

## **SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION AS ROAD MAP FOR VALUE RE-ORIENTATION AND ADDRESSING SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper focused on Social Studies Education as road map for Value Re-orientation and Addressing security challenges in Nigeria. Social Studies Education is equipped with the rudiments for being a responsible and responsive citizen. This is capable of making the learners function well in any society including Nigeria. Presently Nigeria is faced with both social, economic, religious, and political crisis and all manner of insecurity issues especially among the youth. The need for value re-orientation and promotion of national security cannot be overemphasized. This can be achieved through the learning of school content such as Social Studies. This paper argues that Social Studies Education serves as a road through which Nigeria as a nation can achieve the desired value orientation and national security. It provides an avenue for the young ones to be taught the importance of tolerance, harmonious co-existence, respect for other people's culture, critical and creative thinking required for innovation among others, in order to become reliable future leaders and good followers that are devoid of rebellious behaviours. This study concludes that the required attitude, norms, and values are embedded in social studies curriculum and that the classroom teachers should meticulously implement the curriculum so as to achieve the need of the nation through the desired educational goals. Teachers should be*

*re-trained on effective implementation of Social Studies content in order to produce highly patriotic citizens who immensely desires positive change in their society.*

**Keywords:** Social Studies Education, Value Re-Orientation and Insecurity

## **Introduction**

The urgent need for highly patriotic, responsible and responsive citizens in Nigeria today cannot be underestimated. It has become a matter of great concern to educate the masses on the importance of adhering to social norms and values geared towards achieving the desired conducive environment in Nigeria. One of the ways to achieve this is through the school curricular. There are various school subjects that are capable of serving as a means for producing patriotic citizens and Social Studies is one of them. Social Studies is enriched with the basic knowledge and skills that will help the school children to interact meaningfully with their fellow human beings within an environment.

Raising effective citizens is the primary goal of any viable education system. In this respect, the Alberta Education (2015) defined social studies as a school subject that assists students to acquire the basic knowledge, skills and positive attitudes needed to be responsible citizens who contribute to solving problems of the society. Ersin (2017) also defines Social Studies as a programme of study which is intended to instill in students the desirable knowledge, values, skills, attitudes and actions considered important for effective human relations and functional personal interactions. The National Council of Social Studies (2010) defined social studies as the study of aspects of human society at certain post-secondary and tertiary schools, around the globe. Social studies however, is one of the subjects that is capable of instilling in the citizens the right attitudes towards securing their nation right from tender age. These new frontiers of social studies if well mediated will enhance sustainability and growth of human environment. Thus, Social Studies is a value laden subject capable of instilling strong values in the learners. Social Studies Education inculcates in learners the need for collective responsibility which must include good governance by the political leadership and effective loyalty by the people. When states are excessively aggressive, internally repressive or too weak to govern effectively and develop its environments, they threaten the security of the people. A fundamental objective of social studies education in Nigeria according to Nwaubani (2007) is the desire to integrate the diverse people (ethnic, religious, tribe, tongue, etc) of Nigeria through creating a sense of national consciousness in the process of teaching and learning of Social Studies, thereby inculcating the need for integration in the learner and discouraging an attitude that may cause disintegration and disunity as is currently being experienced today in the Nigeria. Such positive attitudes and values as cooperation, tolerance, respect for the human person, dignity in labour, honesty, patriotism, loyalty etc, which are necessary ingredients for national development and security, are better inculcated in a Social Studies class (Nwaubani, 2010).

Nigeria has encountered and is still encountering numerous social challenges which requires urgent and adequate attention. These problems range from influence of colonialism, bad leadership, limited resources, control from foreign countries and national insecurity. Achebe (2012) posited that the problem with Nigeria is squarely, that of leadership. It is appalling that Nigerian leaders are yet to take adequate action that will arrest insecurity in the country. The continuous value degeneration and persistent security issues in Nigeria has given the need to address how Social Studies is taught in schools. According to Nandi (2013), rapid technological changes within our modern society are creating enormous conflict for individuals and also testing their ability to cope. He opined that social studies programme should be tailored in such a way that it would help people attain the skills needed to solve problems, analyze and clarify issues, make sound and rational decisions that will contribute to the improvement of their society and their world at large. This implies that social studies is capable of serving as a conveying belt through which the societal challenges such as insecurity can be addressed.

National security is one of the most pressing challenges faced in Nigeria ranging from uncertainties associated with sit at homes in the south-eastern part of Nigeria. It is relevant to plan educational curriculum in relation to the societal needs so that such curriculum will be functional. Social studies education however, is enriched with worthwhile concepts through which the learners will be raised into responsible citizens. Social studies education will provide youths with critical and creative thinking which will be used for innovations and inventions for the general development of the nation (Morah & Manafa, 2021). In order to arrive at the right destination it is worthwhile to follow a clear guide.

To a layman road map is simply a guide to arrive a given destination. Iwena (2007) described road map as a representation of the earth's surface. But in education it is seen as a blueprint through which educational aims and objectives are realized. Social studies education provides a typical blueprint through which a country can achieve national development.

The goal of this paper is to examine how social studies can serve as a road map to national value re-orientation and addressing security challenges in Nigeria. It worthy of note that teaching Nigerian children social studies concepts is capable of making them functional citizens who will represent the country positively at all times. It is imperative that the inclusion of Social Sciences in school curriculum is capable of equipping the youths with positive skills that will enable them to responsible and responsive citizens of the country (Morah, et al).

The introduction of Social Studies into Nigeria's educational system (like every other country) was based on this need to meet societal needs and aspirations, and use the education so gained to promote national integration (Meziobi, et al, 2014). The objectives of Social Studies as stated in the National Curriculum published by Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2007:iii) are to help students:

1. Develop the ability to adapt to the changing environment.

2. Become responsible and disciplined individuals capable and willing to contribute to the development of the society.
3. Inculcate the right type of values.
4. Develop the sense of comprehension as citizens towards other people, their diverse cultures, history and those fundamental things that make them human.
5. Develop the capacity to recognize the many dimensions of being human in different cultural and social context.
6. Develop a sense of solidarity and sharing security in one's own identity.

The objectives of social studies according to National Curriculum published by Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) proved that social studies is capable of being the road map for value orientation (number three objectives) and promotion of solidarity and security (number six objectives) among others. Adequate attention should be given to social studies discipline in order to achieve these stated objectives for the general good of Nigerian society. There is no way someone will arrive his destination if he enters the wrong vehicle towards a wrong direction. One needs to make use of the right map in order to arrive at the right place. Things may continue to go wrong in Nigeria if social studies continue to lack the needed attention. This is because this subject is taught starting from basic education which forms the foundation for education of young ones. There is need to catch them young because when the child is given the right value from a tender age, the child will not easily deviate from the acquired value.

The nature of value given to children at their tender age is also cause for concern. This is why it is usually said that society is the product of families. There is need for motivated efforts towards value orientation starting from the family level. Family is the primary and foundational anchor of values and moral education as well as general socialization of children. It is made up of parents, children and by implication the extended family system consisting of uncles, aunties, grandparents, etc (Ekpiwve, 2008). Exemplary roles and behaviours are expected to be taught and caught at home or within the nuclear and extended family structure.

Value orientations arranged into a value system are of major importance in an organized social system that has an impact on the whole life and penetrates into all layers the subject which are related to social, economic, and political aspects. Diana (2019) defines value orientation as an “organized and generalized concept, influencing behavior, nature, humanity, human relations with others and desirable and undesirable as they may be related to the environment and inter-human relations”. It is unfortunate that value is yet to gain adequate attention in Nigeria unlike in many developed countries where different studies have shown that bio centric value orientation is fast gaining prominence (Talcott & Edward, 2020). The neglect of value orientation may be the reason behind increase in social vices and insecurity experienced in Nigeria.

Currently, Nigeria is witnessing alarming increase in social vices and other related challenges due largely to degeneration of cherished core values. These core values include honesty, diligence, prudence, hard work, hospitality, tolerance, obedience, integrity, respect, contentment, probity, fairness, justice equity, courage, modesty, obedience, sympathy, transparency, accountability, responsibility, perseverance, patriotism (Ezegbe, 2010). As a consequence, there are now rising trends in examination malpractices, cultism, truancy, insolence, disobedience, indiscipline and general lack of respect among students both at home and in school (Ikwumelu, et al, 2015). Similarly, there are also strong indications of perpetual indulgence of adults such as parents, community leaders, religious leaders, elected and appointed public office holders in general indiscipline and fraudulent acquisition of wealth, misappropriation of public funds, bribery and corruption, ethnicity, religious intolerance and bigotry among others (Udoh, 2014). These trends no doubt have worsened the prevailing rate of terrorism, kidnapping, prostitution, thuggery, drug abuse and addiction, human trafficking and other social vices among youths due largely to unemployment, infrastructural decay and social insecurity caused by failed political leadership and decadent value system (Mkpa, 2020). Indeed, the high rate of crimes and social vices as well as values disorientations indicated above have persisted as major national concerns in spite of previous and current institutional efforts towards curbing them. These previous and current efforts aimed at promoting values include the introduction of Ethical Revolution, War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAIC), Mass Mobilization and National Orientation Agency (MAMSER/NOA), Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offense Commission (ICPC), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), etc. All these efforts cannot be successful without the contributions of the family as the first agent of socialization. The lifestyles obtainable in the family will no doubt influence the behaviours of the citizens since every human being belong to a family. Where parents assume the responsibility of assisting their children, they tend to become socially competent adolescents, mutually understanding spouse/parents and honorable citizens (Morah, 2022).

The failure of these efforts and institutions in stemming values degeneration in Nigerian society is a clear indication that something is fundamentally wrong with our national value architecture or environment. Values have been categorized into moral, economic, aesthetic, spiritual/religious, political, cultural, societal and humanistic dimensions (Turkkohraman, 2013). Similarly, values are also seen to be personal or individual, organizational, societal or cultural in nature (Milton, 2015). This implies the wholistic nature of values in the society. It is not a personal trait rather it requires the participation of all and sundry in the society in order to make it functional.

In view of the above, value orientation however, is the principles of right and wrong that are accepted by an individual or a social group. Value orientation should be one of the main focus of education programme to develop

students' integrated personality so that they may contribute their best to themselves, their families and the country at large. There are cases of declining value orientation or what has been described as loss of values on the society. Majority of the citizens have abandoned the accepted values such as dignity of labour, integrity, religious tolerance, respect for human life and blood, self-reliance among others, and wrongly embraced negative values associated with "get rich quick syndrome"., the consequence is that the younger generations are denied of the appropriate value system, with little or no effort to guide them towards the acceptable values. This has resulted to increase in social vices which has led to high-rate of insecurity in Nigeria.

The state of uneasiness and nervousness has become the order of the day in Nigeria. The problem of insecurity in Nigeria has also given negative signals to the rest of the international community that Nigeria and its surroundings are not safe and secure and as such are not suitable for economic investment and activities. This is particularly worrisome in view of the efforts being made to create the desired atmosphere to attract foreign investments in order to improve employment opportunities and reduce joblessness to the barest minimum. The challenge of insecurity threatens the progress of our collective entity called Nigerian.

The insurgence of Boko Haram has made it worse; crimes, corruption, electoral violence and malpractices, political instability, ethnic and religious wars, riots coupled with other social vices persist and has increased fears in visitors and residents which have defaced the nation. Sustaining national and state security in Nigeria is a task for both governments and the entire citizenry and this is one of the central issues challenging democracy and development today in Nigeria. Mordi (2013) opined that Nigerians speak of declining safety as an element of increasing insecurity in Nigeria. He stressed that nationwide, people live in fear of terrorists, armed robbers, killers, bombers, arsonists and kidnappers. He went further to explain that such situation skyrockets environmental and health challenges, thereby disrupting peace of minds of the citizens. Insecurity however, is the feeling of uncertainty, lack of confidence and presence of anxiety about oneself and his general environment.

### **Causes of Insecurity**

Insecurity can take place as a result of the following factors:

1. **Corruption:** This can result to insecurity when leaders and the led continues to make their selfish priority without considering the impact on the younger generation. Corruption hinders the development and undermines the security of modern societies. Bolaji (2008). Corruption undermines public confidence in the institutions of the state. Corruption particularly impedes the progress of countries in transition, stealing much needed resources from state-building endeavours.
2. **Marginalization:** Persistent marginalization of the citizens is capable of encouraging rebellious behavior which automatically leads to insecurity in the

society. Okorie (2012) identified marginalization as one of the key factors of rebellious behaviours among citizens.

3. **Ethnicity:** the feeling of a group or an ethnic group of being superior to others is what usually necessitates the state of insecurity in the society. Ivanka (2023) opined that majority of social challenges associated to fights are majorly related to sense of pride, ego and superiority of one ethnic group against the other ethnic group
4. **Religious Intolerance:** Religious intolerance can materialize in many ways, from micro-aggressions, to lack of accommodation and acceptance of religious practices, to vandalism of religious buildings, hate speech, and physical violence. These problems whether individually or collectively, constitute a serious threat to the nation's peace, rights and privileges of individuals' security and sustainable development in the country (Ewere & Yakubu, 2022). The psychological, economic, and societal impacts these intolerant behaviours and attitudes have on people can be very detrimental and long lasting.
5. **Bad leadership:** Bad leadership is a threat to national security. Ogundare (2020) opined that a nation characterized by bad leadership is subject to face insecurity situations.
6. **Youth Unemployment:** According to Okolo (2010), unless the government addresses the issue of unemployment, their efforts will be in vain. The unemployed youths must be engaged, otherwise they will continue to be tools in the hands of corrupt politicians. From the look of things, it appears that unemployed graduates are increasing day by day, and this portends grave danger to the society. These youths invariably look for alternative means of survival. The issue of employment now is for politicians and other political heavyweight champions. Until factories and industries are built all over across the nation, employment opportunities will be a mirage.
7. **Falling Standard of Education:** Improper education promotes national insecurity but proper education promotes peace, unity, orderliness and national security. Education allows for the existence of a pool of intellectuals that help and think for the nation regarding the conception and implementation of policies. No nation is capable of developing above its educational standard.
8. **Lack of Transparency:** Excessive secrecy in national security policy undermines the basic functions of democratic self-government. Without transparency, there can be no accountability for government abuses and no way to ensure that our government's actions reflect the will of the people. Excessive secrecy also damages national security. Nigeria is not alone; both national and international bodies always come together to promote national security (Fage & Alabi, 2017).
9. **Lack of proper value orientation:** whenever values of any society is neglected it is capable resulting to loss of cultural values and subsequent wayward lifestyles among the youths. This is capable of making the youths to do the unthinkable thereby disrupting national security and promoting insecurity in the country.
10. **High value for material things among others:** high values for material things invariably leads to promiscuous lifestyle. A situation where one desires to have

something at all cost thereby doing everything humanly possible including negative approach just to achieve such aim. This leads to insecurity as many end up harming lives in order to achieve such selfish interest.

### **Role of Social Studies Education in Achieving National Security**

The following roles of social studies education for enhancement of national security were identified by Nandi (2013);

1. It helps in making people to make public and personal decisions that will affect their lives, local communities, nations and the world at large.
2. It helps people in making certain decisions that will affect their relationship with other human beings. This is because social studies deals with human relationships.
3. It helps in developing intelligent social actors, this is because it is believed that when an individual develops the ability to make rational decisions, he can act intelligently.
4. Social studies help to address issues such as poverty, crime and public health, this is because it is observed that these issues have increased beyond boundaries of disciplines.
5. Social problems are addressed through social studies teaching methodologies such as dramatization, role play, discussion and questioning etc.

Additionally, it should be noted that through Social Studies Education the moral personality of man is built up. This is because the subject equips the learners with worthwhile skills like moral judgment, and this guides the action of man and behaviours.

Furthermore, through the teaching of social studies education, the right types of values such as honesty, respect of elders, and integrity among others are inculcated into the young ones. The teaching of social studies education also promotes the spirit of nationalism and patriotism among youths. Through social studies education, the youths develop positive attitudes of togetherness, comradeship and cooperation towards the affairs of their nation. Ikoya (2013) opined that national security is achieved when the individual to a large extent has the ability to protect himself and his family members. The teaching of social studies equips the individual with the fundamental human rights and his civic responsibilities that will enable him to survive in his environment. The teaching of social studies consequently, helps to curb youth's violence and promotes national security.

### **Conclusion**

Nigeria as a country is faced with various challenges both socially, economically, politically and cultural structures which if well managed could promote effective value orientation and curb incessant security issues in the Nigerian society. However, achieving the above expectations and realities depends on how responsive, enduring, encouraging and sustainable the environment for values orientation is through the school curricular and in particular the extent



Social Studies teaching and learning can be improved to achieve its value goals and mandate. Furthermore, it calls for effective tackling of the challenges confronting values orientation by all strategic stakeholders in Nigeria. This study concludes that as a value laden subject, Social Studies content is enriching and is a road map for instilling values in the learners. However, to achieve the goal depends on the implementation processes employed by the teachers.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made;

1. Restoration of desirable core values is a collective responsibility. To this end, all stakeholders namely parents, governments, professionals etc should demonstrate exemplary roles in private and public affairs by shunning acts that could lead to value degeneration.
2. Parents and family as a whole should show examples as role models and monitor how children interact with peer groups or get involved in offensive social media activities.
3. Government should restore Social Studies as a compulsory subject in its own right and not as mere component of religion and national values curriculum at the Basic Education level.
4. Government should give values education deserved attention by exposing Social Studies teachers to periodic trainings in order to improve their value knowledge and instructional competencies.
5. Environment for value orientation should be made more responsive, conducive and sustainable by individuals especially adult members of the society through exemplary roles and being compliant to rules and regulations.
6. Government should fund education properly by making adequate financial allocation to Social Studies for the production of trained/motivated teachers, instructional materials and resources.
7. Governments and other non-governmental organizations should as a matter of urgency and commitment reduce the economic burdens that usually expose citizens to social vices by providing employment opportunities and creating conducive environment for youth entrepreneurship and empowerment programmes.
8. Public office holders, civil servants, and other citizens in positions of authority should demonstrate values of transparency, accountability, integrity, equity and fairness etc in handling public investments and positions.
9. There should be appropriate sanctions against those who violate public trusts. This if done, will help to reward and encourage people that demonstrate positive values in the society.

In view of the above, it is the researcher's well-considered opinion that a well-articulated and focused Value Orientation (through the auspices and guided Social Studies teaching and learning) can only be achieved if the environment is conducive. However, value orientation calls for a general effort by parents,

teachers and other members of the community such as religious leaders, professionals, governments at all levels etc. through effective enforcement of laws, rules and regulations which would strengthen the moral fabrics of the society. This will in no doubt promote a stable atmosphere that is free of chaos and anarchy in Nigerian society where everyone will go about their daily activities without fear of uncertainties. Thereby enhancing national security in Nigeria through value orientation championed by social studies education given to the citizens from basic education level.

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