**Social Studies Education: A Veritable**

**Tool for National Integration in Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

*Nigeria culture is mainly shaped by multi-ethnic background that encompasses the country. The nature of heterogeneity has led to mutual mistrust and suspicious among the diverse ethnic and religious group with its negative effect on national integration. The main focus of this paper is therefore is to point out how social studies education serves as a veritable tool for national interpretation in Nigeria. This paper stressed the fact that national interrogation is largely dependent on effective citizenry which is the focus, of social studies education that further inculcate worthwhile values which are fundamental to national integration the paper recommend amongst social studies to be taught by qualified teachers, mandatory in both JSS and SSS classes and government to provide necessary instructional materials for the effective teaching in other to promote ethnic integration in the country*

**Keywords:** Social Studies Education, Nigeria, and National integration

**Introduction**

Education across the globe takes place through many school subjects among which is social studies education. This national policy on education (2013) expressed desire of national philosophy of education in Nigeria to inculcate national consciousness and unity. social studies are ranked high in Nigeria, not because of its newness in the school curriculum, but in view of the role it is expected to play in building peaceful co- existences society.

Social studies are the study of man and his physical, social, political, cultural and economic environment. It centers on the development of man, how man influences his environment influences him in return. Frost and Rowland as cited in Okechukwu(2018) state that social studies are the study of human relationship, like human to human, human to institution, human to physical environment and human to value system. Kissock (1981) defines it as a study that equips youths with tools necessary for solving personal and community related problems.

Social studies are an interdisciplinary subject reties heavily on the content of social science and humanities to achieve the goals of preparing people to be good citizen of democracy. It lines factors outside the individual particularly the development and use of reflective thinking, problems solving, national decision making slaw for the purpose of creating involvement in socialization

Social studies as problems solving subjects were used in different part of the world in solving specific problems and development of nations. In Britain social studies is used to inculcate democratic values. In Tanzania, social studies are used for inculcation of the spirit of African socialism Social studies deal with the activities of man at home, in the family, in the village, in the schools, at play, in politics, at work , in religion, in everything or whatever man is engaged in his effort to survive in the environment in which he lives.

**Nigeria**

Nigeria culture is mainly shaped by multi- ethnic background that encompasses the county. The country has over 521 language and 250 ethnic groups, making it one of the most diversified nations in the world. As a pluralistic entity comprising large culture groups and different ideological divides with tribalism constantly challenging every spirited effort any successive government makes towards national integration. Some of the programmes which the government has introduced with the aim of achieving integration in Nigeria include among many others the national youth services corps (N Y S C) in 1973, and the declaration of ethical revolution in 1982 to county but despite these laudable programmes proved by the government to achieve unity in Nigeria the divide however, remains so sharp across the country that we can observes it politically. Culturally economically. In linguistically and religiously. Constantly resulting to conflicts, breach of national peace and putting so much pressure on government and security agencies as well as creating some kind of developmental setbacks.“ Nigerian census 2006 showed that over five hundred ethnicities exist in Nigeria but there are major tribes which are Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba . The Hausa are the biggest tribe in Nigeria they inhabit about ten states out of the 36 states of the federation and are predominantly Muslims but a few of them practices traditional religion. The Yoruba account for the second biggest tribe and are predominantly Christians but a large number of them are Muslims, a few practices traditional religions the Igbo are the third largest tribe. They are largely Christians a few practices traditional religion.

**Concept of National Integration**

National integration, according to Iyamu and Osaigbwo ( 2021) in Ibrahim and Aderuyi (2019), is the process through which different ethnic groups that have been having independent of one another, or that have a close social, economic and political relationship come together, with the aim of forming united indivisible country .Integration in a multi-culture entity we Nigeria remain a core value for socio- political, economic and technological development. Integration is viewed as bringing people or object together in such way that they have sense to belonging to the same destiny. According to Okobash (1984) in Obi (2008) integration is a state or condition of an organization or substance and interactive adjustment of the physiological, physical, emotional and mutual process with the environment such interactive process results in a state generally free from incessant and needless conflicts.

Okene (2010) define integration as the satisfaction of the various components of a social polity with regards to justices, fair play, equitable distribution of resources and ability to access the acquiring national opportunities according to Coneman and Rosberg (1973) in Okene (2010) national integration connotes progressive lessening of ethic, cultural and regional tensions in the process of creating a homogeneous political community. When applied to a nation, integration means harmonious, perceptions, personal adjustment of the individuals to standard demand and responsibilities of society of which he is part and where he lives. Oba (2008) is of the assertion that national integration is attitudinal in form and perceptual in contents.

National integration, according to Isace and Tijanu (2010), is characterized by mutual understanding and commitment to socio-civic responsibilities for harmonious living with a view to achieving accelerated development. it involves learning and understanding other people’s way of life and perceiving it as superior as one’s cultural heritage. It notifies any form of discrimination against cultural value of other people. Thus, the underlying principles of national integration is genuine socio-cultural interdependency which enhance interpersonal relation among the multi-ethnic group of Nigerian society.

As contained in the aims and objectives of secondary education, Integration gives room for sharing of socio-cultural value and traits such like language marriage and other cultural value. Summarily put national integration embraces I connotes behavioral pattern that can ensure absolute security and rapid political and economic transformation in a heterogeneous like Nigeria.

**Factors against National Integration**

Taking a critical look at Nigeria, there are some factors working against national integration despite various laudable effort of Nigeria government towards achieving national integration these factors include religious intolerance that involves Christians and Muslims religious conflicts that lead to a still leading to loss of life and property.

Ethnicity is another factor hindering national integration because of strong and natural feeling toward people of the same tribe. more also inequality due to the wide gap between rich and poor, there are a lot of unrest, especially among the timing unemployed graduate this is a part of the reasons youth engaged in protests across the country year (2020) (Ibrahim & Adeniyi 2019).

Other factors include, electoral fraud this involves manipulation of election result. people want to remain in leadership position by all means similar to these is the multi-party system in democratic governance in Nigeria it divides major ethnic groups along party lines, thereby Jeopardizing national integration. Along this line most of Nigeria leader are ethnic biased when it comes to distribution of amenities for the betterment of citizen in respective of ethnics, these in return result to unfair distribution of infrastructural amenities. To crown it all illiteracy is another factor affecting national integration just because there is astronomically high number of illiterates in the country that cannot weld together the cultural diversities

**Scope and Objectives of Social Studies Education**

Social studies are not static, it keeps on charging because of the factor of time and human development. It centers on the development of man, how man influences his environment and how the environment influences him in return. The subject exposes the child to problems of the society which include the followings: bribery and corruption, religious fanaticism, tribalism, greediness, dishonesty, distrust, stealing, smuggling, child trafficking, laziness, moral laxity, drug abuse, prostitution, food shortage etc. it is against this background that social studies will equip the child with the basic social habits and cultural value which will enable him to build good society in future.

Based on the national educational objectives, Nigeria social studies education has developed some of the following objective for teaching in the Nigeria schools.

1. To create an awareness and an understanding of our social and physical environment in order to conserve it for national development
2. To develop a capacity to learn and acquire certain basic skills of literacy, numeracy and critical thinking essential of the forming of sound judgment concerning social economics and political issue
3. To teach the child to acquire a relevant body of knowledge and information necessary for personal development and contribution to the betterment of man land
4. To develop appreciation for the diverse nature and interdependence of Nigeria communities
5. To develop in student, positive attitude the spirit of friendliness and cooperation necessary for a healthy nation and to inculcate appropriate value of honesty, integrity, hard work, fairness and justice

**National Integration through Social Studies Education**

The below diagram shows the value inculcated to learners that promote national integration in Nigeria

Social Studies Education

Cultural Cooperation

Patriotism

Civic Responsibility

Self-Discipline

Social Justice

Reflective Thinking

Co- Existence

Conflict Management Skill

National Integration

**Source: Afolayan (2024)**

Fig 1

Social Studies is out to solve society problem. It exposes learners to problem of the society and how to solve the problem in return. The most serious problem facing Nigeria today is the problem of unity. As such the social studies education is planned in order to urge Nigerians to do things that will foster unity, peace and the development of the Country. It was based on National Education policy (2009) that emphasis the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity and others that the Social Studies drawn its objectives. With the Social studies objectives reflecting the needs of the society, one easily understands the influences of Social studies as a process of education which examines ways of working in the society in order to understand social problem and thereby seek solution to them, through the use of critical and reflective thinking to solve the problem of man’s survival in the society. Social studies curriculum fosters National cohesion and integration in terms of knowledge , intellectual capabilities and democratic disposition which are expected of learners to actively participate and coexist in the society. This would solve the serious problem of unity facing Nigeria today. This can be seen in Fig 1 Social studies education inculcated different values on the learners such as; Cultural cooperation, patriotism , Civic Responsibility, Co-existence, Conflict management skill, followership and leadership skill and other values not mentioned that would in turn produced a good citizen that will understand the need for togetherness and oneness in our Nation called Nigeria.

**Conclusion**

No nation will ever move forward where there are crisis, disunity and clashes among the people, more so, when youth the future leaders of the society are manipulated and made to become an instrument of disintegration of the society. However, it is a known fact that National integration is largely dependent on effective citizens a product of social studies. Therefore, Social studies education inculcates into the students worthwhile value, which are fundamental to National integration. These include; Spirit of Tolerance, loyalty, Co-operation, Respect for Constituted authority, self-discipline, Cultural Cooperation and other democratic values that will in turn produce a good and effective citizen; that we see the necessity for National integration in Nigeria.

**Recommendation**

The following recommendations were thus made.

1. Social studies education should be made compulsory in both JSS and SSS classes
2. Government should improve the welfare of teacher in order to get the best out of them.
3. Qualified Social Studies teacher should be made to teach the subjects in our schools.
4. Government should supply necessary instructional materials to teach the subjects in all our schools.

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