



SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION CLASSROOM: A STARTING POINT FOR GOVERNANCE AND SECURITY MATTERS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria holds a strategic place on the African continent and the global community. This is not unconnected with the fact that Nigeria is a diplomatic force in West Africa and a major player in African politics. Nigeria surpassed South Africa as the continent largest economy in 2014. Nigeria ranks as Africa largest producer of oil and the sixth largest oil producing nation in the world. However in recent years, the democratization process and the stability of the country are highly jeopardized by the high level violence resulting from political, ethnic and religious conflicts as well as by organized violent crimes in almost all states of the federation. This paper shows that this is an intricate link between governance, democratization and security matters in the country. There is evidence of correlation between democratic governance and state of security in the country. Social Studies is a subject in the curriculum that offers hope on how good governance and security matters can be brought to bear on the citizenry but must start in the Social Studies classroom. The knowledge, skills and attitudes that is needed for this requirement can be taught to the students in the classroom who are our future leaders. The Social studies teacher can help to handle issues related to governance, democratic ideals and security matter using the work of Lawrence Kolberg which focuses on moral values such as fairness, justice, equity and governance and human dignity. The Social Studies teachers should be properly trained, while the classroom should be made conducive. The needed infrastructure should be provided so that students imbibe the practice of good governance and security in their classes to be transferred to later life.

KEYWORDS: Governance, Security Matters, Teaching, Security.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is one of the primary concerns of any educational system. It is an activity that permeates our entire life. Teaching can be conceived as a body of knowledge, a doctrine, a way of helping others to learn, an occupation of those who educate as well as a profession.



It is a systematic, rational and organized process of transmitting knowledge, attitude and skills, all in accordance with professional ethics. Ekiugbo (2015) defines teaching as an attempt to help someone acquire or change some skills, attitudes, values, knowledge, idea or appreciation.

Teaching is one of the pervasive essence of education, linked with schooling. Infact, this holds true for set ups where knowledge skills and behavioural changes constitute the challenge of education. In prior post modernism era, teaching has been too traditional, teacher centred, theoretical, with little touch on inquiry, emphasizing memorization of definitions, centred competition and individual isolations. These desperate elements of teaching has permeated contexts where content selection and organization was extremely mechanical. A paradigm shift to post modernism in which humanistic education characterizes school activities has occurred globally. The essence of education in post modernism is to ensure peace, liberate oppression, fight poverty and promote industry through entrepreneurial skills and so on. All these are expected to favour industrial revolutions, economic and social securities, individual prosperity amongst others.

Miranda (2015) posits that helping students to become increasingly competent in responding to the issues of public concern as in the above that calls for the use of judgment is a challenge of the Social Studies education and Social studies teachers and the teachers are obligated to assume this with thoughtful responsibility. Agwemuria (2014) explains that Social Studies is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of human beings in group interrelations with both their social and physical environment. The understanding of human relationship, and values and reasoned judgment is to effectively live, interact, interrelate and contribute positively to the economic, social, political and cultural development of the society. Okobiah (1984) explains the salient features of Social studies education which makes it capable of examining the relationship and interactions of man with his various environments, with a view to solving problems of the society. It proffers solutions to the problems of the society, the holistic and integrations approach to issues or problems using the cause – effect – solution paradigm, is a core feature of Social studies. Social studies is a problem solving discipline with features of socialization through which man studies and learns about problems of survival in his environment. Social Studies is a study of problems of survival in an environment and how to find solutions to them. Bayero (2010) opined that Social Studies is the sum of learning derived from the various aspects of human thoughts and experiences for the purpose of solving man's intermittent problems.



History has shown that no nation of the world, grew and enjoyed steady development in virtually all spheres of its national life without good and selfless leadership. This is largely so because qualitative growth and development has always been an outcome of effective governance. Thus, good governance is perhaps regarded as the single most important factor in tackling poverty, inequality and promoting all round development. This fact makes the question of good governance a salient matter for all countries in Sub Saharan Africa where the lack of development in the continent has been traced to poor governance. The governance crisis is evident in widespread corruption, inefficient public services and a host of other failures. World Bank (1989) argued that deteriorating quality of governance epitomized by bureaucratic obstruction, pervasive rent-seeking, weak judicial system and arbitrary decision making by those in leadership position, hamper, socio-economic and political development in Africa. Ekiugbo (2015) hints that there is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land climate, water, air or anything else. The problem is the willingness or inability of its leaders to rise to their responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which is the hall mark of true leadership.

A country endowed with mineral and human resource, capable of ensuring development remains ridden with crisis of governance. Nigeria's political system is deeply flawed and this contributes to security challenges today, such as violence, insurgency and terrorism Olateju (2013). As in many Africa nations, governance in Nigeria has for decades been characterize by predatory elites and incomplete institutional development. The general belief and attitude is that government as positions are avenues to enrich oneself and one's patronage network Antiwi – Danso (2012). As a result, ordinary Nigerians are not only disappointed with the on-going lack of services or infrastructures but they are also disenchanted if not furious with their government.

It is argued that violence, security challenges and criminality thrive in a climate of sustained pressures. It is no coincidence that the worst forms of security challenges in Nigeria originate in the most socio-economically disadvantaged parts of the country. In Nigeria as in other societies, there is evidence of correlation between democratic governance and the state of security in the country. As aptly noted by Ukiwo (2003),

to all intents and purposes, the Nigerian state remains
oppressive, privatized, unpopular and unhegemonic. The
state is barely able to stand on neutral ground to mediate
conflict because it lacks autonomy from the political class.



It is difficult to separate government from the state, much less the personalities.

Conceptually, governance for human development is partly about having efficient institution and rules that promote development by making markets work and ensuring that public services live up to their norm. Governance must be democratic in substance and form by the people and for the people. Democratic governance means that people have a say in the decisions that affect their lives and they can hold decision makers accountable. Democratic governance therefore exists when the authority of the government is based on the will of the people and responsive to them. Nigeria has democratically elected government in power and thus the quality of governance is attracting more and more attention within and among countries and as such, good governance has become a vital criterion for determining a country's credibility in the practice of democracy. Good governance therefore is another name for democratic governance and this entails.

1. People's human right and fundamental freedom are respected
2. People living with dignity
3. People have a say in the decisions that affect them
4. People can hold decision makers accountable
5. Women are equal with men in private and public spheres of life and decision making
6. People are free from discrimination based on race, ethnicity, class, gender and any other attribute
7. The needs of future generation are reflected in current economic and social policies aim at eradicating poverty, and expanding the choices that people have in their lives (Human Development Report 2010)

Security according to Encyclopedia Britannica (2010) is the quality or state of being free from fear or distrust. Security implies freedom from hunger, fear or an anxiety or act to make safe against adverse contingencies and to put beyond hazard of losing or if not receiving, that is to avoid insecurity and be sure of the implications of the action taken. Human beings usually care so much about security either as an individual or as a group in the form of a state or a nation. They take measures to guide against attack, crime, escape and espionage or sabotage. Nigeria faces a lot of security challenges. The challenges are unprecedented and worrisome hence, this has brought to limelight the issue of persisting state failure as reflected in bad governance and institutional decay in the country. There is a link between good governance and security problems in Nigeria. This can be likened to what



goeson in Social Studies classroom. This paper shows how the Social Studies class acts as a starting point for masters of good governance, security and development generally in the country. The paper also offers clues to what could be done to make governance and security challenges in the nation be improved, using the aims, objectives and philosophy of Social Studies education.

OBJECTIVES OF SOCIAL STUDIES

The Nigeria policy on education (2004), revised edition, specifically, hopes that Social studies will achieve the following objectives for the citizens of the nation through its teaching and learning:

1. The inculcation of an understanding of our evolving Social and physical environment as a whole in its natural man-made cultural and spiritual resource together with the rational use and conservation of these resource for national development;
2. The development of the capacity to learn and to acquire certain basic skills, including not only those of listening, speaking, reading and writing and calculation, but also those skills of hand and head together with those of observation, analysis and inference which are essential to the forming of sound social, economic, and political judgments.
3. To ensure the acquisition of that relevant content materials and information that is essential pre-requisite to personal development as well as to a positive personal contribution to the betterment of mankind;
4. The development of a systematic appreciation to the diversity and interdependence of all members of the local community and the wider national and international community;
5. To develop in students positive attitudes of togetherness, comradeship and cooperation towards a healthy nation, the inculcation of appropriate values of honesty, integrity, hard work, fairness and justice at work and play as the contribution to development of the nation;
6. To encourage learners to appreciate that all things they have learnt are interrelated. Through Social Studies, it is possible to present knowledge as a whole instead of a series of specialized fragments; and
7. The promotion of effective and active citizenship.



The Committee of Primary School Curriculum Guide on Social Studies, sponsored by the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), itemized what Social studies hope to do for Nigerian child as:

- i. Inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
- ii. Developing the ability to adapt to his changing environment;
- iii. Becoming good citizen capable of and willing to contribute to the development of the society; and
- iv. Inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes.

While all these look robust and laudable, a question the author keeps on asking is “how and to what extent are these fulfilled in Nigeria as most Nigerians are not patriotic and loyal to the country. The concept of citizenship and national identity is forgotten in our daily lives; inculcation of national consciousness and national unity which use to be a watchword for the founding fathers of this country is at variance with what obtains today. The average Nigerian values and attitude is that of greed and a variousness. Nigeria today is a society that is desperately menaced from within by all sorts of social ills ranging from corruption to the problem of child abuse, hooliganism, and the celebration of hypocrisy in all levels of government, nepotism, Boko Haram insecurity problems in the northern states and the blood bath in the coastal areas of Nigeria, arising from the militants camps. All these stand at variance with the recommendations of the committee of Primary school curriculum guide on Social studies sponsored by the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council.

However, Iyewarun (1984) expresses the fear that, one of the main difficulties in teaching and learning Social studies in achieving these objectives is how to reconcile the goals in the society and that of the teacher in one hand, and those of the teacher and learners on the other hand, and also to secure genuine motivation for learning. To address these problems, he called for the need to reconcile the demands of adult society with those of today youths, particularly those regarded as worthwhile. It should be noted however that this could only be achieved through effective teaching of Social studies contents. The observation of Iyewarun (1984) tallies with that of Akimbode (2009); in his book the Youth and crisis of Social Survival, he noticed that the prevalence of conflict and crisis in our societies is driven by the energy of youths, as significant percentage of those who directly carry out acts of violence are predominantly the youths in Nigeria. The author observed that the socio-economic marginalization of youths by the adult society is the single most important underlying factor behind, the proliferation of armed militias in Africa, And as Lemarichard



(2009) suggests, the existence of the violent youths (Warlords) in Africa and Nigeria is the expression of a diffuse sense of hopelessness in the face of economic and political circumstances that are totally beyond their control.

The African youth according to him remain victim of failed economic and structural political programmes and the incipient bad governments of most African leaders from the (1990's). Africa youths try to change their victim status to that of victor by engaging in conflict as a means of livelihood. This author notes that because the systems are exclusively designed by the elites and youths are excluded from functional participation in the system, they feel a deep sense of hopelessness and isolation as all the entry points into the systems are blocked. Transforming the youth in Africa into agents of peace and conflict resolution is an onerous task to be done on a daily basis through good government and genuine empowerment by the adults. The demands of the adult society with those of youths must be reconciled. Social Studies is a veritable task for reconciling this world of difference between the adult and the youth world.

Objectives and Philosophy of Social Studies Education versus Governance and Security Matters in Nigeria

In Nigeria, as in other societies, there is evidence of correlation between domestic governance and the state of security of the country. A country endowed with mineral and human resources capable of ensuring development remains saddle with crisis of governance. Nigeria political system is deeply flawed and this contributes to rising cases of insecurity situation policy, there is no doubt that poor governance and laws of effective leadership at all levels of government are central in attempting to explain the problem (Adambazau, 2014) Indeed, what the current tread of insecurity is imparting on the psyche of Nigerians is that government security apparatus is incapable of guaranteeing the safety and security of its people.

Governance in Nigeria has for decades been characterized by predating elites and incomplete institutional development. Nigeria is a nation where transparent and good governance and intellectual stand is blunted. In asseing Nigeria's good governance record from the overall concept of human security, the emerging public is at best dismal. All these security challenges undoubtedly pose some threats to the social, economic and political stability of not only Nigerian but also of the African continent especially the West African Sub-region where Nigeria makes up more than half of its population. Security challenges is



one of the highest contributors to humanitarian crises in the form of rise in human casualties, internally displaced persons refugee debacles, food insecurity and the spread of various diseases, Stewart (2004). There is much of destruction from insecurity in Nigeria to both lives and property. Schools, power stations and roads are destroyed outside human lives and this tends to reduce the production capacity of the economy. As noted in the Guardian Editorial of November 12, 2014 the worry is not just about the delimitations in security is steadily causing the country and its law abiding citizen, it is even more so about the demystification of the Nigerian Army that before now has an enviable international reputation for valiance and war time discipline. Omilusi (2016) opined that this is an open contempt for Nigeria and its constitution and its covertly exposes vulnerable youths to extremist influences, recruits and deploy them as an essential part of group insecurity machine.

The impact of insecurity on internal security in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized as citizens now live in fear of impending but unknown affairs, Venda (2015). Security matters to the poor and other vulnerable groups especially women and children is because of bad polices, weak justice, penal systems and corrupt militaries and this mean that they suffer disproportionately from crime, insecurity and fear. They are less likely to be able to access government services, invest, in improving their non-entry and escape from poverty. Thus incoming from huge deficit in governance and leadership that is unwilling to transform society and guarantee security for the people. As noted in the International Crisis, Group report 2014 “poverty is a product of bad governance including a bloated administration. The cost of insecurity in Nigeria could also be seen on the percentage of annual budget allocated to security agencies on a yearly basis. Infrastructure and human capital development are almost foregone alternatives, hence capital expenditure is struggling from the rear (Kamtook, 2014).

The food industry in the Northern part of the country is under threat with the rising number of hostilities there, those employed in the industry have decreased their movement outside protected areas nor fears of possible attacks. Many farmers in the states of Adamawa, Borno, Yobe and Zamfara now fear being attacked. The heightened attacks across the regions above have also made transportation of food slower, more expensive which in turn has placed greater presence in the economic situation. Again, the total number of Nigerians who have been removed from their ancestral homes or those referred to as internally displaced person (IDP) is on the rise on a daily basis. Such insecurity situation in Nigeria



traceable to bad governance in Nigeria calls for honest way son how such carnage and bloodletting can be stopped.

Social Studies Education Classroom: A Starting Point To Governance And Security Matters In Nigeria

Omale (2013) contends that given the complexity of the security situation in Nigeria, blended with political and social strife, a fundamental obligation of the Nigerian government is to address all issues of socio economic inclusion, and marginalization youth job creation and any conditions or what the risk of insecurity might become more likely to occur. The committee of Primary school curriculum guide on Social studies sponsored by the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) itemized, what Social studies education hopes to do for the Nigerian child, among others:

- (1) Becoming good citizens capable and willing to constitute to the development of the society
- (2) Inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes amongst others.

The Social studies teacher is using Social studies classroom as an avenue to help the students become competent in responding to the issues of public concern that call for the use of judgment. Becoming good citizens capable and willing to contribute to the development of the society can start from the elementary or secondary schools. Children can be properly trained at this level to be effective members of the society. An effective member of the society is unto whom the inculcation of the right type of values and attitude is real. With such right type of values and attitudes inculcated, they may likely end up to become good citizens who will pay their taxes, have love for their country and eschew any negative act that will ruin the name and reputation of their country, and have sympathy for good governance if elected to positions of authority.

The Social studies class also provides an avenue for core democratic ideas that centres on good governance to be taught to students. Infact Miranda (2000) observed that Social studies teachers have responsibility for helping students at the secondary school level to learn to apply and balance such core democratic ideas found in the constitution of Nigeria and these include freedom, justice, equality, general welfare, good governance and domestic tranquility.

Foncault (2000) opined that Social studies programs engage students through the Social studies teacher to discuss issues, make presentation, solve problems, evaluate the



quality of their thinking and of the products they produce. What Nigeria needs today especially those in government leadership positions, is the ability and willingness to evaluate the quality of their thinking. This is a good step in the right direction. Such thoughts must flow from the mind that is watered with the love for one's nation and must be consistent with constitutional principles, with diversity and traces of non-partisan.

The Social studies curriculum has certain citizenship traits which are vital to governance and the security of the nation that can be taught in the classroom to the students. These traits interact with one another, contributing immensely to the development of the nation. Obedience, loyalty, patriotism, civic mindedness among others are some of the traits. The learners as future leaders through effective teaching and learning of the citizenship traits above could be moulded to form a base that will be improved upon in subsequent generations through the instrument of Social studies curriculum that will suit the demands of the generation in terms of their security and governance with reference to the environment.

For Nigeria to handle governance and security matters effectively, Moral development perspectives based primarily on the work of Lawrence Kohlberg 1969, 1984 in Social studies can be taught to the students. This approach focuses primarily on moral values such as fairness, justice, equity and human dignity. It is assumed that students invariably progress developmentally in their thinking about moral issues. They can comprehend one stage above their current primary stage and exposure to the next higher level is essential for enhancing moral development. This perspective views the students as an active initiator and a reactor within the context of his or her environment. The student actions are the result of his or her feelings, thought behavior and experiences. The Social studies classroom is an avenue for such experiences, feelings, thoughts about good governance and security matter to be taught to the students as they become leaders in the future. Such students can express their moral reasoning freely.

In Social Studies classroom, students are taught on how to undertake valuing process successfully. It is a process that involves consideration of a set of alternative values and a conflict resolution among students. This is what students need today in Nigeria. There is so much of conflicts, violence, insurgence and terrorism in the country today, supposedly caused by lack of good governance. These security matters are of great concern to the entire nation. Children should be taught how to resolve conflicts so that people will no longer live in fear. Knowing how to resolve conflicts especially in a democratic set up could be a spring board for the release of pent up feelings freely.



In Social Studies classroom, it is the hope of the Nigerian policy on education (2004) that Social studies will inculcate in the students, positive attitude of togetherness, comradeship and cooperation towards a healthy nation, the inculcation of appropriate values of honesty, fairness, hard work and justice at work and play as one's contribution to the development of the nation. The child is taught to pursue a social and economic policy that will ensure the realization of right, equity and justice for all Nigerians regardless of their identity, religious, ethnic, regional or other affiliations. The Social studies teacher therefore has the responsibility for helping students learn to apply and balance all these in order to produce future leaders who can find a proper balance between protecting the rights of the individual and promoting his common good.

Above all, in Social studies classroom, Njoku (2013) opined that students are taught logical reasoning to solve societal issues. This according to him is necessary for the protection of rights, professional conduct, good governance, social justice and research ethics. The issue of good governance and security should be the concern of every one in Nigeria. The students in the classroom need to be trained to handle all the issues raised above. Only then can Nigeria be safe place for us all.

CONCLUSION

What goes on in the Social studies classroom has tremendous impact on the issue of governance and security matters of both individual and the nation as a whole. It has also affected the nation as a whole because the child is exposed to fundamental democratic ideas that centre on good governance, professional conduct, social justice and research ethics. All these, the child acquires to make him become adequate and responsible member of the society who is socio-civic economically and politically ready to contribute his own quota towards the growth of this country. Foundation matters a lot in life. The Bible says when the foundation is destroyed, what will the righteous do and amount to? The skills of valuing acquired in the classroom will enable him evaluate situations critically before taking an action and also to accept responsibility for his action/inaction in his dealing with others. The importance of developing surviving skill in the Nigeria child early enough cannot be over emphasized, especially as in a country where many of the University graduates knowledge and skills do not meet societal requirements for a balanced life. The role of the Social studies teacher cannot be overemphasized here. Infact, Miranda (2000) posits that helping students to become increasingly competent in responding to issues of public concern that calls for the use



of judgment is a challenge to Social studies teachers and they are obligated to assume this with thoughtful responsibility. The challenge for Social studies teachers therefore, is to help students learn to be more effective in using skills learned through Social studies education to discuss issues of governance and security amongst others. A more robust Social studies education curriculum that centres more on the perception of learners, should be introduced. A policy of inclusion needs to be implemented in all schools and throughout our educational system. The government, parents and all stakeholders in the society should aid in making the Social studies class a place conducive for teaching and learning. It is by so doing that the students will be ready to become good citizens who are willing to contribute to the development of the society, and willing to embrace national consciousness, national unity, citizenship, and positive attitudes of togetherness, comradeship and cooperation which are essential pre requisite to personal development as well as positive contribution to the betterment of mankind. All these are possible in the Social Studies classroom.

SUGGESTIONS

The security of the nation and that of the individual is closely tied to what happens in governance. Good governance and its traits can also be learned in the classroom going by what social studies education has, as it own aims, objectives and philosophy. The following are suggestions for all stakeholders.

- (1) Democracy is not only about elections. It is also about distributive and social justice. If democracy fails to provide for justly distributed social economic development, human security, is likely to be threatened. Causes of insecurity have to be addressed. The government can turn around the negative trend by strengthening its capacity to provide public good and proactively responding to the needs of its citizens and strengthening democracy as well as fair elections to guarantee rights and security of citizens. The state must distribute national resources equitably and transparently.
- (2) The voices of people living in poverty and most marginalized must be heard in decision making over allocation of development resources. It must take development and human security deficits in all parts of the country seriously.
- (3) A key building block of good governance is empowerment with enhanced and meaningful participation in decision making process. People have a right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Government should not design and execute programmes for the people without involving them.



- (4) Social Studies teachers should be trained where the learning environment should be made more conducive. The needed infrastructures should be provided so that students imbibe the practice of good governance and security in their classes to be transferred to later life.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Leaders of government business should stop poor managerial or mismanagement of diversity which, on the other hand is out of our greatest and most important assets. As a result, very onerous cloud is gathering. And rain of destruction, violence, disaster and disunity can only be the outcomes. Nothing should be taken for granted, the clock is ticking with the cacophony of dissatisfaction and disaffection everywhere in and outside the country.

The federal government should stop fanning the embers of hatred, disaffection and violence. All these one manifested in hate speech, violent agitation and shouldering violent agitation. Care must be taken else it will continue to snowball until it is out of control.

There should be renewed mobilization for national unity, stability, security, cooperation, development, growth and progress.

It is high time to convoke a national conference to come up with situations that will effectively deal with the issue and lead to rapid development, growth and progress of the nation. It must be owned by the citizens, people's policy and by the government no matter its colour and learning.

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