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Social Studies Education for Inculcating Desirable Political Socialization among Secondary School Students in Nigeria

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Abstract

The role of social studies education in inculcating desirable political socialization cannot be over-emphasized. It is basically an established fact that all human societies are faced with a daunting task of transforming their helpless infants into matured adults capable of playing some vital roles and conforming to the norms and values of their society. This paper is aimed at viewing the panacea of transmitting the culture of effective political socialization among the youths who are mostly in secondary school a robust national development stride. Where the new members acquire special skills, knowledge, norms, ideas, beliefs, values, attitudes and empirical facts about the process of socialization will certainly play a significant role for effective national development in the country. Therefore, the paper highlights the relevance of inculcating efficient political socialization through quality social studies programme. T paper further x-rayed the possible hindrances for effective political socialization among secondary school students and recommend solutions for the overall political and social development in the country.

Key words: Social Studies, Education, Inculcating, Desirable, Political Socialization.

Introduction

An ox examination of the partially amended constitution of Nigeria and the National Policy on Education (NPE) would show one in clearly unequivocal term the efforts of successive governments in Nigeria to use education for meaningful changes in the

society. This is because of the recognition of importance of education as a social vehicle for positive change in the society, an instrument through which socio-economic and political developments can be effected. This view of general importance attached to education is also probably due to the fact that there is thinking in educational circles today that education is the right of every citizen and also that it enables the person to perform one's own socio-civic and political functions to the country more effectively.

The above point is one function that set social studies as a unique subject in the Nigerian secondary school curriculum. It is discipline that moulds the learners through the various stages of development called socialization, which is crucial in human life. Socialization takes numerous forms and processes at different stages of development to enable the learner acquire various skills and dispositions, which equally will make to become a useful and integral member of the society he belongs or lives. There are several agencies of socialization such as the family, peer group, religious groups, mass media and school all playing a socializing role of the individual at one point or the other.

The level of attachment that citizens attached to their country is an expanded function of the school, family and religious organizations among other agencies in building a strong bond among fellow members, thereby producing a united and indissoluble nation building pride on the principle of democracy which enhance participatory decision making. Political socialization is a lifelong process by which people form their ideas about politics and acquire political values. While the family and school are important early in life, what our peers think and what we read newspaper and see on television have more influence on our political attitudes as adults.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The quality of political socialization among secondary school students in Nigeria is a pressing concern, as it directly impacts the nation's democratic development and civic engagement. Despite Social Studies education's pivotal role in shaping students' political awareness and participation, research suggests that many Nigerian secondary school students lack adequate knowledge, positive attitudes, and practical skills necessary for effective citizenship and responsible political engagement. This study examines the challenges and opportunities in leveraging Social Studies education to inculcate desirable political socialization among secondary school students in Nigeria, with a view to informing policy and practice for improved civic education outcome.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. Assess the current level of political knowledge, attitudes, and participation among secondary school students in Nigeria.
2. Identify challenges facing Social Studies education in promoting effective political socialization among students.
3. Explore strategies for improving Social Studies curriculum and pedagogy to enhance students' political awareness and engagement.

4. Investigate the influence of Social Studies education on students' civic values and responsible citizenship behaviors.
5. Recommend policy and practice improvements for leveraging Social Studies education to foster desirable political socialization.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION:

The following concepts are hereby clarified below;

SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION:

Social studies has no single definition. It has been defined in varying perspectives by different scholars largely because of its relative nature in terms of location, time and circumstances as well as the individual scholar defining it (Kazi, 2007). According to Owen (2004) as cited by Dalton (2008), social studies is that aspect of learning which deals with one's environment, both physical and human involving the development of those skills, attitudes and values that characterize a responsive and responsible citizenship in a free society.

Nnoli (2001) explains social studies as the study of man within his environment: physical, economic, psychological, religious, political, cultural, scientific and technological. He went further to state that it is the integration of interacting national consciousness and national unity, inhibiting the right type of values and attitudes for self reliance and for national survival. In another dimension, Okam (1998) sees social studies as a discipline that possess a very strong and effective overtones which its curricular structures are meant to incorporate substantial degree of program which are indispensable for effective education as it advocates the gospel which is meant to cater for the individual nature and interests.

Based on the above mentioned views, social studies could be seen as a branch of knowledge that promotes socio-political and intellectual awareness, understanding of the society and its relative development and enhancing the individual ability to apply that knowledge and understanding for future or continued life.

SOCIALIZATION:

Socialization is a term used by sociologist, social psychologist, anthropologist, political scientist and educationist to refer to a lifelong process of inheriting and disseminating norms, values, customs and ideologies, providing an individual with the skills and habits necessary for participating within a given society. This was backed up by Kohlbergh's (1998) theory of moral development which expressed moral reasoning (how individual reason situations as right or wrong).

Socialization can also be seen as the process of learning and practicing the culture of a given society by both the young and adult members, it is a way of internalizing the specific prescriptions and proscriptions of standardized practice of one particular society or group. Essentially, socialization can be looked at from two (2) view points: that of the society and that of the individual. To the society, it is a process of fitting new members into an organized way of life and instilling in them the society's cultural traditions. It a step by step medium of

transforming the raw human animal into human being capable of adapting and rational actions with other members in the society. As a result of the transformation process, most babies grow up into fully functioning social beings, able to use the language of their parents and competent in their cultural participation as each new day brings into consciousness new experiences that must be learnt and assimilated either consciously or otherwise. It is upon the basis of what is learnt and internalized that the child relate with the outside world, perceiving others behavior and reflecting on same and also responding on the basis of his understanding. Biological heredity ushers the infant actor on the stage which physical environment, the group and the culture have set in. The dramatic action now begins and the new born is gradually transformed into social personality; the term used by sociologist to designate this transformation is socialization.

Looking at the new born baby as new actor, one can certainly see without doubt that he possesses a number of organic power or traits making up what is together called Organic Heritage (O.H.), the factor sometimes known as the Original Nature or Original Endowment. This dynamic power or forces make up his arsenals with which he begins his fateful expeditions upon the sea of life.

POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION:

Political socialization is how individuals form their political attitudes and thus how citizens form their political culture. Political socialization is an elusive and messy process. Broadly construed, political socialization is the transmission of political culture to new or emerging generations of citizens in a given country or society Bachen et'al (2008) and Dudley, et'al (2003). It is product of interlocking sets of macro and micro level phenomena. The fundamental question underpinning macro level political socialization research is: how politics transmit values, beliefs, opinions, and behaviors to the mass public? Micro level studies ask: how and why do people become citizens? At the macro level of political system, political socialization is the means by which polities and other political societies inculcate appropriate norms and practices in citizens, residents, and members (Sapiro, 2004:2). Polities convey established patterns of thoughts and actions, laws and norms, traditions and folkways through agencies such as the family, educational system, peer groups, mass-media, political institutions, community organizations, and the military (Marshal, 1998). However, the kind of questions that are addressed at the macro level focus on " where and how people develop the kinds of political orientations and practices that transform the designs of democratic constitutions and institutions into the creation of real, functioning democratic politics" (Sapiro, 2004:19).

Political socialization is a particular type of political learning whereby people develop the attitudes, values, beliefs, opinions, and behaviors that are conducive to becoming good citizens in the country. Socialization is largely a one-way process through which young people gain an understanding of the political world through their interaction with adults and media. Thus, political socialization has been defined as "the long developmental process by which an infant

(even an adult) citizens learns, imbibes and indeed internalizes the political culture (core political values, beliefs, norms and ideologies) of his political system so as to make meaning of the world around him (Ofoeze, 2003:13). The implication is that political socialization is "the process of induction into a political system (Hooghe, 2004). Consequently, the enduring norms, values, beliefs and attitudes that are supportive of the political power system and which are transmitted from one generation to the other is referred to as the political culture. One of the most important agencies of political socialization is the political party. Apart from carrying out the vital role of political socialization, political parties' also perform such other latent functions like interest articulation, interest aggregations, building political culture, political education through advocacy strategies and leadership recruitments etc.

POLITICAL CULTURE:

Modern use of political culture is traceable to the work of Galston (2007) titled "The civic culture". The study represented a classic comparative analysis of political attitudes and democracy in five (5) countries. The essence was to demonstrate how cultural development and political development move in tandem (Ofoeze, 2001). Political culture according to Marshal (1996:398) refers to "the norms, values and symbols that help to legitimize the political power system of a society". Maclean and Macmillan (2009:400) defined political culture as:

> *The attitudes and values which underpin the operation of a particular political system. These were seen as including knowledge and skills about the operation of political system, positive and negative feelings towards it and educative judgments about* the *system.*

Political culture in the words of Beck (1977), as cited in Allyn et'al (2003) is defined in two (2) dimensions namely; at the levels of individual citizens and at the political system as a whole. On individual level, is defined as "all important ways in which a person is productively oriented towards the essential elements in the political system". On the political system as a whole, political culture is referred to as "the collective orientations of members toward the basic elements in their political system (Alwin et'al, 1991). The above mentioned definitions emphasized the importance of orientation of members of society toward basic and essential elements of the political system. Thus, positive orientations that generate norms, values, beliefs and attitudes that are supportive of the political power system is basic to political culture. In other words, effective political socialization breeds enduring political culture.

LEVELS OF POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION:

Political socialization therefore proceeds in two (2) stages which are;

Primary socialization: also referred to as family socialization which involves the training of the individual into roles performance which in most cases are at the level of the family setup. These include the following; moral training, intellectual training, character training, vocational training and affection training among others.

Secondary socialization: this form of socialization occurs outside the family where the emphasis is on the induction into groups which essentially exist outside the family. This political socialization forms part of those things learned outside the family.

DIMENSIONAL LEVELS OF POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION:

Political socialization has three (3) unique dimensional levels;

a. **System level:** citizens and leaders views of values and organizations holding political system together;
   i. Tap basic commitments to the political system,
   ii. Share common identity, patriotism and national pride
   iii. Legitimacy provides foundations for citizens' oaths to obey.
b. **Process level:** this involves the expectations of how politics should function and individual's relationship to the political process. What do we expect from the government?
   i. Participants involved and informed,
   ii. Subjects- passive, obedience,
   iii. Parochial- limited awareness.
c. **Policy level:** which include citizens and leaders policy expectations from the government.
   iii. Political policy expectations
   iv. Political expectations from government.

Agents of Political Socialization:

The Family: The family exerts the first and most important influence on the formation of individual values. As Beck (1977) observed, the direct and indirect influence of the family; the first socialization source that an individual encounters, are normally powerful and lasting. Participation and family decision making can increase the child's sense of political competence. The family shapes the future political attitudes by defining a social position for the child; establishing both ethnic, linguistic, class, and religious ties; affirming cultural values and influencing job aspirations. In order to contribute meaningfully to democratic stability, the government should not be indifferent towards the family. In societies where government support and nurture the family system, the level of political consciousness is presumably high. Nigeria is not known to support families and in homes where parents cannot cater for the routine family demands, children are vulnerable to a lot of vices and abuses which undermines his or her overall socialization.

The School: The role of schools in transmitting civic education cannot be overstated. This entails the inculcation of fundamental values and beliefs or ethics of the society to the younger ones. Through public education, states or countries seek to influence the youths before their normal character is fully formed. Magstadt (2009) asserts, "the ideal of liberal education fits easily into the scheme of constitutional democracies that protect the right to questions authority. The school provide children with knowledge of the political world and their

respective roles in it, also it reinforce affection for the system. Simultaneously, higher level of education seems most likely to encourage citizens to participate meaningfully in politics, as education also affects political skills and resources of the public. Educated people are more aware of the impact of government on their lives and therefore pay more attention to politics. The better educated folks have more mental skills that improve their ability to manage the world of politics. They also have more information about political processes and take part in a wider range of political activities (Lemlech, 2009). To enhance greater political stability in Nigeria, the government must refrain from its present lackluster approach towards education sector and accord it its prime place (Niemi and Junn, 1998).

Peer groups: Although peer pressure certainly affects teenager's lifestyles, it is less evident in developing their political values. Exceptions are issues that directly affect them. Later, if peers are defined in terms of occupation, then the group does not exert significant influence on how its members think politically. For example, professionals such as teachers or bankers often have similar political opinions, particularly on matters related to their careers. Peer groups are important social units that shape political attitudes, motivates or pressure them to conform to attitudes or behavior accepted by group.

Political Parties: Political parties are essential and conspicuous features of liberal democracy (Alfa, 2011). Political parties normally play an important role in political socialization. In democratic systems, political parties attempt to mould issue of preferences, arouse the apathetic and find new issues to mobilize support (Roh, 2008). However, an exploration of Nigerian political parties today shows that they contribute to democratic deficits rather than democratic stability (Oddih, 2003).

According to Ofoeze (2001) and Owan (2000), political parties perform the role interest articulation by identifying and selecting from innumerable and often conflicting and confused mass of problems, opinions, ideas and interests considered as more pressing, urgent and more critical, analyzing them, thinking and fashioning out solutions and presenting them in policy opinions to the people for consideration. Political parties also perform interest aggregation through the filtering of divergent views and opinion of the people and articulating them in such a manner that they can be presented for consideration as public policy.

The Mass Media: The mass media in the form of print and electronic media play a significant role in the socialization and continued education of citizens. Newspapers, radio, television, magazines enhance the internationalization of attitudes and values around the globe and also convey the main standards upon which a society agrees. The media presents a single point of view and party activity reinforces that perspective directly involving the citizens. Most of the media houses in Nigeria are publicly owned and are used as mouth piece of the government. This however, negates the principle of accountability in governance and also negatively affects democratic responsibility.

RELIGIOUS PLACES:

Religious traditions can have a strong effect on someone's political views. For example, Protestants tend to be more conservative (in countries where Protestants are not in great majority). The effects of the Church and the Mosque in socialization process of individuals

have been quite remarkable in recent times. It helps in the inculcation of desired values and norms of the society where the individual lives. The religion as a crucial agent performs the following roles;

i. It inculcate unalloyed obedience,
ii. It instills moral values,
iii. It enhances intellectual development,
iv. It also teaches serving humanity,
v. It ensures spiritual development.

FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION:

In the views of Almond and Bingham (in Ofoeze, 2001), political socialization performs the following broad functions;

- Shapes and transmits a nation's political culture,
- Maintain society's political culture from one generation to the other,
- It has the capacity to transform the population or part of it to view and experience politics in different dimensions,
- It brings about rapid changes or extra ordinary events have the capacity of generating politics where none existed (through cultural diffusion).

FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES:

According to Ofoeze (2001), political parties serve the role of interests articulation by identifying and selecting from diverse and often conflicting and confused mass of problems, opinions, ideas and interests considered more pressing and more critical, analyzing them, thinking and fashioning out solutions and presenting them in forms of policy options to the people for consideration and application. Political parties also perform interests aggregation through the filtering of divergent views and opinions of the people and articulating them in such a manner that they can be presented for consideration and adoption as public policy.

Another imperative function of the political parties is the use of political socialization and education to build an enduring political culture. In the western advanced democracies, political parties encourage positive orientations that generate norms, values, beliefs and attitudes that are supportive of the political power system. In addition, political parties undertake the following crucial function as outlined by Ofoeze (2001); the identification, screening, selection and discovery of those citizens possessing the relevant leadership abilities and who then are pointed into formal political governmental positions to exercise general political or governmental leadership.

The Role of Social Studies in the Socialization of Secondary Students:

1. To ensure development of cognitive political learning, one expects that desirable political attitudes, values and knowledge which would promote the ideals of the nation would be incorporated into the programme of schools such as social studies subject

so that the "future leaders" or "leaders of tomorrow" would be outsourced and have outgrown some of the cancerous political vices which have helped to obstruct the evolution of a virile political culture in Nigeria.

2. To ensure again that the process of transmitting political knowledge and information about different aspects of the political system should be put in place. At this juncture, it can be observed that in Nigeria, studies in the cognitive political socialization among secondary school students are grossly lacking. This probably due to the fact that researchers in the area of political socialization have focused extensively on the political behavior of adult only.
3. Social studies education provides knowledge and skills that shape the students behavior to be active participants in political whether local, national or international.
4. Social studies education corrects the social anomalies, not only by making the students to be at the receiving end, but the society as a whole via the school can be normalized. Societal problems like mismanagement in our offices, squander mania, injudicious spending, breach of trusts and flagrant abuse of power or office etc can be brought to minimal if extra attention is given to secondary school students as far as leadership training is concerned.
5. Social studies education entrust student with responsibilities and equip them with specific administrative and life skills that will help them in their future life and also inculcate the spirit of national consciousness and sound spirit of leadership in the curricular and extracurricular activities.
6. Students socialized at secondary schools through social studies education receive democracy training.
7. Social studies education also expose secondary school students to the knowledge of the Nigerian problems and through adequate socialization, it is expected that social studies curriculum content is prepared to pave an easy way of solving these problems.
8. Social studies education through its moral content train students to respect the law and instituted authorities and by molding their behavior politically and socially.

HINDRANCES/OBSTACLES TO POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION:

1. Social studies education is only taught at junior secondary school as the senior secondary school is left out of the socialization process.
2. Quality of teachers and misplacement of social studies roles to other social science subjects like economics, history, geography, sociology which somehow do not serve as role models and behavior modifiers.
3. Teachers' welfare in terms of salaries and allowances is not commensurate to their professional duties as the government is yet to encourage the teaching profession. Thus, most teachers do not derive job satisfaction which in the long run undermines their roles in the political socialization process.
4. Incessant industrial actions results in several labor unrest in Nigeria, especially in the education sector which brings serious interruption of school sessions from primary to

university levels. Hence, students spend more time at home without proper interaction with their teachers and school mates which has adverse effects on the political socialization among secondary school students in Nigeria.

5. The non fulfillment of party manifestoes and campaign pledges by elected politicians has led to political apathy, thereby discouraging active participation and socialization.

SOLUTIONS TO THESE CONSTRAINTS:

3. Policy makers should implement the curriculum of social studies education at the senior secondary school for effective political socialization in Nigeria.
4. Government should motivate teachers by giving them incentives in the form of special packages to commensurate their teaching profession in addition to workshops, seminars and conferences to enhance their professional development.
5. Government should also provide conducive environment for industrial harmony to curtail incessant industrial actions.
6. The teaching of social studies should be given strictly to social studies specialists.
7. Elected leaders should stand and fulfill their party manifestoes and campaign promises.

CONCLUSION:

Effective socialization and well articulated child rearing and positive development are panaceas to efficient developmental activities in any modern and civilized world due to the fact that development itself is all about people. In some areas of the country, children are still used in hawking wares during the time they are expected to be in school despite the government policy of universal basic education (UBE) and education for all (EFA) campaigns. Unfortunately, children of school ages who are supposed to be in school are still found hawking and roaming all over the streets in Nigeria. Both government and policy makers should continue to give due regards and not to underrate the relevance of social studies education in correcting the societal anomalies. Social studies can be used to indoctrinate or impact social ideologies or to a large extent instill the most desired behaviors to the wider world. Social studies is the best instrument for social transformation, through its contents, the nation can move forward, change unwanted behaviors and it brings about rapid societal improvements.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Authorities should encourage religious and cultural trainings in schools. Both religious and cultural practices must be made compulsory in the primary and post-primary institutions as they are morally and spiritually inclined subjects.
- Teachers working and living conditions to be improved as it will help them in discharging their duties diligently in bringing up future leaders.
- Both teachers and leaders should live up to expectations and conduct an exemplary life worthy for emulation by the younger ones.

- Development of clubs and societies in schools broaden students intellectual and leadership abilities and should therefore be mandated.
- Efficient monitoring should be encouraged for all government policies and programmes in Nigeria so that children to enhance the overall social development in the country.

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