

## **EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM IN SCHOOLS: MATTERS ARISING**

**Okon E. Akpan Ph.D**

Faculty of Education

Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH), Calabar, Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT:** *The purpose of this paper was to examine the extent to which social studies curriculum had been effectively implemented in schools. The paper highlighted content and context of the curriculum, adequate human resources, political factors and government policies, and availability and effective utilization of instructional resource as major factors that contribute to ineffective implementation of social studies curriculum in schools. Some challenges of social studies education had also been highlighted. The paper recommends that the government and other related agencies should organize conferences, seminars, workshops etc on the strategies, methods and construction of special tools for the evaluation of social studies curriculum if social studies must be effectively implemented.*

**KEY WORDS:** curriculum, social studies, human resources, instructional materials.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Social Studies Curricul

um has been accepted by many as a means of human total development. The government saw it as a means by which man can realize capabilities and priorities (Imo, 2017). Government policies and strategies often raise challenges in situations of actual implementation of Social Studies curriculum in many instances (Amaele, 2015). The study was informed by the ineffective implementation of Social Studies curriculum in schools by students, parents and many educational stakeholders. (National Council of Social Studies 2004; National Education Research Council 2004; Esu, Erukoha and Umoren 2006).

In the search for solution to the problems of implementation of Social Studies curriculum in Nigerian schools, government has been playing a major role especially in the aspect of continuous conceptual analysis of Social Studies curriculum in order to assist in effective implementation of it. These include: availability and effective utilization of instructional materials, availability of human resources, content focus and government policies for effective understanding and implementation of it in schools among others. In spite of many efforts, the problem surrounding the general understanding of the meaning of Social Studies curriculum remains a problem even in Education. This spills up to contribute to the difficulties of effective implementation of any Social Studies curriculum. To ensure effective implementation, is to make use of diverse strategies or methods in order to make learners active, reflective thinkers and problems solvers (Laraba 2015).

Meziobi, Oyeoku and Ezegbe (2012) noted that, the effective implementation of Social Studies curriculum in schools is inextricably dependent on quality Social Studies teachers who are adequately informed about what to teach, attitudes, values and skills expected to be injected in the learners for the realization of functional educational goals. Jemialu (2018) also noted that effective implementation of Social Studies curriculum is synonymous with teaching (teachers) effectiveness. In addition, it can be seen as a manifestation of knowledge of content, skills in lesson presentation, creating desirable atmosphere for learning and also as a kind of classroom transaction that occur between teachers and students resulting in increase in students' knowledge. It is the achievement of all or most of the learning objectives and reduction of differences in cognitive levels among the students. The transformation agenda of President Goodluck Jonathan (Vision 2020) is feasible in Nigeria through Social Studies curriculum if effectively implemented. Social Studies teachers' classroom instructional effectiveness is instrumental to the effective implementation of the Social Studies curriculum in schools (Blessing, 2019).

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) National Policy on Education states that the quality of effective teaching is dependent on the capability of trained Social Studies teachers and ability to simulate learning to an appreciable extent. According to Akeke and Aluko (2017) the method adopted by Social Studies teachers is a strong factor that can affect learners' level of achievement. These days many people can be teachers, but the question is, how many people are effective Social Studies teachers including those who know what and those who know how? To be an effective Social Studies teacher does not only involve having a deep content knowledge, but also organizational, management and communication skills, being able to organize instructions and providing relevant assessment and fair evaluations. In addition an effective Social Studies teacher is always in a constant learning process due to changes in terms of the students' characteristics, the curriculum, the community and finance among many others. Social Studies teachers are the crux of subjects' implementation, without them teaching effectively, the subjects may not attain its objectives. Teachers' instructional methods facilitate the teaching and learning of Social Studies. The Social Studies teacher is expected to adopt various instructional approaches, illustrations and explanations, such that the learner is maximally involved in the teaching/learning environment. Effective teachers presupposes effective learning by students. Teaching effectiveness can be seen as a teacher's ability to be intellectually challenging, motivating students, setting high standards, approachable, presenting materials well, making Social Studies and class interesting, encouraging self-initiated learning and having good elocutionary skills that triggers learning and produce useful outcome (Akeke&Aluko, 2017).

Akubuilu, Ugo, Ugo, Ugochukwu and Ikehi (2009) states that Social Studies curriculum addresses economic, political, psychological, physical and technological relevance of cultural and moral way of life of a people to national development. Its content is organised around social and environmental issues affecting man's existence, ability to perform and conserve the environment for sustainable development (Mezieobi, Akpochofo&Mezieobi, 2010). Social Studies curriculum is one of such programmes that deserve national attention especially in the planning of the curriculum

(Godfrey, 2009). Curriculum is planned, considering the target audience in order to achieve effective learning through an appropriate means or method of implementation of equal importance. Godfrey (2009) concluded that the study of Social Studies curriculum is foundational to social-based professional courses for learners. Social Studies subject is one of the subjects in Junior Secondary Curriculum that could enable persons to achieve moral, societal and educational goals. Social Studies serve as an avenue to incorporate students into citizenship education, providing them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that would make them competent and responsible citizens who are knowledgeable to contribute to the community, and display moral and civic excellence. Social Studies was included in the Nigerian schools as a quest for relevance in Nigerian Education and society. This explains why Social Studies as a subject has been given a honourable place in the basic educational sector (Ediinyang&Effiom, 2014). Social Studies curriculum was designed in such a way that it has the potentials to equip the learners with the needed skills to be abreast and survive in their environment. According to Ezeoba and Okafor (2019), its implementation touches every sphere of society.

The institutions that are directly responsible for the implementation of Social Studies curriculum should be conversant with the possible issues that can arise in the implementation process and develop a working Social Studies curriculum. To achieve effective implementation, effective strategies and policy intervention will be the driving forces for implementing Social Studies curriculum. It is against this back drop that this paper examine the strategies for effective implementation of Social Studies curriculum in schools to enhance students'achievement in Social Studies. To do this, this paper is therefore divided into seven sections. Section one gives the introduction and rationale, section two discusses the context of the curriculum, while section three examines available human resources. Section four discusses political factors and government policies, section five examines availability and effective utilization of instructional materials, section six discusses economic constraints while section seven concludes the paper.

### **The content and context of the curriculum**

According to Laraba(2015) the content of Social Studies is a synthesis and composite of important generalizations about relation, problems and institutions drawn from the social science. It should however be noted that the sources of content for Social Studies cannot be limited to the Social Science alone. This is because of the multi-dimensional nature of the programme. In other words, Social Studies content is derived from concepts generalization and theories of Physical and Biological Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences. Thus, it is eclectic in nature.

In discussing the content of Social Studies, it will be incomplete to neglect the scope of the subject. This is because the scope directly influences the content. Where the scope is wide, the content is also bound to be wide, and where the scope is narrow, the content will also be narrow. In view of this therefore, in any attempt to determine the content of the subject, the first thing that must be done is to determine the scope. Once this is done, then appropriate subject matter, ideas, concepts and generalization could be drawn from various subjects' areas that come within the scope.

The content of Social Studies is organized around social environment issues affecting man's existence and ability to perform and conserve the environment (Mezieobi, et al, 2010), Ezeoba and Okafor (2019) noted that the curriculum content of Social Studies is aimed at achieving the objectives of Social Studies. According to Ezegbe as cited by Laraba (2015), the objectives of Social Studies include: (i) inculcation of national consciousness and national unity. Thus, it creates awareness of our evolving social and physical environment as a whole. (ii) To help man become good citizen and develop the necessary values and attitudes needed in a democratic society. (iii) To expose man to the problems of his society and then lead him to develop appropriate functional approaches to the solutions of such problems.

According to Akubuilu, et al (2019) and Akubuilu, Ugo, Ugo, Ugochukwu & Ikehi, (2019), teachers, coverage of Social Studies content is a vital aspect of curriculum implementation. It is traditionally known that for an effective teaching, the teacher must have the knowledge of what to be taught which is "content knowledge", In the opinion of Markley (2012) an effective teacher is one who demonstrates knowledge of the curriculum. Teachers' knowledge of what to deliver helps them to cover the subject content. Factors such as content knowledge, instructional objectives, verbal ability, certification and experience enhances Social Studies content coverage (Boadu, Bordoh, Bassaw & Andohmensah, 2014). Moreover, Umadi (2012) noted that the unique nature of Social Studies curriculum appears to draw extraordinary attention to the fact that all stages of its teaching process and content implementation are always problematic. Based on this notification, it is important for the curriculum developers to take into consideration the proper means to ensure that what has been designed is properly implemented to ensure the actualization of the context and objective of Social Studies.

In the context of the curriculum, a review of some documents related to sustainable development agenda reveal that international community agreed upon a overarching goal for Social Studies education: "ensure equitable and inclusive quality Social Studies education and lifelong learning for all by 2030" (Eheazu, 2014). For quite some time, the term Social Studies education vary greatly between countries and among social educators. Social Studies curriculum has been emphasized as a fundamental human right for the achievement of equity and inclusion, for alleviating poverty and for building equitable tolerant, sustainable and knowledge-based societies (UNESCO, 2011). As an encompassing field of education, implementing Social Studies curriculum could be very demanding and tasking. This is why Ehwazu (2014) argued that adopting Social Studies as a new paradigm for learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century implies defining in each particular context, the framework, priorities and strategies to make it happen, Social Studies curriculum can be seen as a means for personal, community and human development for active citizenship building and for improving the lives of people.

### **Availability of human resources**

Resources from Social Studies connote all things in schools that may be used to help and facilitate teaching or learning. They include human, financial and physical resources. The human resources of a secondary school, like any other formal organization irrespective of type and size, consist of individuals engaged in any of the

school activities regardless of their level of placement. The academic and non-academic staff and students are necessary irradiant in the achievement of goals and objectives of the school. This indicates that people are indispensable that no school or organization exists to achieve optimum desired results without human resources. This subject depends on how well managed the staff are related to other resources in the production process. As evidence, Ititim, Ogbiji (2017) and Inyang (2002) in their explanation of social system theory noted that human resource in the teaching and learning of Social Studies is the management of people, work and their relations within the school system. The aim of such management may not be far-fetched, essentially, if it is to bring together and develop into effective organization for their well-being to enable them contribute effectively to success of the school.

Human resources are very important and necessary to develop and manage effectively towards the achievement of the stated objectives of teaching and learning of Social Studies towards educational goals. Human resources in secondary schools, for instance, involves the principal, vice-principal, teachers, students and other non-teaching staff within the school system. Social Studies education produces high level man-power, which is very essential to the nation's economic development. In other to achieve the desired objective of Social Studies education and have much needed quantitative man-power, teachers of Social Studies who are human resources as well as other human being in schools need to be well managed to become effective.

The teacher is an important human resource in curriculum implementation (Adeoye, 2006). Aliyu (2009) explains that when curriculum planners have put in their best to present a curriculum for use in schools, when facilities and other materials needed have been provided, the resource person who would ensure that the curriculum objectives are realized is the classroom teacher. Although there are other personnel whose works are quite as important as the teacher, (for example, the school councilor) it is the teacher who is solely responsible for the implementation of curriculum objectives and content especially in the programme of studies component of the curriculum. Among the important functions of a teacher in curriculum implementation are:

1. Breaking down of the syllabus presented by the curriculum planners into small segments.
2. Selecting appropriate learning objectives.
3. Evaluating students' performance in the programme.
4. Communicating students' performance to parents and reflect this in planning classroom activities.
5. Recognize the complex nature of school children development and reflect this in planning classroom activities.

### **Political factors and government policy**

Qualitative and quantitative Social Studies education has become a political variable in the developing nations in determining which political party wins or loses political elections and in determining the supply of Social Studies educational facilities. The quality of Social Studies education has become the pivot of government policy in Nigeria and sizeable percentage of public resources is being devoted to the expansion and improvement of the existing facilities to facilitate qualitative Social Studies

education (Laraba, 2015). With the Universal Free Primary Education (UBE) in operation in Nigeria, the Federal Government speaks about twenty-five percent of its annual budget on education (National Budget, 1980). In those states in Nigeria where education is free at all levels, education has attracted up to forty-one percent of each state budget, (Oyo state budget, 1980). To offer qualitative and quantitative education at all levels, the federal and the state-expenditures on education might be respectively increased to fifty and sixty percent of their budgets because the existing facilities would have to be expounded and improved considerably.

During the 1979 general election in Nigeria, election promises for education varied from quantitative to qualitative free education. A televisual political debate between the two political parties was experienced. Candidates for the governorship of a state in Nigeria, came to a prompt end where one of the two candidates asked other to define qualitative education. Qualitative Social Studies education cannot be defined in isolation. Its definition implies a comprehensive evaluation of the inherent quality of nation's educational efforts.

#### **Availability and effective utilization of instructional materials**

Availability of curriculum materials according to Ughamadu (2004) are indispensable in the teaching learning process/curriculum implementation. The teacher is expected to have knowledge of a wide range of curriculum materials available for curriculum implementation. Added to this is the need for teacher to have knowledge of the roles of these materials in the teaching/learning process, qualities of useful curriculum materials and other issues related to curriculum materials. Aliyu (2009) defines instructional materials as all those resources that serve as tools for knowledge transmission and acquisition in a formalized system of education. These tools of learning and instructional aids can be classified under the following categories:

- i. **Printed Materials:** These are the traditional tools of learning and instruction in formal education system (Mezieobi, 2011). They are usually such professionally produced publications such as textbooks, revision notes, educational journals, magazines, cardboards, charts, manuals and other periodicals. As a result of advanced technology other materials have come under this category of printed materials. These later aids are photocopy, offset reproductions, ease/sheets, photographic prints and so on. All now play significant role in the field of education and training.
- ii. **Non-Print Materials:** The objective, non-print, is a misnomer here because instructional materials often classified as non-print actually contain in them, printed materials. In the field of educational technology, these non-print materials are usually called software and hardware (Ughamadu, 2004). This category of instructional materials can further be classified into sub-groups, viz (a) Visual materials (b) Audio materials and audio-visual materials (c) educational media hardware. Each of these can also be sub-divided into smaller classes. Whether or not a software is commercially prepared or locally produced by users, there is still need to be cautious of the way it is used. Its effectiveness in learning and instruction can only be well determined after it has gone through evaluative process.

iii. Community resources: Traditional bias for printed educational materials has made many educators unaware of the invaluable roles that community resources, if appropriately utilized, can contribute to learning and instruction. Ughamadu (2004) states that these resources can be classified into two groups (a) educational visits or trips to places that can supply additional learning experience such as market places, religious institutions, historical settings, amusement parks and so on. All have specific role to play in education and training (b) Resource persons are often professionals and experts in their various fields of specialization. They may be legal practitioners, medical personnel, religious leaders, business entrepreneurs who are capable of enlightening students on specific learning experiences. Not until recently, many education industries were not conscious of the significant contributions that resource persons bring to education. Curriculum materials as Ughamadu (2004) states have been classified as printed materials (Examples: textbooks, journals, posters) non-printed materials (Examples: chalkboard, flannel board, models 16mm film projector). They have also been classified as audio materials or aid (Example: pictures, charts, maps, real things, models, mock-ups) and audio visual materials or aids (Example: instructional or educational television, 16mm and 8mm sound films).

iv.

Another classification according to Ughamadu (2004) is that of projected and electronic materials or aids (Example: projected still pictures in slides and films strips, motion picture films, overhead projectors, opaque projector) and non-projected materials or aids (Example: various forms of chalkboard, flannel board, textbooks). Most teachers fail to utilize appropriate instructional materials to enable students appreciate the lesson more. Some fail to create an active learning environment and collaborate learning, which makes the lesson, teacher-centered and boring to students. Others fail to give classwork or assignment and when they do, they hardly mark them and do corrections.

### **Challenges of Social Studies education in Nigeria**

The effective implementation of Social Studies is no doubt faced with many challenges, some of which are new, while others are also old as its introduction. Aliyu (2009) identified some of these problems as follow:

i. One of the greatest problems of Social Studies education is the threat and harassment it suffers in the hands of social science specialists, such as historians, geographers and economists among others. They often gang up against Social Studies because of its popularity and acceptance among people.

ii. Another problem is lack of suitable and adequate textbooks. Students mostly rely on History, Government and other Social Science textbooks to study Social Studies. This is dangerous because the authors of those textbooks lack Social Studies orientation and so the content of those textbooks cannot be said to be appropriate for the subject.

iii. Inadequate qualified teachers that are used to teach the subject. Thus, they resort to use teachers who specializes in history, geography, economics and government to teach the subject. Knowing fully well that they lack Social Studies orientation.

iv. Inadequate and appropriate teaching aids are used in allocation on the time table and lack of continuity of the subject from Junior Secondary through Senior Secondary or higher institution. Economic constraints and lack of effective supervision and evaluation of Social Studies curriculum.

Other problems identified in the course of this study include;

v. Inability by some Social Studies teachers to reconstruct Social Studies curriculum in line with Social Studies objectives for effective implementation.

vi. The government and other related bodies should organize conferences, seminars, workshop etc for teachers in the strategies, methods and the construction of special tools for the evaluation of Social Studies curriculum.

## **CONCLUSION**

Effective implementation of Social Studies curriculum would adequately help students, who are the present youths and future leaders, to acquire the vital skills and attitudes required for good morality and nation building. The effective implementation of Social Studies curriculum is expected to help with youth character formation to ensure a stable, peaceful and progressive society and nation. Its content/context, human resources, political factors/government policies and utilization of instructional materials are basic requirements for effective implementation.

Effective implementation of Social Studies curriculum is not an easy task, infact, it is a complex process. It is not only concerned with success in short-term, but also with appropriate values and success of long term achievements. Effective Social Studies teachers need to have good professional and personal skills, such as content knowledge, together with good planning, clear goals and communication, good classroom management and organization and consistently high and realistic expectations with the students.

## **Recommendations**

i. Seminars, workshops and conferences should be organised for Social Sciences specialists and Social Studies teachers to create awareness between the scope and content of both discipline.

ii. Adequate and suitable textbooks for Social Studies should be introduced and made available for students' utilization in schools.

iii. Adequate and qualified teachers should be trained and certified so that they can have the grasp orientation to teach the students effectively.

iv. The government and related authorities should provide appropriate instructional materials for the study of Social Studies in schools.

v. The Social Studies teachers should reconstruct the content of the curriculum to align its objectives with Social Studies.

vi. The government and related agencies or bodies should organize conferences, seminars, workshops etc. for teachers on the strategies, methods and construction of special tools for the evaluations of Social Studies curriculum.

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