

SOCIAL STUDIES AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL MOBILIZATION

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Abstract: This paper critically looks at the problem of Social mobilization program of the government in Nigeria. It noted that objectives of the program such as inculcating desirable value of patriotism honesty, hard work, probity and unity have not been realized. This' is' due to the haphazard sporadic nature of the programs that fails to have lasting impact on the people'. Give its citizen Education and value orientation content, Social studies Education that shares similar objective should he used as synergetic partner of social mobilizing programs of the government. This is due to the long lasting effect of Education in the cultivation of skills, values and attitude necessary for National Development.

Keywords: Social mobilization, Social studies, Education, cultivation of skills, National Development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social studies is the study of man and his environment (Akinlaye 2003). It is concerned with mends behaviours as he goes about his daily activities interacting with his fellowmen and other elements in the environment. Man as a social animal depends on his fellow human being and nature of his natural environment to earn a living. The mutual nature of group life in a society necessitates the upholding of values like fair play, obedience to law and order, dignity of labour patriotism and unity. These attributes are necessary for peaceful coexistence (Odor, 2002). These attributes or values are always encouraged world wide by all government in the effort of building a just progressive and egalitarian society. They form the building block of nation building effort necessary for national development. Odor (2002) defines national development as a process of positive changes in the economy, infrastructure, politics, and education towards the advancement of the nation. To enhance societal advancement government from time to time finds it necessary to mobilize the people for mass participation in the national development process. Development is a multi-dimensional process involving changes in structure, attitude, institutions as well as acceleration of economic growth reduction of inequality and eradication of poverty. Changes in structure, institution, attitude and value are initiated through social mobilization effort. Mobilization of the people from time to time is necessary part of the building block of nation building. Nation Building is a converted effort by political leaders to integrate diverse, people in order to form an economically strong and politically stable society in which peace and unity reign. The integration of diverse people in a multi-ethnic nation like Nigeria for the purpose of unity and stability could also inform social mobilization effort that could focus on ridding the society of anti-social ices such as comtption1 dishonesty and other activities detrimental to peace and progress of the country.

Over the years Nigeria government imitated social mobilization programs ranges from the National Youth Services corps, austerity measures, operation feed the Nation, War Against Indiscipline (W.A.I), Mass Mobilization for Social Justice Self Reliance and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) to the current Re-branding campaign of the Yar'dua administration. Common to all these program is the issue of educating the public on the desirable ways to imbibe values, attitudes necessary for unity and peaceful socio-economic growth of Nigeria. Education is one of the principal ways through which society can inculcate desirable skill values competence into individual for the over all growth and development of the society. Fafunwa (1979) defines education as the aggregate of all processes in which a person develops abilities, skills and other forms of behavoiur of positive value in

a society in which he lives. In a formal setting education has evolved various disciplines that are concerned with a defined sphere of human endeavour. One of such discipline is social studies. It is concerned with the study of man's behaviour in his/her social, political technological environment. Jarolimek (1977) agreed that education particularly social studies curriculum plays a forceful and positive role in teaching values and beliefs. Unlike the behavioural sciences that human behaviour in different spheres of life, social study takes an integrated multidisciplinary approach in the study of man.

This paper will thus look at the need for national orientation; Nigerian social mobilization efforts and their relationship to social studies objectives. It will appraise how social studies can be used to further the objectives of social mobilization for nation-building and national development.

2. NIGERIA SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND NEED FOR SOCIAL MOBILIZATION

A critical look at the Nigeria today shows the presence of social problems that are confronting effort of national development. Its multi-ethnic configuration tends to bring disunity as people of different ethnic group struggle for power. The problem of ethnicity results in political violence, electoral malpractices and general political instability. Osakwe (2009) observed that Nigeria's new politics is marked by violence, massive rigging at reactions, and assassinations. Corruption is also the order of the day in private and public sector of the economy. Due to corrupt practice our oil wealth had not been able to transform the standard of living of the masses for the better. Odejide (2008) lamented that that corruption increases poverty, inequality and reduces economic growth. Corruption had become so endemic that it now manifests examination malpractice in our schools. It encourages lawlessness as law enforcement agents are ever ready to be bribed instead of persecuting law breakers.

Osah (2008) regretted our decadent moral values that encourage prostitution, human trafficking, religious riots and robbery. In the Niger Delta where Nigeria derives about ninety percent of her Foreign exchange income there is an on going war between federal troops and the militant who are fighting for fair fiscal federalism and development of the area, (Adekanbi 2009). Our public infrastructure of water, road, and electricity are unreliable. Unable to get its relate right, with breakdown of public infrastructure, increase in robbery, political assassination, election malpractice and runaway inflation, Nigerians and the international community seem to have lost hope in the survival of Nigeria as a nation. Given our vast natural resources and human potential, there is a dying need for social mobilization of the masses for the task of nation building and development.

Okorodudu (2006) averred that modern 'societies world wide now see the vision of providing programs for reorienting the citizens who have already acquired values1 perceptions and concepts that are not favourable to the growth and development of the nation. In Nigeria, government had initiated program aimed at socially mobilizing the citizens to imbibe the ideals and values necessary for national development. Such social mobilization program includes the National Youth Service Corps Operation Feed the Nation, Austerity measures, Ethical1 revolution, Mass Mobilization of Social Justice Self reliance and economic recovery (MAMSER), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and rebranding. Most of these programs have had little success given the continued state of corruption and indiscipline in the society. There is thus the need for a serous partnership with an educational discipline such as social studies. Osakwe (1984) declared that any country seeking to establish meaningful socio-economic and political values must channel such efforts through social studies.

Social studies as a tool for Social Mobilization:

Social Studies as a Tool for Social Mobilization. Social Studies as an educational discipline is a potent tool for social mobilization. , Conscious of the place of education in national development, National Policy of Education has a philosophy of making Nigeria: A free and democratic society; Just and egalitarian society; a united strong and self reliant nation and A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

Specifically, education should be used for

1. The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity.
2. The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for survival of the individuals and the Nigerian society.
3. Training of the mind in the understanding of the world around and
4. The acquisition of appropriate skill, abilities and competence both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society, FME (2004).

Societal development involves the organization of the individual citizen to imbibe the values of the society he lives. Values, are the foundation of individual's behaviour. As a course that is concerned with human behaviour. Social studies believes; in value orientation, citizenship education and patriotism in line with the philosophy of the National Policy of Education.

Adaralegbe (1980) identified five broad objectives of social studies that could be used to mobilize the populace towards the national ideals of a united, strong and prosperous polity

1. To create awareness and understanding of our evolving social, physical environment as a whole and in its natural, man-made culture and spiritual resources, together with rational use and conservation of these resources for national development.
2. To develop a capacity to learn and to acquire certain basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing and of calculation, but also those of skills of hands and heads together with those of observation, analysis and inference which are essential to the forming of sound social economic and political judgment.
3. To ensure the acquisition of that relevant body of knowledge and information which is essential prerequisite for personal knowledge as well as to positive personal contribution to the betterment of mankind.
4. To develop a sympathetic appreciation of 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 co-operation towards a healthy nation: the inculcation of appropriate values of honesty, integrity, hardwork, fairness and justice at work and play as a contribution to national goals.

These objectives are basically in line with the philosophy, aims and objectives of the National Policy of Education. To ensure a free and democratic society, Social Studies encourage the knowledge of basic human right such as freedom of speech, assembly and political participation. Osakwe and Itedjere (2005) agreed that Social Studies are also concerned with national consciousness and unity. It helps develop positive attitudes of togetherness, comradeship and cooperation towards a healthy nation. These attitudes enhance the emergence of a fair and egalitarian society with equal opportunity for all. A great and dynamic economy can only be achieved if citizens are well skilled to participate in all sectors of the economy socially, physically, technologically etc. Social studies encourage honest citizen to participate in the nation's economic production process that will not selfishly enrich themselves to the detriment of the national economy. A rational use of natural resources also contributes to a buoyant economy. Social studies objectives of creating an awareness and understanding of the ever changing social/physical environment also aids citizens to understand the world around them as stated in the National Policy of Education.

To realize these lofty objectives of education and national development, social studies embarks on information or knowledge acquisition as a cognitive effort. This enables one to be informed of human behaviour, environmental resources and important national institutions and their uses.

The skill learning aspect of social studies enables us to acquire the skill of listening, speaking, reading and observation. This enables one to analyze and make inference necessary for sound rational decision making. The affective domain of social studies is concerned with attitude and value learning. This helps to inculcate the ideals of our constitution, cultural heritage and loyalty to the national course. It is the skill of the heart that will enable us take patriotic and nationalistic decision in the midst of differing choices and values. Value orientation, together with citizen education are basic course content of social studies.

Okam (1998) noted that one of the goals that direct social studies is citizenship education. It helps to internalize desirable values of the society. It builds in the learner skill crucial for effective participation in the society (Ajose, 1998). It enables citizens to imbibe and duly obey the laws of the land without compulsion. It is the values people have that translate into behavioural patterns. Thus, value orientation is also a core concern of social studies.

Mokwunye (1991) defines values as worthwhile principles that determine conduct. They are more or less conceptions of what is desirable which often perceived in relation to oneself or groups are. Fraikel (1972) maintained that values are standard of conduct that a person endorses or tries to live up to. Values could be personal, institutionalized or general.

Personal values or individual attitudes are means to satisfy personal interest, while institutionalized or general values are group or society bound. The personal values must be subjected to the group value for peaceful co-existence and progress in the polity (Osah 2008). It is the institutionalized values that inform society laws.

Values such as patriotism, democracy, equity, justice, equal rights, respect for rule of law or due process, belief in the dignity and will of man are core values. The influence of core value over selfish and anti social values are at the center of government social mobilization programs. Such mobilization may take the form of permanent institutionalized programs such as the National Youth Service Corps, use of school curriculum such as social studies or mass publicity campaigns such as War Against Indiscipline (W.A.I), Mass Mobilization for Social Justice and Economic Self Reliance (MAMSER), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and Re-branding. A close look at the objectives of these programs reveals their similarity with those of social studies education

Social Studies as Partner in Social Mobilization Effort of the Government:

Osakwe and Itedjere (2005) asserts that social studies education raises the level of awareness of the citizenry and encourages the pooling of human and natural resources for the overall well being of the populace.

The National Youth Service Corps of the 70s was one of such initiatives of the government to mobilize youth for the unity of the nation. Introduced in May 1973 after the civil war, its policy to make graduates provide national service in states other than their own for one year. This is to make them understand the diverse culture and people of Nigeria. It is to instill in them the spirit of selfless national/community service and unity (N Y S C handbook 1973). This is in line with social studies objectives that encourage the awareness and understanding of our diverse social and physical environment, develop loyalty to country and ability to work with others in group.

Austerity Measure and Operation Feed the Nation of the Obasanjo military era were a deliberate attempt to shun the wasteful use of resources and shifting of emphasis to agriculture, the traditional mainstay of the economy. This was to check the onslaught of extravagance and neglect of farming in the wake of oil boom. This is in line with social objective of developing the skill of head and hand. Austerity measures encourage the rational use and conservation of resources. The War Against Indiscipline of the Buhari/Idiagbon administration in 1984 was to curb the rising tide of indiscipline, lawlessness and corruption in both private and public life. W.A.I was to instill in the mind of Nigerians the noble ideals of national consciousness, sense of patriotism and above all discipline and obedience to laws of the country. (W.A.I Handbook 1984). Under the WAI regime cleanliness in our homes and streets was emphasized. People were inculcated with values of orderliness in public gathering and waiting for one's turn. Lateness to work and idleness was abhorred. Corruption in public offices was greatly reduced and dignity of labour was restored. WAI objectives are commensurate with social studies objectives of developing positive attitude and values of honesty, integrity, hard work, fairness and justice at work or play.

By far the most embracing of government social mobilization program was that of MAMSER of the Babangida regime in 1987. MAMSER an acronym for Mass Mobilization for Social Justice Self Reliance and Economic Recovery. MAMSER was established due to the degree of social ills and moral decadence among Nigerian citizen. (Okorodu 2006) MAMSER has twelve basic objectives among which are

1. Establish an appropriate framework for the positive mobilization and education of all Nigerians toward economic recovery and development of a new social and political order.
2. Inculcate in Nigerians the value and spirit of civic responsibility to social economic self reliance through harnessing of their energies and national resources into productive use.
3. Propagate the need to eschew all vices in public life including dishonesty, electoral and census malpractice, ethnic and religious antagonism.
4. Create consciousness about power and its use, the proper role of government in serving the collective interest of the governed.
5. Inculcate in all Nigerians the virtues of patriotism and positive participation in National affairs. (MAMSER Handbook, 1987).

The bottom line of MAMSER objective is to instill into Nigerians the values of civic responsibility, justice, hard work, democracy, religious tolerance, unity and patriotism. These qualities are however still lacking among Nigerians of today. It is instructive to note that the Babaginda government that initiated MAMSER annulled June 12, 1993 election that brought monumental political crises in Nigeria. This is against MAMSER objective of use of government power to serve the collective will of the people and the abhorrence of electoral vices and ethnic antagonism.

Government continued quest for a new social order brought the introduction of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) of Obasanjo civilian administration in 2004. NEEDS policy paper came out after consultation with Nigerians of various calling and profession in all parts of the country through seminar, workshop and meetings. NEEDS, (2005) made it clear that it is the people way of letting government know what kind of Nigeria they wish to live in and the government way of letting the people know how it plan to overcome the deep and pervasive obstacles to progress. The program main goals are wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and value orientation. As part of its value orientation policy, due process must be followed in the business of governance. It will tram Nigerians in ethic and expose unethical practice. It will strengthen all anti-corruption organization such as Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), and Independent and Corrupt Practice Tribunal (ICPT). It will reorient the police to provide people friendly service.

To empower the people to create wealth and fight poverty, soft loans will be provided to the people through increased funding to small scale cooperative, increase funding for education, and encourage vocational and technical education. NEEDS will also promote strict adhere to University autonomy act. Its core value emphasizes due process, probity, accountability and patriotism (NEEDS 2005). Needs is thus an integrated multi sectoral plan to rid the country of its pervasive social economic and political problems. These objectives are in line with social studies integrated approach to the study of man and society, NEEDS interest in the provisions of functional education and its regard for probity is core values of social

Like most similar program before it NEEDS objectives have not been realized. The monumental electoral fraud and violence that visited the 2007 general elections, the Jos religious riots the endemic corruption, the castration of E.F.C.C powers, the continued crises in he tertiary Institutions show that NEEDS had failed. This had made some Nigerians to be skeptical in embracing the current re-branding campaign of the Yar'dua administration.

Re-branding is a deliberate campaign to make Nigerians work on their self image. Things have consistently gone wrong in Nigeria that Nigerians have lost hope in their ability to make the Nigeria project work regrets that Nigeria is a brand "though a corrupt brand where nothing works". Re-branding will make Nigerian proud and positive about themselves and their ability to over come Nigeria's myriads of social, economic and political problems. Nigerian should show apathy and be more conscious of the good things that abound in Nigeria. The feeling of hopelessness and pessimistic tendency discourages ability to confront and solve social problems. It destroys a nation. Social studies instill national consciousness and inculcate the right type of values, skills and competence to solve social problems. According to Ezeh (1997) social problem arise from pathological feeling of hopelessness, helplessness, frustration and alienation. Jarolirnek (1977) noted that social studies provide young people with a feeling of hope in the future and confidence in their ability to solve problems.

3. FAILURE OF SOCIAL MOBILIZATION EFFORTS AND NEED FOR SOCIAL STUDIES INTERVENTION

The failure of the government and the people of Nigeria to achieve the objective of social mobilization program over the years calls for he intervention of a more stable strategy such as the use of social studies education to aid the nations quest for development. The program shares the basic objectives of social studies but lacks social studies systematic approach to social mobilization.

Iyamah (1989) regretted that government social mobilization efforts were short lived and therefore cannot address the deep seated pathogens of the problems. Different political regime come and goes with different programs of mobilizing the masses for sustainable nation building. In most cases they are focused on matured working population with die hard habits. Its executioners lack the political will and conscience to execute the polices to the letter. The 1987 political Bureau report observed that social mobilization effort had achieved nothing other than wastage of socio-economic resources, (Okorodudu 2006). In the same vein Osakwe, (1994) pointed out some reasons for failure of the program. They include:

1. Sporadic and isolated response to specific situations.
2. Five brigade and short-lived approach with no effect on the morals of Nigerians.
3. Mobilization efforts have been largely consultative and mere appeal oriented.
4. Government does not seek to integrate the programs with school subjects that share similar objects such as social studies.

Any country seeking to establish meaningful collective socio-economic and political values must channel such efforts through social studies education (Osakwe 1994). Okere (1993) asserted that education means; to train, to foster, and to bring up. Thus, educational institutions with discipline such as social studies trains and inculcate into the minds of young impressionable youths (and even adults) basic societal values necessary for National Development. Educational institutions assemble people from diverse interest groups and impact on them skills value and attitude desired by the society. Such impartation takes place systematically over a relatively long period making recipients to be gradually molded into civically competent participating citizens. It is a more permanent and stable approach towards character building for national development. Social studies education with its problem solving approach is best suited for social mobilization of the populace. Its flexible curriculum can be adopted to integrate some of the focus of the different social mobilization programs of the government. Social studies and social mobilization are thus partners in business of societal improvement. This perhaps informs the policy of making social studies compulsory at the junior secondary school level. Given the nature of social studies, it should be incorporated into the general studies programs of universities and polytechnics. Government should embark on a training of more qualified social studies lecturers or teachers grounded in the peculiar teaching method of social studies. This will make social studies takes its proper place of bringing up patriotic, honest, and just Nigerians. This is in line with the national objectives of building a free democratic, egalitarian, just and progressive country.

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This paper appraised the nature and scope of social studies education and how it can be used as a synergetic partner in social mobilization effort of the government. Government had embarked on various social mobilization efforts from the 70's till date in a determined bid to rid Nigerians of the myriad social problems with little or no good result.

It noted the basic objectives of some of the mobilization programs geared towards inculcating desirable values, attitudes, competences into Nigerians, necessary for national development. Such programs like the N.Y.S.C, Operation Feed the Nation, War Against Indiscipline, MAMSER, NEEDS and re-branding share in common objectives of social studies. Apart from the N.Y.S.C., given their temporary nature their target group, and inconsistent policy approach, their objectives have not been realized. Social studies as educational discipline become a more permanent alternative approach to realizing the objectives of social mobilization. Social studies shapes the mind of the youth in a systematic manner over a relatively long period of schooling to become responsible, honest, just, humane, patriotic citizens.

To enhance the teaching of social studies, this paper recommends the training of more competent social studies teachers and its introduction into the general studies programs of tertiary institutions. The inculcation of desirable values imparted into youths who are future leaders of the society will go a long way of churning out honest, humane, patriotic and participating citizens of Nigeria. Here lies the synergetic partnership between social studies and social mobilization for national development.

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