stress, and a constant economic upbringing.

The second structure from the four types of family structure is the Single Parent. It is one of the most outstanding transformed from the other four types of family structure. In the Single Parent family, children are most likely to live in a single parent structure for reasons other than the death of a parent, children's born with their mothers not married, usually teenage mothers. One of the most luxurious things for a single parent is child care. Single families frequently have less pressure compared to the pressure in families before divorce. Usually parents and children are more eager to work together with each other to find solutions to solve household chores in single parent families.

The third structure from the four types of structure is the Extended Family. Extended family is two or more adults from unlike generations of a family, who share a household. It consists of

more than parents and children; it may be a family that includes parents, children, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, foster children. At times children are raised by their grandparents when their biological parents have died or can no longer take care of them. Extended families can be found all over the world in different communities and countries. In the four types of structure nuclear family is more probable to become an extended family than any other family type.

The fourth and last structure from the four types of family structure is the Childless Family. A childless family is basically a group of people from all variety of backgrounds and all areas of life who, for whatever reason, have never had children. Others will perhaps have children at some time in the future, but are not prepared just yet, and some sought to have children but were unable to because of a variety of social and or biological forces that obstruct and result in unplanned childlessness. To replace children, childless families usually have pets as a substitute.

4. What is Social Studies?

Social studies is called with different names in different parts of the world. For example, some call it cultural studies, oriental studies, environmental education/studies or social science. This is due to the various ways people perceive the concept, which is as a result of varied objectives from place to place depending on the needs, aspirations and desires of people. For the same reasons, social studies also vary in objectives from time to time and from place to place depending on the needs, aspirations and desires of people. Hence social studies do not have a universally accepted definition as different authors and writers defined social studies in various ways.

According to Akintola (2000) Social Studies could be seen as a programme of study in our schools which is used to inculcate in the learners the knowledge, skills, attitude and actions considered important in human relationship in the society (CESAC, 1993). Ajiboye (1999) simply puts it as the study of man in his society. Social studies is not the study of man alone or the study of the society exclusively rather it studies man at home, at work, at worship, in politics, at play, in the village, in the nation and everywhere engaged in his busy programme of living (Barth & Dubey, 1998). With these definitions, social studies could be seen as the study of human behaviour and human institutions which aim at helping the individual understand the culture or society in which he lives. Other authors look at social studies from a different perspective. Merit (1961) in Akanbi, Adekomi and Adenyaju (1993) said that social studies is the overall subject of instruction which stresses human relationships. Adeyoyin (1990) defines social studies to reflect changes and a dynamism which has kept it alive as a field of study, flexible, dynamic and responsive to changes in the society. Ogunsanya (1984) says that social studies is an integration of many of the subjects of the social sciences, arts and sciences. He further explained that it is a synthesis rather than a mixture of the relevant component subjects such as economics, political science, sociology, anthropology, history, archaeology, geography, religion, pure and applied science, health education etc. To these, authors explained that, social

studies draws its knowledge from different disciplines and integrate the knowledge to form its concepts and also aid easy adaptation to societal changes.

Seen from the above definition of the term social studies, three important things are greatly highlighted.

- It is subject that expose individual to have awareness beside that of their immediate environment.
- It helps us to acquire and develop good attitudes such as compassion, honesty e.t.c.
- It develops skills of observations and interpreting those observed in our both internal and external environment community.

4.1 General objectives and relevance of teaching social studies

Fadeiye (1981) and Ajiboye (1999) share the following as objectives of teaching social studies:

- It presents knowledge as a whole unlike the traditional subjects such as history, civics, and geography to mention but a few which are taught separately.
- It helps to create awareness and understanding of our evolving social and physical environment as a whole in its natural, manmade, cultural and spiritual resources together with the rational use and conservation of these resources for national development.
- It helps to develop a capacity to learn and to acquire certain skills, including not only those of listening, speaking, reading, writing and of calculation but also those skills of handwork and lead together with those of observation, analysis and inference which are essential to the forming of sound socio-economic and political judgment.
- It helps to ensure the acquisition of the relevant body of knowledge and information with essential prerequisite to personal development as well as to a positive personal contribution to the betterment of mankind.

Mansaray (1991) grouped the objectives into three broad categories:

- **Knowledge:** This means understanding the evolving social physical environment, acquiring basic facts and information about our environment.
- **Skills:** Acquiring such basic skills as listening, speaking, reading and writing, skills of observation, data-collection, analysis and inference, which are essential to the forming of sound judgment.
- **Attitudes and values:** Development of positive attitudes of togetherness, comradeship and cooperation, the inculcation of values of honesty, handwork, fairness and justice.

A critical analytical consideration of these three groupings to go, justify the strength possessed by the subject in human development and attainment of national goals on education as probably no other single subject on the school curriculum has the potentiality of bringing about a high quality (character) education, the understanding, tolerance, appreciation of various cultures and subcultures of component groups in Nigeria as social studies. According to Ross and Genevois

(2006) a high-quality education will always reflect the dynamic nature of culture and languages, the value of the individual in relation to the larger context and the importance of living in a way that promotes equality in the present and foster a sustainable future.

5. Some roles of social studies in ensuring fully participation in the community affairs

Sunmomu (1984: PP 14-15) Social studies develops in the young ones a lot of useful skills, such as skills of writing, reading, modeling, listening critical thinking and many more. These skills are essential for any person, to be useful to his or her self in the society. Social studies use various teaching strategies to develop the stated skills like debate, excursion, dramatization etc, these strategies are used by social studies in order to prepare young ones to be actively involved in the community participation be it at the family level or at large, community in general.

Social studies teach the culture of the people in which the family and school found. The values, belief and norms of a society are examined. There are many issues in the social studies syllabus that give room for cultural study, for example, the syllabus of both primary and junior secondary school under the sub-theme 'living in the local community' are issues such as history, people and origin of your local community, societal relationship and custom, living habit and behaviour and religious belief, that encourages our young ones to be fully involved in the affair of the community having acquired much about the culture in their community.

Acceptable attitudes are developing through the acquisition of social studies knowledge, for example, acceptable moral behaviours and consideration of others. During group work in social studies lesson, learners develop tolerance, co-operation, and willingness to share and appreciate other people contribution towards a given goal. Role play is one of the strategy that is exceptionally good in the development of affective domain of a learner, by so doing sustainable community participation is encourage in our society.

Social studies teachers play a role on teaching value clarification. Values are personal references or attitudes and cultural norms that are imperative for any family and community member for the freely and actively participation in the community affairs. As personal reference or attitudes they are deeply rooted in the needs of the individual, in whatever considers important and hold dear, in what later becomes the styles of one's life. As cultural imperatives they refer to the pressures and norms which if properly assimilated and adopted, makes man's daily life both efficient and satisfying; this helps greatly in encouraging both family and the entire community for the fully and actively participation in community affairs.

Generally, you would agree beyond reasonable doubt that social studies contributed greatly in making family and the entire communities leave in groups and harmoniously. This is because man is gregarious, any man who deliberately decides to live in isolation can rarely be considered 'normal' in the accepted form of the term. We also know that when man is faced with enforced isolation - like a prisoner, he may gradually become disturbed psychologically.

The need for man to live in society or community come about as a result of desire to improve his living condition and that of his entire community at large so that by so doing issue of security and protection of the entire society is trust by the fully and actively participation in the community affairs.

The above roles or contribution of social studies toward sustaining community participation do have some problems and some of this problem are-

6. Problems

Dubey and Barth (1980:PP.5-6) Social studies has a long way to go, because it is fully institutionalized. Its history has been short and there are many people including teachers, administrators and ministry officials who regard it as uncomfortable challenge to those more familiar with traditional teaching subject. Mezieobi (1993:PP. 144) sees that problems of effective teaching of social studies may be consider in five dimensions, namely, the human factor, government factor, the teachers factors, school factor and community factory. One of the human factors militating against the effective teaching and learning of social studies is the resistance behaviour of people trained in the traditional discipline of social sciences and humanities to the introduction of social studies in the school curricula. These subject traditionalists fear that social studies might out rightly displace their traditional disciplines; have continued to resist, directly or indirectly, the emergence of social studies in the Educational scene in Nigeria for example. They perceived and teach social studies in the light of their disciplinary bias.

Government factor- The government is a significance factor in the pathetic state confronting the teaching of social studies education in Nigerian school which invariably, negatively affects the sustaining of community participation. In ineffective teaching and implementation of social studies curriculum can be schematized, thus:

As is evidence from the other educational and social plans in Nigeria such as the universal primary education programme, modern mathematics and the green revolution saga which had failed, government embarked on the implementation of the social studies curriculum without adequate preparation for its effective take off.

The social studies programme is also inadequately funded, the quality of social studies in our school today are too poor; a majority of those who teach social studies today are not trained for the job. There is no government that situated incentive plan to induce even professional trained social studies teacher to embark on regular professional regeneration activities in order to constantly update their knowledge skills and competence as a device to keep in constant touch with recent development and trends in social studies education.

Teachers factor: unquestionably there is the teacher factor which is perhaps principal factor in the inappropriate implementation of social studies curriculum at all levels of the educational system there by affected greatly the participation of the entire community in their affairs. The preponderance of generalist social studies teachers in Nigerian social studies classroom suggest that social studies

implementation, appropriately conceived, is bound to be malfunction. The problems of effective teaching of social studies in Nigeria as they relate to the 'teacher factor' more than anything else on teachers methodological emphasis Mezieobi briefly made this point when he opined that the malfunctioning of the social studies curriculum in Nigeria is attributed largely to the inappropriate utilization of teaching methods and techniques connected to the effective teaching and learning of social studies. Most teachers of social studies in Nigeria are neglected; perhaps out, of sheer ignorance, the relevant community resources that abound for effective social studies delivery, focus attention, on hard ware materials which the education authority hardly ever afford nor adequately distributed to schools for schools effectiveness in view of the country dwindling economic fortune.

Community factor- Mezieobi (1993: PP 154) went further to say that most community members do not understand what social studies is all about. The result is that community members do not give social studies implementation of their desired supply materially and financially. Furthermore, community dynamism, which social studies teaching and learning must always reflect, has been such that social studies teachers can not readily keep step with in the interactive process.

Generally, social studies problems are highly characterized by inferiority complex justify by the government, teachers' students and the entire community at large.

7. Suggestions

In order to enable the subject better help in encouraging fully and actively community participations, the following may serve as the prescriptions and counseling for good community participation-

We do have other to overcome however probably the major problems are the teacher himself, and concurrently the teacher training programme that produced him. Teachers tend to be very much productive of the training which they undergo. It is up to a teacher-training scheme to train-teachers in the way they are expected to teach. If teacher training institution want social studies teaches to teach with inquire activities then their programmes will have to give practical opportunity for them to learn. Examination emphasis needs to be shifted in that direction also. Students and teachers in -training are no exception. They need to be examined on what is value and rewarded. This does not mean being able to make a (recall) list of all of the possible inquiry activities in the world, but rather being able to analyze, evaluate and apply techniques and to be able to select appropriate learning activities, from the many alternatives, for the situation at hand.

The current 'teacher' of social studies in primary, school, secondary and tertiary institution who by training, do not have requisite credentials in social studies education should be subjected to a mandatory degree/NCE programme in social studies education run by the Universities and Colleges of Education, so that those teachers would have more sufficient knowledge on how to encourage their product to actively participate in the community affairs.

Government should give express and determine priority attention and support to the production of professional training to social studies teacher. The implication is that government through her

appropriate education agencies should persuade all conventional universities to many well-articulated B. Ed (social studies) degree and graduate. Although a meaningful social studies curriculum planning and revision must be a co-operative responsibility of rational citizens of all walks of life, yet government should entrust professional matters relating to social studies education to appropriately trained and qualified social studies educationists not generalist social studies practitioners.

Community participation through social studies education can also be possible if social studies textbook writers design social studies books in such a manner that they are illustrative, can be studied and thought about rather than books that can only be read. At these crucial level of social studies education primary and junior secondary schools-books that are tailored just to be read, detract from the investigated-oriented and reflective thinking philosophy of social studies.

8. Conclusion

In order to eliminate or reduce handicaps militating against social studies instructional effectiveness the commitment of all citizens must be elicited. This entails the social-political will make social studies education superlatively functional, this would encourage community participation, in short, is a course that is community oriented in nature.

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