

The Integrated Nature of Social Studies Curriculum and its Implication for Nigerian Society

Regina O. Arisi
Social Science Education
Delta State University, Abraka
Email: regina_arisi [AT] yahoo.com

ABSTRACT---- *Social Studies mean different things to different people because it is concerned with the way man lives and interacts with his social and physical environment and how science and technology has helped him to live well in their environment. The conceptualization of social studies call for different definition hence its understanding in content and nature will better enhance what constitute Social Studies and how it can be of use in solving societal problem. This study is geared toward analyzing the integrated nature of Social Studies, its conceptual framework as a tool in helping the individual to live well as an effective individual for the good of the society. The paper is divided into 3 parts the introduction, the integrated nature of Social Studies and its implication to the Nigeria society.*

Keywords---- Integrated, Nature and Social studies

1. INTRODUCTION

Social Studies is a relatively new subject in Nigeria when compared with traditional subjects such as History, Geography, Economics, Political Science, that is the Social Sciences where it draws its content. Social Studies deal with man in his environment. It is concerned with the way man lives and interacts with his social and physical environment and how science and technology have helped him to live well in this environment (CESAC, 1979).

The origin of Social Studies in Nigeria can best be assessed from the curriculum innovation which began in Europe in the early 1930s. with the rise of the totalitarian regime in Europe in the 1930s, many educators felt the need to introduce the teaching of cultural values as a matter of policy. This was spearheaded by the association for the Education in World citizenship (AEWC) which advocated the teaching of political science and economics in secondary schools. This unprecedented enthusiasm to reform the conventional curriculum was accepted by many nations of the world particularly those in Africa. It became obvious that the educational system during the colonial and early post-colonial era lacked a sense of direction and were geared towards alienating the individual from his cultural environment. Ukeje (1966), fafunwa (1976), Akinlaye (1981), Okobiah (1984), Ogunsanys (1985), Osakwe and Itedjere (1993), Ogunsanys (1981) sees this kind of Social Studies (History and Geography) as having failed to inculcate in the Nigeria child an awareness of the local environment, national consciousness, national pride and a desire to know and read wide about their country.

The teaching of Social Studies in Nigerian schools has a short, but an important history because since 1963, there has been several conferences and seminar in bid to enunciate concrete policies needed for the teaching of the subject in Nigeria schools. The most imported was that of 1969 where that goals and objectives of education were clearly defined. Obebe (1980). This became a turning point in our educational history. Many Nigerians from all works of life participated in the one week conference whose central focus was to identify the national educational objectives. This was summoned by the Nigerian educational Research Council (NERC) a federal educational agency. As Fafunwa pointed out; it was not a conference of experts and professionals but of people. The conference was attended by representative of trade Union, farmers union, women's organization, religious bodies, teachers association, University teachers and administrators, businessmen and representatives from the government of the then twelve states of Nigeria.

The conference reviewed old and identified new national goals for Nigeria Education. Consequent upon this, the National Educational Research Council (NERC) commissioned eminent Nigeria educators to offer suggestions on concrete ways of teaching and learning Social Studies for the implementation of the programme. (NERC 1987). Social Studies if properly taught in the Nigerian school can help in the promotion of the Nigerian philosophy of education which is base on making the individual a sound and effective citizen. With this new policy, social studies was for the first time endorsed as an instructional as well as a core subject in the Nigerian school system NPE (1981) The objective of Social Studies is centered on man. In other word, it deals with the multitude of factors that bear on man's existence. According to Ajimoko (1976) as cited by Osakwue and Itedjere(1993), the term Social Studies was accorded

official recognition in the Report of the Committee on Social Studies of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary School Education by National Education Association of the United States. It was defined as “those subject matter that relates directly to the organization and development of human society and to man as a member of a social group”. (National Education Commission, 1916)”

Social Studies started in United States of American in 1893, but was introduced into the school’s curriculum in U.S.A in 1916. The subject came into Nigeria after 42 years and it took its beginning at Aiyetoro Comprehensive High School. In 1969, there was a National Curriculum Conference to discuss the value of core courses that will serve as introductory knowledge for every Nigerian child; these courses include integrated science, Social Studies, Business education. The concept of core curriculum in the National Policy on Education in Nigeria since 1976 and 1981 sound nebulous because the level of integration was not clear as to which of the subjects to be regarded as core. Based on this, some criteria were considered as follows;

1. The subject must meet essential aspects of the selected subject areas.
2. It must be controversial, inquiry based and value laden.
3. It must be of intrinsic value and develop high sense of awareness
4. It must lead to commitment of the people in their daily activities to the nation
5. It must be meaningful from the beginning to the end.
6. It must be contemporary in nature.

The relative newness of Social Studies in Nigeria’s educational system, coupled with various persons, Professional Social Studies Educators, Non-Professional Social Studies Educators who have one way or the other come in contact with Social Studies had led to an over dosage of Social Studies definition. Perhaps the search for a definite definition of Social Studies in Nigeria would provide a directional framework for conceptualization of the definition of Social Studies from the numerous definitions. A careful analysis from these definitions from the compiled definition of Social Studies in Educational literature, one will be able to sieve from the following as to what constitute Social Studies as reported by Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (2008):

1. as a simplified Social Science
2. as a synonym of the Social Science
3. as a concentration of selected aspects of the Social Science and the humanities without each of the district subject areas losing its separate identity
4. as an integrative subject which blends the contents, concept, methods and generalization from the Social Science, humanities, the sciences while in the relevant function, each of these desirable discipline loses its separate identity.
5. as a supplement or complement of the traditional subjects or disciplines of the humanities and the Social Science.
6. As an outright substitute for or displacement of the traditional subject in the Social Science, humanities at the primary and junior secondary school level of the educational system.
7. as an applied Social Science
8. as citizenship education
9. A new form of introductory courses in humanities and science
10. as human skills development field of study
11. as ecological studies
12. As value on oriented education.

From the foregoing, one can tell what Social Studies is all about, hence it can be seen as an integrated field of study which focuses on man’s interdependent relationship with his environment that equips man with reflective, intellectual, affective and social skills which enable man understand his world and its problems and how he rationally solve or cope with them for an effective living in the society.

What then is the Integrated Nature of Social Studies?

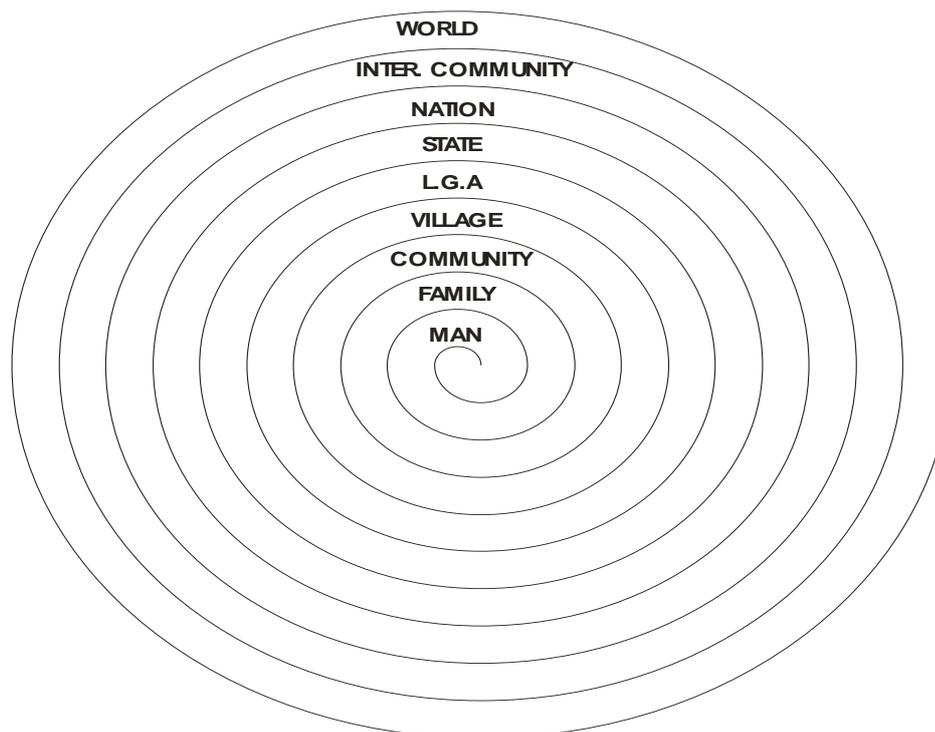
A look at Bajah (1983) definition of integrated science as cited by Ezeife. (1991).defined integrated science as:

“An approach to the teaching of science in which concepts and principle are presented so as to express the fundamental unity of scientific thought, around premature or undue stress on the distinction between the various scientific fields.(pg.4)

This can also be applied to integrated Social Studies as an approach to teaching Social Studies in which concept and principle are presented in such a way to express the fundamental unity of knowledge. In other words integrating the principles of Social Sciences and humanities which are geared towards producing a course content which has the following aims;

1. Must be relevant to the needs and experience of the learner.
2. Must stress the fundamental unity of knowledge in a holistic framework rather than in the separateness or compartmentalized frame.
3. Must lay adequate foundation for the understanding of man and his environment.
4. Must add a cultural dimension to the subject.

Social Studies as a discipline vary from place to place over time and space. It is an integrated study of man and the outcomes of his interaction with his various environments whose nature and content are based on its integrated contents and methodology. It focuses on problem of man’s survival in the process of his interaction with his environment by employing the system of analytical approach in identifying and studying of man in his multifaceted environment. According to Adarelegbe (1980) there exist definitions which represent divergent thinking about what status are Social Studies. He is of the opinion that the study of Social Studies spreads along a continuum with sharp philosophical differences separating the two extremes. On one end of the continuum represents those who see Social Studies as the study of the Social Sciences in separate discipline with the intension of using the method and content of these disciplines. This school of thought sees Social Studies as simplified form of Social Sciences. Wesley and Wronski (1964) were among those with this view, and also see Social Studies as the preparation for responsible citizenship through the use of the subject labels such as geography, history or economics and so on which are expected to influence the training of the youths. This group of people in their own views do not see the need for any subject label such as Social Studies as synonymous with the Social Sciences, here these discrete subject which constitute Social Studies in their separateness are viewed individually as Social Studies. Among these scholars in this school of thoughts are Kenworthy (1969) Clark and Leonard(1973) and Jorolimek (1973).The other ends of this continuum are associates of Social Studies; they are those with the view that Social Studies led to behavioral changes of the learners. To them, the total school programmes contributes to the general education of the citizen here, it is the peculiarities of the subject that provide citizenship Education to the learners behavior. In this case, there is need for an integrated field of study such as Social Studies which derived, fuses or blends materials, contents, concepts and methods of the humanities and other subject areas such as the Social Science which according to Douglas (1967) should not be exclusive sources in the study of Social Studies, but the resultant fusion whose identity, concept, and contents of the subject area, where the content and concept are derived are completely lost. Logar and Remmington (1969), Aderelegbe (1980), Dubey Onyabe and Prokupet (1980), Ezegebe (1988), Jiboku (1980) Ikwuemelu (1990), Barth, bar shemis (1977).The third groups of school of thought are those who perceived Social Studies as a combination or amalgamation or a federation of selected aspects of portion of the Social Sciences without each of these distinct subject not necessarily losing their separate identity. Preston (1963) also sees the discipline in this perception, with this Adeyoyin (1982) says that when Social Studies was first introduce in the Nigeria schools, it was regarded as a combination of History, Geography and Civics. Because of these divergences view of Social Studies as a field of study there are many definition as there is many practitioners. These practitioners happens to be coming from a variety of background of training and experiences, which was expressed by Kenworthy (1962) that Social Studies as a field is *“as wide as the world and as long as the history of man, for good measures, it includes the millions of years prior to recorded history and also foreseeable future. It’s include material drawn from the Social Sciences and related discipline psychology, social psychology, geography and philosophy as well as subject like literature, sciences, art and music and religion”*.Social Studies uses a horizontal or vertical and spiral approach format for the analysis of societal problems, starting from man as an individual, home (family), community, state, nation and international communities and the world at large.



SPIRAL APPROACH FORMAT OF SOCIAL STUDIES

Although, Social Studies is aimed at imparting knowledge and providing valuable information necessary for life, its basic function is geared towards helping to inculcate in the individual desirable social habits, attitudes and values as well as useful skills of listening, reading, writing and of calculation. In this way, Social Studies incorporates knowledge, skills, concepts, attributes and values drawn from history, religion, Social Sciences and humanities in the understanding of man and his environment. Knowledge they say is not compartmentalized. There is unity in knowledge, hence making Social Studies as an integrated or inter-related subjects is because it utilizes the already formulated theories of these parent subjects in order to gain a holistic understanding of man and how he solves his societal and environmental problems.

2. IMPLICATION OF SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM TO NIGERIAN SOCIETY

The introduction of Social Studies into Nigeria's educational system was a welcome development especially as it became a course of study in the school curriculum. The idea behind the acceptance of the discipline is not unconnected with the contributive role it has to play on the socio-economic and political development of the nation. Some authorities in the subject area believe that the subject has its unique significance to national growth and development. They trace this to the impact teaching and learning of Social Studies has on the society. Jimoh (2010) identified one of such impact with the family. He believes that the contents of Social Studies will be needed in the interpretation of vital issues relating to the family. The role of Social Studies fulfilling this objective was expressed in the work of Adetoro R.A (2000). He contended that the far reaching range of knowledge of the subject employed in solving problems at any place where people are living, including the family setting among communities shows its contributing effect of the discipline in the Nigeria society. Again, Social Studies Education in Obebe (2004) revealed that it has a goal oriented and innovative education. This implies that the subject can provide socio-political and economic orientation to learners, thereby enhancing their innovative capacity. Life success depends on new idea to cope with one's situation and to adapt to changing environment. This awareness is created through the medium of Social Studies teaching.

Furthermore, the emphasis of the theoretical framework and ideology of the secondary school curriculum shows that Social Studies and citizenship education are paramount to the quest of achieving the goals of enabling pupils to acquire knowledge and skills. This is because, Social Studies is concerned with the study of human being hence, Jarolimek and Walsh (1977) observed that *Social Studies are concerned with man in relation with his people, how and where they live, how they form structures and societies*. Thus, the implication arising from this type of education is aimed at preparing members of society to be responsible citizens, who can consciously participate in the decision-making process that affects their destinies. Oganwu (2000) holds the same opinion, noting that; Social Studies prepares "The individual in the state to receive the positive development of ideas, beliefs habits and attitudes cherished by society to enable them live as useful and effective members of the same society". This goes to mean that human capital development is one of the functions of Social Studies teaching and learning in schools. Significantly, the inspiration

drawn from the fundamental objectives of Social Studies teaching in schools provides the basis for the understanding of its implication in Nigeria. Preceding the objectives according to Akinlaye (2003) is the purpose of Social Studies which includes to:

- ✓ Inculcate national consciousness and aspiration towards national cohesion, unity and progress.
- ✓ Make learners become good citizens capable of and willing to contribute to the development of society.
- ✓ Inculcate the right types of attitude, skill values in the learners.
- ✓ Make learners acquire basic knowledge, feeling and skill as essential pre requisite to personal development as well as to a positive contribution to the better quality of life of man in the society.
- ✓ Develop in the learner's intellectual capacity and ability, self-confidence, self-expression, self-realization, initiative, reflective thinking, resourcefulness for the social-political order.

From the foregoing, these aspirations of Social Studies confirm the fact that its concerns are on citizenship process, with full emphasis on the development of those rational habits of mind and humane attitude that should enable individual learner make informed decisions about social and personal matters. This contribution of the subject matter cannot be under-estimated, because the continuity of a society is based on the level of an ongoing social interaction among members of a given society. For any positive interaction to take place, there must be meaningful co-existence depended on rational habit of mind and humane attitude of individuals that makes up that society. This is further connected with the general objectives of Social Studies teaching which places emphasis on creating awareness and an understanding of our evolving social and physical environment as a whole in its natural, manmade, cultural, and spiritual resources together with rational use and conservation of these resources for national development. Ossai (2010) is of the view that one of the objectives of Social Studies is to foster patriotism in Nigeria. She reasoned that development is contingent upon patriotism since it entails the love for one's country. She, in addition describes patriotism as; *This kind of love for one's country Does not just come about, it is planted The cultivation of the attitude of Patriotism involve a gradual process Of character molding. This implies That patriotism is not attained instantly.*(pg.7)

What this implies is that the process of attaining the spirit of patriotism demands exposure of the young ones to school curricula that support the concept. Social Studies as a school subject is laden in its content orientation that provide the lead way in furnishing the young learner with the ideology of patriotism. Hence, Osakwe (2010) gives credit to the dominant role Social Studies has in Nigeria and envisaged how in the near future Social Studies will provide the leverage for integrated national development in Nigeria. Olatunde (2006) as cited in Utulu (2010) put it succinctly that, "Social Studies was introduced into Nigerian school system decades ago, with the goal of breaking down regional, ethnic and religious allegiances, in order to promote national unity". This collaborates with the meaning of national integration advanced in Kochor (2002) as a means of doing away with inter-state prejudices based on linguistic and cultural differences. Other studies have equally attested to the role of Social Studies in national integration. In the opinion of Agbure (2010), Social Studies is taught with the view of enhancing national integration in Nigeria, a point Obiajulu and Obi (2003) stressed, stating that since Social Studies deals with the concept of culture, being the totality of the way of life of the people, could be exploited for national development. In this way, Social Studies has and will continue to have meaningful contribution to the Nigerian society, hence its teaching should be encouraged at all levels of education in Nigeria.

The nature and objective of Social Studies in Nigerian secondary schools emphasize student's knowledge of their physical and social environment, improved social relationships and interaction, skills and ability to think reflectively, critically, creatively and independently. All these objectives are required in life problem solving. As a totality of man's experiences in society and a problem-approach discipline, it becomes imperative to emphasize student's active participation in the learning process. In this way, Social Studies is seen as a programme of study in our school which is used to inculcate in the learner the knowledge, skills, attitudes and actions considered desirable in human relationship in the society.

The basic education curriculum in Social Studies apart from taking into cognizance societal needs has incorporated many of the contemporary issues of local and global concerns, such as youth unemployment, youth restiveness, environmental issues, drug abuse, family live education, security, kidnapping, peace, conflict issues including other aspect of the seven point agenda of the government. In this case, Awoyemi, (1994) opined that "when we plan a Social Studies curriculum for any society, it must take the problem of that society into considerations.

In achieving the integrated nature of Social Studies curriculum in our schools, there is the need for major corresponding changes to be in place and these include;

1. Integration and sieving of concepts and orientation of all the Social Science and humanities subject contents that is relevant to the understanding of man and his environment.

2. Making the learner the centre of educational processes (child-centered teaching/learning) with more emphasis in the development of skills attributes and values for the survival of the individual and Nigerian society as well as provides the necessary equipment for the individual to live effectively and contribute to the development of the society.
3. Focusing on the environment that connects the child with his/her immediate and remote communities (local, state, nation and international communities).
4. Using inquiry method by which the child learns to ask and answer questions raised and to solve problems that are peculiar to individual, communities, state, and nations and international.

3. CONCLUSION

Conclusion Social Studies is the study of man in his / her environment, how he/she interacts and influences the environment and how the environment in turn influences him or her. The paper looked at the concept and perception of Social Studies in Nigeria, its nature and scope in solving societal problems and the implication of Social Studies in Nigeria Society. Social Studies if well taught in our schools the individual will be well informed and made a better person to the society.

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