

Social Studies Education as an Antidote to Corruption among Political Class in Nigeria*

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated Social Studies education as antidote to corruption among political class in Nigeria. The researcher discovered that social studies focus on citizenship education. Citizenship is the process through which Nigeria political class can acquire and internalize the values, sentiments and societal norms that is relevant to occupying political offices including anti-social and unguided political exuberance. It is with this mind-set that the researcher recommended among others that: Nigeria political class should be given general orientation on social studies education, they should acquire social skills that involves self-control in public offices and to be very familiar with the common values of our societies as enshrined in the constitution of the federal Republic of Nigeria.

Keywords: *Political class, corruption, social studies education, citizenship*

INTRODUCTION

The study examines social studies as antidote to corruption among the political class in Nigeria. The focus of social studies education is citizenship education. Citizenship education is the process through which Nigeria political class acquire and internalize the values, sentiments and norms of the society in which they actively get involved in to ensure that the common goal of the citizens of the society is catered for including resisting anti-social and unguided political exuberance. Citizenship education involves critical thinking, political activism or inquiry into the goals and values of a good citizen. Citizenship education must be likened to citizenship skills. Citizenship skills mean the learned ability to reason critical about causes and morality. This involves being well informed and be able to gather relevant facts, communicate well and organized groups. Citizenship may be viewed as a limited notion. It has not covered the whole of morality not even the whole of political morality. For instance, there are circumstances in which moral persons is seen to be a bad citizen as in political uprisings and other revolts.

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***This paper first appeared as Reading in Education, Development and Globalization in 2011.**



Similarly, social studies is very much concerned with raising the level of awareness of the political class and also encouraging the pooling of human and natural resources for the collective well being of the people. This is also the central task of mass mobilization programme of the Federal Republic of Nigeria “MAMSER. That is the acronym: mass mobilization for self-reliance, social justice and economic Recovery. Basically set-up to inculcate into the political class values, the habits and the orientation to lead without coercion to the emergence of a great self-reliant civil society in which justice, duty, responsibility, to tolerance and commitment to national cause reigns supreme. Mamsers has antecedent. One of the antecedents of MAMSER is Buhari’s War Against Indiscipline (WAI, 1984). In 1987, Babangida Administrations armed with a catalogue of social ills came up with MAMSER which is the first institutionalized moral institution in Nigeria. Among myriad problems that necessitated MAMSER are: instead of honour and honesty, corruption reigned supreme on a large scale, confusion and growing poverty, depended slavishly on western ideals, disgracefully indebted to financial institutions within and in the developed world, battling with social, political, and religious confusion become experts in consumption of the fruits of others’ labour, indiscipline, glory in confusion and empty pride. These are the quality of the political class in the scene of politics today. Akinlaye (2003) posits that social studies create awareness and understanding in our evolving social, political and physical environment. The awareness include natural, man-made, cultural and spiritual resource together rational use and considerations of the resources for national development for the citizenry.

The implication of this assertion is that social studies provide the public, particularly, the political elites knowledge and information about events, politics, society and economy. This correlates with the notion of Arnett (1995) that social theory stressed the need for central development of conscience, role preparation and performance. The implication of development of the society depends on the level of awareness of the politician. It is in this regard that Osakwe and Itedjere (2005) note that social studies has to do with the development of the political class knowledge, attitudes, values and skills that are pre-requisites for societal development free from corrupt practices. Hence Ezewu (1983) argues that every meaningful socialization provides by social studies to the political class should be directed towards political change of the country.

CORRUPTION AMONG THE POLITICAL CLASS

The term corruption has been viewed from various perceptions. For instance, Longman (1995) defines corruption to mean dishonest, illegal behaviour especially of people in



authority. The above assertion has direct relationship with Sagay (1995) that there is the general agreement that the ruling class in Nigeria has always been fractious, unprincipled, grasping, cowardly and unpatriotic. It is characterized by arbitrariness, insensitivity, dishonest, above all power. The members of Nigeria political class have abhorrence for commitment to principles in politics and national life. Thus, members of the class are bought and sold, have no loyalty to ideals and seek to be in politics largely to obtain any form of gratification. Members of Nigeria ruling class have a proclivity for corruption. Andreski (1968) argues that the political class has a naturally strong desire to steal. As he puts it “the Nigerian political class has approximations to pure Kleptocracy that have been recorded. They use public funds for private enrichment in the normal and accepted practice in Nigeria and the exceptions are very minimal and inconclusive. Andreski (1968) pinpoints corruption as a major value of the governing class of Nigeria rulers. He locates the cause of corruption in the psychology of the Nigeria syndrome. The proclivity for material gratification through corruption precludes members of the political class from committed political praxis. Indeed, in terms of anomic and unprincipled conduct, members of Nigeria political class can be ranked as perhaps the worst in the world. Marx (1978) notes that the ruling ideas in any age are the ideas of the ruling elites in that age. It is thus rule not amazing that a generalized state of anomic pervades the Nigerian nation and its politics.

Factors Influencing Corruption in Nigeria

There are many factors that influence corrupt practices in Nigeria. One of the factors as identified by Osakwe (2010) is political insensibility. He reveals that a major pain discernible in Nigerian polity is the political insensibility of the politicians. He explains further that the emerging environment has thrown up politicians who are not accountable to the electorate. Most of the politicians are not interested in their constituencies rather to line up their private purses and accounts with public funds in millions and billions of world denominational currencies. There is wide -spread of sensibility that the political class neglect societal development. They have no iota of interest in the welfare of the electorate. The Nigerian populace experience severe pains from the political class. This has resulted to complaints about their corrupt practices. Sahara reports (2011) reveals a scam on the Asaba 40 billion Airport project in Delta State that took a test-run on the airport as a sign of completion. The test-run is a complete deceit for April 2010 polls. The above report correlates with the observations of Osakwe (2010) and Aghedo (2006) that portray the effect of corruption experienced by the electorate in Nigeria political scenes. They maintain that corruption has grip Nigeria hostage. SNG



(2010) reveals that corruption practices in Nigeria have no boundary. It cuts across the political class from the Local Government, State, to the Federal echelon of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The Role of Social Studies Education as Antidote To Thepolitical Class

Lawton and Durfour (1973) Identify social studies as instrument for reshaping society. In the same manner, Osakwe (1993) sees the nature, content and scope of social studies as a weapon for developing new socio-political order. In other words, the knowledge and skills acquired from social studies serve as means for achieving political reformation to Nigerians. Social studies is society - based or related in the sense that it is generated towards solving the problems of the society. Consequently, social studies education in Nigeria is tailored to word the needs of the Nigerian society. Nigeria as a nation is beset with myriad of problems. Foremost among the problems are those of dishonesty, greed and selfish covetousness. There are other problems like insecurity, including social, economic and physical insecurity, political instability and political ignorance, lack of unity and corrupt practices most especially among the Nigeria political class. The objective of social studies education in Nigeria is condensed into these broad areas.

1. Informational learning
2. Skills learning, and
3. Attitudes and values learning.

Though, there is no general consensus as to the goals of social studies, there is the notion that social studies has influence on the beliefs and values of the society that it variability produces good citizens. In the post-independence of 1960, Nigeria identify social studies as a veritable organ for reshaping the political class. It is used specifically to inculcate good citizenship, foster and enhance the Nigeria way of life. It is as a means of developing a new political order in Nigeria and as well as medium for preparing politicians for their roles in political offices. In Nigeria, the national aims of social studies have been adequately explained. However social studies attempts at realizing the following objectives:

Information learning: This is the knowledge component of social studies that includes creation of awareness and understanding of our ever changing social and physical environment, for example, the physical and political metamorphosis of Nigerian environment from 1960 to date. There is need for efficient utilization and management of our vast natural and human resources.

Attitudes and values learning: The objective of social studies in the area of attitude



and values include knowing the common values of our societies as enshrined in the constitution of the federal Republic of Nigeria. Ability to make decisions that involves choices between competing values.

Abilities and skill learning: The ability to live and work together - that is the feeling of comradeship. It also involves discipline in public places, courteous; learning self-control from public properties, sharing ideas and experiences with others; and inculcating the spirit of accepting defects but not bribing tribunals with public funds to enforcing oneself into positions of governance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study draws attention to the use of social studies education as an antidote to Nigeria political class corrupt practices. The is because social studies content is directed towards the acquisition of informational capabilities, skills learning, attitudes and values that can reshaping one's conveotous attitude tendencies towards public properties most especially funds entrusted to political office holders. Similarly, other studies have added to the meaning of political change. For instance, the studies of Ita-Giwa (2001), Nwankwo (2005) maintain that human change is inevitable but at times intentional but often not planned, controversies and some change is faster than others. It is this change that takes place as human beings. Interact with societal problems like politics and governance that is basically the background to social studies education in Nigeria. Therefore social studies education is significantly. Based on the conclusion above, the important to Nigeria political class are recommended.

- i. Political class should be given orientations based on social studies education before assuming political offices.
- ii. The Nigerian political groups should acquire social skills - that is ability to live and work together, the feeling of comradeship that involve discipline in public places. For example, learning of self - control towards public funds
- iii. The political class should be familiar with the common values of our societies as enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and always adhere to it.

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