Social Studies Educaion as a Tool for Peace Advancement in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examines Social Studies Education as a tool for advancement of peace in Nigeria. It adopts literature review as its research approach. It discovers that social studies education was introduced into Nigerian schools to project and disseminate vital knowledge, skills, values, and right attitudes combined that are suitable for addressing the challenges of peace keeping and instability in Nigeria. It is with this mindset that the study recommends that social studies education should be used as corrective measures in propagating peace and tranquility for the progress of Nigerian society because its contents have value laden to accommodate contemporary changes, challenges and progress for the purpose of maintaining peace in Nigeria.
Keywords: *Social Studies, education, peace advancement*

INTRODUCTION

Social studies is a discipline that was introduced into Nigeria with the aim of inculcating knowledge, skills as well as values and right attitudes that will enable Nigerians to fit into the system properly and contribute to the progress and well-being of all Nigerians. Social studies education was introduced into Nigerian schools to solve Nigeria environmental problems and issues that confront Nigeria as a country. The significance of social studies education in Nigeria is to project, promote and disseminate knowledge, skills, values and norms that are suitable for addressing Nigeria problems and other relevant issues in a fast changing and transforming Nigerian society.

Similarly, social studies is very much concerned with the advancement of peace keeping that strive to establish peace in the country. Social studies education has its foundation for solving challenges that are facing human existence, for instance, the issue of Boko Haram. Akinlaye (2003) posits that social studies create awareness and understanding in our ever evolving social, political and physical environment. The awareness includes natural, man-made, cultural and spiritual resources together, rational use and considerations of the resources for national development. The introduction of social studies in Nigeria enhances the grooming of patriotic citizens

who are law-abiding because of its emphasis on citizenship education. Citizenship education as embedded in social studies content is the process by which the Nigerian citizens acquire and internalize the values, sentiments and norms of the society in which they actively get involved to ensure that the goals of the citizens of the society are catered, including resisting crises-prone activities such as embezzlement of public funds, inadequate provision of jobs, inflation, corruption, fraud and among others (Okogu, 2011). Citizenship education is likened to citizenship skills, which means the learned ability to reason critically about the causes of crises, civil unrest and the various protests. This involves making the citizens to be well informed and be able to gather relevant facts, communicate well and organize groups towards curbing crises, terrorism and protest phenomenon in order to ensure a stable and peaceful co-existence. The implication of this assertion is that social studies provide the citizenry the needed knowledge and vital information about events that are occurring in all sectors of Nigeria. Social studies is a discipline that emphasizes citizenship education, studies the interaction of man and his environment, in the process of studying, acquire some challenges such as crises-prone activities confronting man and as well to elicit relevant facts that are useful in resolving the challenges so as to enhance stability and peaceful society.

Peace as a concept is an occurrence of harmony characterized by lack of violence, conflict behaviours, disputes and the freedom from fear of violence. It is a term that justifies the absence of hostility and retribution, the existence of a healthy or newly healed interpersonal relationships, prosperity in matters of social or economic welfare, the establishment of equality and a working political order that serves the true interest of all Nigerians. Peace as a term has been disrupted and also encouraged by individuals, various bodies, organizations and personalities in the past and the present. The global society has had to fight terrorism in the past and is still fighting terrorism. Peace had been severally threatened and this has brought unconducive co-existence among man that lead man to reside in unconducive places as many now live in squalors just to posses a shelter, lost their lives, properties and human dignity.

Nigerians now strive for fame, honour and peace. Nigeria is experiencing, religious turbulence, incessant occurrences of terrorism for instance the Boko Haram sect in the North, militancy in the Niger Delta and many others. This has threatened the existence of peace among Nigerians. This requires urgent attention; Nigeria as a nation is gravely affected. That has led to uncomfortable co-existence among Nigerians. For instance, Nigeria experienced various cases of wars that had evolved in the past such as the Biafra civil war, Aba women riot, and a one thousand mile match during the draconian Abacha regime that led to the lost of many lives. Hence, this study examines social studies education as an advancement for peace in Nigeria.

Factors that are against Peace in Nigeria

Nigeria has witnessed a lot of conflicts, crises and terrorism that has threatened and disrupted peace over the years. The apparent misunderstanding and disunity on

one-hand and the various processes of sustaining and maintaining peace through dialogue, counseling and prayers are not put in place on the other hand. Therefore, Nigeria is not experiencing technological, economical, political and intellectual growth. Peace is the equilibrium of human development, trend in the right direction that will elicit for peace, movement or policy at one time that make for war but under other conditions similar changes are made for peace. Nigeria should promote peace by encouraging and resisting political instability, economic destabilization, discouragement of mono-economy and discouraging political injustice (Wright, 1965 cited in Rummel, 1979). Henig (2002) posits the following as factors that are militate against peace: economic factors, political factors and territorial factors. These factors as stated in his study are the prevailing issues in Nigeria. In addition, he explains further that militarism, a complex web of alliance that hinders existence of peace in Nigeria. Similarly, the Royal Geographical (2014) explains the following as factors that are against peace in any society: land disputes, miscarriage of political justice, religious turbulence, cultural differences and the uneven distribution of natural resources.

In addition, Rummel (1979) highlights the following as against peace to opposing interest and capabilities (specific socio-cultural differences and similarities between the parties); significant changes in the balance of powers, individual perception and expectations, disrupted structure of expectations, a will to conflict, cross pressures, authoritarianism or totalitarianism, status quo disruption and lack of confidence in successors. He goes further to explain that peace are aggravated by socio-cultural dissimilarities, cognitive imbalance, status indifference, coercive state of power, system popularity, big power intervention, weakness of the status quo power, credibility at stake, honour at stake, power parity, class conflict. He further explains that the stated factors against peace are hindered by socio-cultural similarity, decentralized or weak, coercive state power, system polarity, a stable *status quo*, cross pressures, internal freedom, strength of the *status quo* power, world opinion and power disparity. Concisely, he notes that lack of peace can be triggered by perception of opportunity, threat or injustice and surprise by the populace of the society. The above stated factors against peace are synonymous to lack of peace in Nigeria.

Social Studies Education for Peace Advancement in Nigeria
Nigeria as a country since its existence has witnessed various crises, terrorism, protests among others that hinder peace as well as depreciated Nigerian economy. Nigeria since its existence solicited various means and strategies of curbing these ugly incidents of crises, terrorism, protests and other crises-prone activities. The means and strategies have being effective but not certainly an end to crises. This is as a result of the urge for fame, wealth and power in order to live and sustain effectively in the society and this has lead to evolvement of diverse issues that give birth to problems thereby disrupting the peace and stability of the country. Considering the incessant occurrence of crises, terrorism as well as protests in

Nigeria whereby had disrupted the peace and stability of Nigeria; Social studies education serves as a means of curbing the occurrences of terrorism, crises and protests in our country. Social studies education is a discipline that emphasizes the acquisition and development of knowledge, values, and skills as well as beliefs that are needed by man to survive in his ever dynamic society. It is a vital tool in Nigerian schools that consists critical study of mans interaction with his environment, how environment influences man and how man influences his environment in return. Social studies education promotes and projects values such as honesty, knowledge that are suitable for addressing challenges confronting Nigerian citizens in this fast changing society.

In order to ascertain peaceful and stable Nigerian society, her citizenry needed to be well equipped with contemporary knowledge and skills to remain competitively viable and meaningfully survive the challenges and pressures of the time. To support this argument, social studies education content, the implementation process and the viability of social studies graduates in terms of fitting productively into the labour market needs to be periodically appraised as a measure of providing facts, data or information to institute a viable social studies education curriculum that is line with national transformation agenda which connotes achieving practical results in education investment (Mezieobi, Ogaugwu, Osssai and Young, 2013). Social studies education is a reformatory subject designed to equip Nigerians with desirable attitudes, values, skills and knowledge for cohesive social existence in Nigeria society (Mezieobi, 2011).

Similarly, Social studies education as a field of study in Nigeria aims at inculcating in her citizenry, the necessary values, knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to fit into and contribute to the progress, well-being and peace of the country (Fabianmine, 2011 cited in Mezieobi, Ogaugwu, Osssai and Young, 2013). He explained further that social studies education develop humans in order for them to make viable input and contributions towards averting the societal challenges and establishing democratic leadership, achieving harmonious social co-existence, environmental sustainability, economic growth, technological advancement for improved standard of living, consideration of meaningful utilization of the country's resources for the general good of all citizens; the management and accountability of natural resources for improved social and physical infrastructure for stable economic growth, the enthronement of democratic stability, peace and assured formidable national security for environmental steady growth and development of the economy. In fact, social studies education is a tool for resolving peace instability in Nigeria, this include advancement for peace, the needed knowledge, skills, norms, values, beliefs, right attitude and patriotism.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Social Studies education contents are directed towards the acquisition of informational capabilities, skills learning, attitude and value development that are

necessary to re-shapen ones covetous attitude towards crises-prone activities as well as to inculcate the zeal to be crime-free, crises-free and patriotism that would enhance a peaceful stable Nigerian society. Fiabianmine (2011) cited in Mezieobi, Ogaugwu, Osssai and Young (2013) maintains that social studies education is reconstruction discipline to salvage peace as against antagonistic, anarchy, disharmony and terrorism. Therefore, Social studies education is synonymous to peace advancement in Nigeria. Based on this, the following recommendations are made:

i.   Social studies education should be emphasized as a yardstick for encouraging peace-keeping in Nigeria.

ii.   Social studies education serves as a tool for sensitizing Nigerian government and her masses.

iii   Social studies education should be used as a means of encouraging the various governments to promote peace and harmony among the citizenry.

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