

SOCIAL STUDIES, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Social Studies is an inter-disciplinary approach to the study of human beings in group interrelations with both their social and physical environment hence it is defined as the study of man in his environment. It focuses attention on how man controls the factors of his environment and how these factors influence him. The paper focused on Social Studies as an instrument for promoting good governance in the society. It also sees Social Studies as the pivot in which the wheel of National development rotates. Social Studies teaches loyalty, obedience to law, political participation and good leadership as veritable ingredients for effective governance. Role of Social Studies in achieving National development were outlined. The paper concluded by recommending some measures that will enhance good governance which inturn will accelerate National development.

Keyword: *Social Studies, Good Governance and National Development*

Introduction

Social Studies is the study of man in his physical, social, economic and cultural environment. This definition connotes that man lives in a social environment because he lives in groups, similarly, because man lives in an area and makes use of things that are found in both natural and man-made things, we can say that he lives in a physical environment. Man uses science and technology as a means of solving problems arising from the two environments. This goes a long way to say that Social Studies is the study of man in his environments, Odedele & Egotanwa (2002).

Social studies by understanding human relationship aims at producing citizens with skills, competences, moral values, reasoned judgment and critical thinking so as to live, interact, interrelate and

contribute positively to the economic, social, political and cultural development of Nigeria society. Social Studies teaches citizens proper information about the society he or she lives in, the culture, norms and social values which the society cherish and uphold and the difference between them and other people, the ways of political participation, loyalty and obedience to law, payment of taxes and rates, dues, and good leadership and followership. Having knowledge of all these information promote good governance and inturn accelerate national development, Ebirim & Uzoagba (2011).

Governance is the process of decision making and implementation while good governance is the process of measuring how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources and guarantee the realization of human rights in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption and with due regard for rule of law, (Wikipedia). It is also the ability of any government to produce effective leadership through the provision of essential amenities such as portable drinking water, good road network, electricity, good health services, quality education and improvement in the general well-being of its citizens that is devoid of corruption, Uzoagba (2020).

Conceptual Clarification Social Studies

Social Studies has been defined by different scholars depending on their vision of the functions and characteristics of the subject. Since people view the purpose of Social Studies from different perspectives, they can be expected to have different definitions. Kissock (1981) conceptualized Social Studies as a programme in which a society instills to its younger ones knowledge, skills values and desirable attitudes society consider worthwhile. Okam (1998) opined that the essence of social studies programme in schools is to contribute its own quota to the social education of the young. Therefore, Social Studies is expected to provide children with insight into the use of various knowledge structures and procedures that have relevance in modern civilization. Okam further stated that the objective of a Social Studies programme is the development and improvement of social living generally not merely in the classroom, but in the community, country and in the world as a whole.

Social Studies is concerned with man as a social being and the way he organizes his society which includes: social, cultural, economic, political, historical and geographical aspects of the society. Social studies is designed to help inculcate in the masses desirable social habits, attitudes as well as acquire useful manipulative skills of problem solving in the society because the world is becoming interesting, complex and interdependent. This is why social studies through its structure of being an interdisciplinary subject is capable of unifying from the various disciplines with the overall objective of creating awareness and understanding of the social milieu. In doing so, Social Studies seeks to develop positive attitude and desire by the individual to make meaningful contributions to the maintenance of the sustainable environment that increases the quality of life, Lawton (1976).

Good Governance

Good governance prevails in an atmosphere or environment where there is social stability, democratic values, rule of law, right of individuals, freedom of speech and social values. Good governance refers to a governing system which are capable, responsive, inclusive and transparent, UN website. United Nation Development Program (UNDP) defined it as a meaningful and inclusive political participation, which allows more people to have a say in the decision which affects their lives. Good governance can also be defined as transparent and accountable institution, with string skills and competencies, with a fundamental willingness to do things right. It enables government to deliver services efficiently to its people, Paul Wolfowitz, World Bank President, Jalcanta, 11 April 2006. Key elements of good governance includes, accountability, transparency, participation, combating corruption and the promotion of an enabling legal and judicial framework, Asian Development Bank (ADB). Good governance helps people and nations of the world to always act in the best interest of their business especially in the areas of stability and productivity. It also reduces risk and enables business to grow faster.

Development

Development is a normative concept whose goal is improvement in human conditions. It is a process of change which spans a period of historical setting. Development in human society is a many sided process, at the level of the individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material wellbeing. At the level of the social groups development implies an increasing capacity to regulate both internal and external relationships. Much of human history has been a fight for survival against natural hazards and against real and imagined enemies. Development in the past has always meant the increase in the ability to guard the independence of the social group and indeed to infringe upon the freedom of others, Amadi (2006). Development is a multifaceted phenomenon in the society they include,

Technological development implies the ability of a nation to demonstrate evidence or technological self-reliance. Self-reliance in this context means that a nation requires a minimum of external aid to cope with the demands of the critical aspects of its life where the application of scientific knowledge, skills and gadgets is concerned. Such a nation is not only a consumer but a producer of the said technology, and possesses the capability to maintain and/or repair broken down machinery of various sorts.

Economic development implies a substantial increase in the Gross Domestic Product of a nation, increase in the per-capita income of a nation and the ability of a nation to produce much of its essential goods and services. It implies a relative strong currency which is not too subservient to the vagaries of the world market forces.

Social development is quite a broad subject which includes, among other things, the quality of the educational opportunities, literacy level, rate of infant and maternal mortality and shifts in social status. It may also be perceived in terms of the ability to induce and manage positive change; ability to predict, plan, understand and monitor change and reduce or eliminate unwanted or unwarranted change.

In political development, the emphasis is on the degree of political civilization that prevails, the quality of democratic principles, the freedom of the people in the governance of the States, the freedom of the press and the like. Indeed, the quality of leadership and followership is of great essence here, among other things.

National Development

National development is expectedly the ultimate target of every responsible government world-wide. It remains the aspiration towards which all programmes of both the developed, developing and the ever-developing countries are geared. The extent to which the target is approached differs from country to country and is a function of several variables. The target itself, by the very nature of the concept, is indefinite if not infinite, for it proceeds along a continuum the end of which is as distant from us as eternity. This is so because a nation can hardly claim correctly to have solved all her problems, given the fact that the solution of a problem automatically originates another one. If national development is indicated by the ability of a nation to solve all her problems, one would wonder whether all the problems of a nation could ever be solved, Mkpia (1999). National development is a process whereby society increases its capability to manipulate and control the forces of nature for the enhancement of the quality of life of its members. Quality of life means improved social conditions which make for availability of such basic needs as balanced diet, good health care, education, shelter, clothing and good water supply among others, Shehu in Ezegebe & Owunwa (1999).

Mezieobi (1994) cited in Ezegebe & Owunwa (1999) described national development as a process of systematic transformation of the overall social, economic, political, scientific and technological life of a nation via effective, coherent, co-ordinate social mobilization strategy in which citizens actually participate and exhibit reconstruction process for the improved human conditions of the people. From the definition, it is quite obvious that national development can be seen as all aspects of life of an individual and the nation. It is a process of reconstruction and development in various dimensions of a nation and its citizens. Indices of national development among others includes;

- Functional education

- Improved living standards of people
- National integration
- Congenital and stable economy
- Political stability and participation
- Absence of unemployment, inequality and poverty
- National consciousness
- Responsible political leadership and fellowship
- Economic stability

From the above discussion therefore, national development can be viewed as an advancement from the lower, less satisfying, less peaceful steps of beings, higher and emancipating conditions. It is used to denote whatever is done to rid a people of the stigma of backwardness.

Theoretical Framework

Organismic Theory

This study is linked to organismic theory of Herbert Spencer (1820 – 1903) which saw the society as a living organism which has various organs, all working together for the livelihood of the organisms. What can be deduced from this assertion that is favourable to nation building aspirations is that national development could be likened to the work flow theory in which efficiency or production of process affects the other parts. The main thrust of the organismic theory of nation building is that in nation building, government, individuals, groups of persons must work co-operatively to achieve nation building goals. Social Studies as a course teaches values of national development which include tolerance, loyalty, respect for constituted authority, honesty and dedication to duty. All these values promotes food governance and national development. Social Studies teaches its citizens on how to contribute to community development, environmental sanitation, defense of the country, political socialization etc. All these are duties of the government which Social Studies as a discipline help in complimenting the effort of the government. Put in another way, in applying this theory to society, it implies that all the various organs of government, economy and the forces of change have to work co-operatively and in concert, for the development and progress of the society.

Social Studies Instrument of Good Governance

Social Studies is a way of life that looks into people's activities in the family, school, church, market, politics and all facets of human development. It teaches values of the society that are ingredients of good governance. For any society to develop, there must be respect for the values of the land which in turn will accelerate good governance. Ebirim et al (2011) highlights the role of Social Studies as instruments of good governance as follows:

- **Obedience to the law**
Social Studies teaches obedience to laws for the citizens of the state. Laws are made for social control, in the interest of the citizens of a country. They are made to ensure that rights of individuals are granted as well as ensure that order, peace and good government are maintained, since they are not made for the oppression of any person or group of persons, but are rather made for the benefit of the people, it is therefore imperative that every citizen should obey them,
- **Payment of Taxes, Rates and Dues**
Social Studies encourages citizens of the state to pay their taxes and rates It is from taxation and the payment of dues and rates of- various forms that the government realizes money with which it carries on the arduous task of governance. It is with the help of the funds realized from the various forms of taxation that the government meets its obligations to the citizens with regards to the payment of salaries to public servants, establishment and maintenance of government owned institutions, execution of various government projects and the sustenance of many social services. This means that the citizen who benefits from these services or for whom the services are provided should normally pay for their provision.

- **Helping in Community Development Efforts**
Social Studies teaches citizens on how to participate in community activities like leadership skills, environmental sanitation etc and through that method patriotism is ensured. It has generally been realized and accepted, as a matter of fact, that the government cannot do everything for the people. Even if any government were to pledge to provide everything for the people, lean financial position and other constraints, would make it difficult for it to redeem such a pledge. From here, it becomes mandatory for communities to engage in community development efforts in which every citizen should participate.
- **Loyalty to the Country**
Social Studies teaches loyalty to the country which is essential ingredient for good governance. Apart from laws and decrees which governments employ for social control. There are some other pronouncements or enactments which the government uses, either on or adhoc basis, for the solution of perceived social problems. For example, as part of the war against filth, the government in 1985 declared every last Saturday of the month as an environment sanitation day when all premises of the people including gutters are cleared. It is the duty of every citizen to obey this order. When the government declares public holidays on an occasion, private employers also have to respect this order, it shows loyalty. There are many other examples where the nation may require its citizens to do one thing or the other, such as census enumeration, election registration or voting at polls; the citizens have to obey according to government directives.
- **Discipline and Orderliness**
Social Studies teaches discipline and orderliness to both students and citizens of the state. Self respect, discipline, orderliness and integrity are very necessary qualities that an individual possess, to ensure effective execution of tasks, in all forms of social life. The citizen should be made to realize and appreciate all these. This appreciation will make the citizen to avoid and hate corrupt practices in his later life.
- **Knowledge of Civic Right and Privileges:**
Social Studies teaches knowledge of civic right and privileges to the citizen, therefore citizens should be made to know their fundamental rights and privileges as guaranteed him under the constitution. He should also be led to know how to seek redress through the law court/ when these rights are denied him. Furthermore, he should be made to understand that while seeking these rights/ he should not infringe upon those of others.
- **Allegiance to the Nation and Respect for Constituted Authority:**
Social Studies teaches allegiance to the nation and therefore citizens should be made to realize that he has to pay allegiance to the nation by doing whatever the nation says he should do. He should further be made to know that he should respect all constituted authority, in the family/ the school/ the community, in any organization or group, and in the nation at large. A person should not betray his nation or divulge national secrets.
If these virtues are properly adhered to by the citizens of any state or nation it will promotes good governance in the society.

Ebirim et al (2011) outlined the Contributions of Social Studies in Achieving National Development

- **Acquisition of knowledge and relevant information**
Social Studies teaches the citizens on how to acquire appropriate knowledge and relevant information about what is happening in the country and the world at large. It teaches him about the various institutions in the country notably political, economic, social and cultural, their systems of organization and their practical functioning in the society. It also gives him valuable insight¹ into the relationships among workers or functionaries in institutions, organizations and establishments. By this process, the learner becomes aware of various situations, conflict and co-operation operating in institutions. This raises his level of awareness and sensitization about issues and problems in the society.
- **Political Socialization**

An aspect of the acquisition of knowledge and information in which Social Studies is interested in, is political socialization of the learner. This aspect of Social Studies programme enables the citizens to know how he is being governed, the levels and arms of government in his country and how each functions. It makes him know his rights as a citizen, and also what he should do to obtain redress, if he feels that such rights have been violated or denied him. Social Studies induces the citizen to develop democratic values such as obedience to law, freedom of opinion, liberty, justice, tolerance, democracy, consideration and discipline. This aspect of the programme further teaches him about party politics and the practice of democratic principles. From here, the citizen how elections are organized, how candidates are selected and how he can personally participate in election when he comes of age (Ezegbe, 1994).

- **Development of Intellectual Skills**

Social Studies education normally helps the citizen in the development of intellectual skills. In this respect, Ezegbe (1988) points out that "such skills include comprehension, which will enable him understand facts, concepts, ideas, philosophies, and other forms of knowledge that are communicated to him". Others are the "skills of application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, calculation, classification, comparison, observation, imagination, reporting and inference" so, Social Studies contributes in creating facilities that enable the citizen to develop his cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains.

- **Development of National Consciousness**

Social Studies helps the learner to develop national consciousness. The values implicit in this development are love for the nation, appreciation of the similarities and diversities among the people, obedience, allegiance loyalty to a central government; unlike overwhelming primordial loyalty. Therefore, change of attitude from ethnic to national loyalty and attitude towards the national, economy are emphasis Social Studies does by using discussions, debate, story-telling information, national symbols, and special talk by resource persons. In the process, the student would be led to appreciate the various efforts the federal government has been making to foster national unity in the country, the benefits that are derivable from belonging to a large united nation and what the federal government has been doing to help individuals and groups to prosper in this society.

- **Value Orientation**

Basically, there are two types of values namely personal values and general values. These Social Studies values represent the basic orientation of the society and indicate traits which the society regards as good and acceptable. The values listed under this category by Jarolimek (1977) in Ezegbe (1994) include liberty, justice, equality, honesty, consideration for others, respect for individual rights and property, human dignity, individualism, responsibility, truthfulness, fair play, hard work, uprightness, faithfulness and tolerance. Social Studies develops these cherishable values through several methods, such as story-telling, use of biographies, and models, discussion, use of the classroom situation, role-playing and talk by resource persons.

- **Inducing active participation in community and societal affairs**

Through several practical methods of teaching Social Studies, such as problem-solving, practical work, project assignment, community studies and assignment, independent study, self or student government, debate, interview, mock performance, opinion poll and economic surveys, students would be led to develop the right attitude, ability, disposition and needed competencies in participating further, and also be led to develop or imbibe the qualities of leadership and followership such as courage, hard work, honesty, justice, tolerance, dedication to duty, responsibility, accountability, obedience and cooperation (Ezegbe, 1994). The attempt here is to mould them into active citizens and gear up their interests towards public wellbeing and national development.

Conclusion

Social interaction is the pillar of Social Studies because man continue to interact and interrelate with one another on daily basis for the total realization of his basic need of life. Therefore, the paper is of the

opinion that man as a social being should harness all the ingredients of social living in other to promote good governance and national development.

Recommendations

- Social Studies should be taught at all levels of our educational institutions so that our students who will grow to become leaders of tomorrow and appreciate the values of Social Studies as an ingredients of good governance.
- Government should at all times provide the dividends of democracy to the citizen so that the citizens will inturn obey the rules and regulation for effective governance.
- The rights and privileges of citizens should be guaranteed so that the tenets of democracy should prevail for national development.
- Government should take the issue of developing all the facets of our institutions, be it economic, political, social, religious and cultural very serious as that will accelerate national development.

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