



**ENHANCING HUMAN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION:
A STRATEGY FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
IN NIGERIA**

***AKINOLA, DAVID BABATUNDE (Ph.D) *OYESIKUN, JOSHUA OYEKALE (Ph.D)
UMAR, BASHIRU BAKO (Ph.D)

*Department of Education Foundation, Faculty of Education, University of Abuja, Abuja. **Department of Social Studies, School of Arts and Social Sciences, Niger State College of Education, Minna.

Abstract

This paper present social studies education as a school curricular instrument with sound pedagogical practices which imparts relevant knowledge, sound values and useful skills to enhance human development. Key concepts; Social Studies Education, Poverty alleviation, development and sustainable were extensively discussed. The paper further examined the impediments to human development in Nigeria. Also, it captured Social Studies as a catalyst for human development. Rationale of human development were highlighted while strategies for poverty alleviation by successive government in Nigeria were logical stated and some challenges of sustainable development in Nigeria were explained. The paper recommended among others, that Social Studies education be adequately taught to prepare individuals for functional and productive live that would enhance human development towards sustainable development.

Keywords: *Social Studies Education, Development, Human Development and Sustainable Development.*

Introduction

Nations, world over, that crave for all round development see promotion of human development as a necessary prerequisite. This implies that development in all facets becomes attainable and sustainable if the angle of human development is given considerable attention. Human development is not easy to come by except through conscious and organized programmes which are mostly taught and acquired in form of a school subject which covers the three aspects of taxonomy as domiciled in Social Studies education.

Social Studies education contains and imparts the three aspects of Bloom taxonomy of educational objectives, categorized into cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains (Akinola, 2015). These three educational domains are very necessary to equip and empower an individual to become functional and to further constitute part of the formidable human resource that could engineer development in a nation.

When equipped with the cognitive, affective and psychomotor competencies, an individual becomes productive rather than dependent. Hence, the production capacity turn out to make an individual generate something for livelihood and live above poverty line. The individual, in turn, would be able to provide food, cloth, house and settle other bill by himself.

Individual's continuous capacity to contribute to all facets of human society consistently will overtime amount to sustainable development which simply connotes a socio-economic concept which varies in content according to the culture, time and perspective and can only be properly understood by adopting the integrative approach involving ecological, socio-political and economic considerations (WCED in Oyesikun & Philip-Ogoh, 2015).

In essence, this paper tries to examine Social Studies education as a tool that could be used to enhance human development as a strategy for poverty alleviation and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Concept Clarification

Development

Development according to Amaechi in Amdii (2015) is the sum total of quantitative, qualitative and psychological wellbeing of man. The quantitative dimension appreciates economic growth such as provision of infrastructural facilities, for example, schools, roads, hospitals, markets and so on. While the qualitative dimension connotes equity, equality, fairness, social justice and good conscience in distribution of facilities.

It can then be argued that one can have economic growth without development. This implies that the qualitative dimension must be present before one can contend that there is development. This, therefore, posits that development must be human oriented. It has to be driven by human beings who are consciously empowered.

Human Development

Human development simply entails empowerment of people to identify their own priorities and to implement programmes and objectives of direct interest to

them. Human development enhances knowledge, skills, productivity and inventiveness of the people (UNDP Report, 2002).

Rationale of Human Development

Nnabuike (2010) opined that no nation can develop properly either politically, economically and technologically without adequate education and training of its citizenry. It is not an overstatement to say that education is all encompassing because there is no aspect of human activities that is not covered through the various facilities of educational programmes; for instance, a builder who has gone through an organized educational programme will certainly perform better in his job than otherwise. Although it may not be possible for everyone to acquire formal education at the appropriate time, efforts should be made to make education available by concerned organs and through various means. Such education as it is domiciled in Social Studies should have capacity to provide opportunities for human development.

In the same vein, a capability approach to education should focus on the ability of human beings to lead lives they have reason to value and to enhance the substantive choices they have. San in Nnabuike (2010) buttresses this by maintaining that, the idea of human capabilities is a more expansive notion than human capital because education encourages aspects of human development.

It is, therefore, worthy to note that the impression of human development in every nation originates from observation that education develops certain qualities in people and these qualities enhance economic productivity and economic growth, just like an increase in physical capital or investment does. Human development is, therefore, the major objective of development. It is a way of fulfilling the potential of people by increasing their capabilities, and this, in turn, implies empowerment of people and enabling them to participate actively in their development.

The above mentioned implies that human development entails empowerment of people to identify their own priorities and to implement programmes and objectives of direct interest to them. Human development enhances knowledge, skills, productivity and inventiveness of people (UNDP Development Report (2002). It is therefore, necessary to create an institutional framework which guarantees for everybody gainful employment, access to productive assets and sufficient food to live a healthy and nutritious life.

Impediment of Human Development

Halilu (2015) observed that as good as human development is to all round development in human society, it is often limited by some impediments. These impediments are:

- The mismatch between the needs of country and the content of our education are not likely to produce human development that would enhance sustainability.
- The absence of moral and ethical values leading to all kind of ills and violence at all levels of our educational system challenge the credibility of the system as well as the moral fabric of the Nigerian society as a whole.
- The socio-political and educational system is yet to help us to integrate properly as a nation by removing excessive ethical allegiance, parochialisms, indiscipline and religious bigotry.
- There are groups that refer to themselves as nations within one country that do not believe in togetherness and oneness. These retrograde and debilitating cankerworms grossly underline the fabric of national unity and human development that could champion sustainability.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a socio-economic concept whose content varies – according to the culture, time and perspective of people and it can only be properly understood by adopting the integrated approach that involves ecological, socio-political and economic considerations. It could also be described as a consciously organized and maintained process of growth and advancement of a country in all its sectors without negative impact on any of such sectors. (WCED, 1987).

World Bank (1987) equally sees it as a form of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This, according to World Bank, is largely dependent on how well the present generation is able to balance social, economic, environmental and scientific objectives or needs when making decision today.

Challenges of Sustainable Development

According to Ohwofosa and Onah (2015), the challenges of sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa are numerous and these have acted as impediments to economic development of the region. Similarly, they explained that the effects of these challenges have also led to the emergence of others. In all, they identified and discussed these impediments of sustainable development as thus; and some are presented as follows;

(a) Inefficient Resource Use

Nigeria is richly endowed with natural and artificial resources, human resource inclusive but these resources are not efficiently explored and exploited and this poses a major challenge to economic development.

(b) Cultural Barrier

A nation that wants development must accept some alteration in its traditional way of doing things. Traditionally, the Fulani Muslims are principally herdsmen. A child that grows up in such ethnic/religious group and aspire to accept western education as a tool for growth and development will be seen different and a taboo by that ethnic divide. This has been identified as a major feature of development draw-backs.

(c) Policy Inconsistency

It is important to mention here that all the development plans ever enunciated in the annals of Nigeria as a country were brilliantly formulated, but have always suffered from policy inconsistency, deficient and dwarf in scope, poor implementation, budgetary indiscipline and corruption. Other impediments to sustainable development in Nigeria and Africa at large are outlined to include; inadequate capital base, shortage of skilled and technically trained personnel, limited market base and single export product economy.

Poverty Alleviation

Poverty alleviation is a concept that connotes the capacity of individuals, government and other relevant stakeholders to put measures in place to reduce the heat of poverty on people of a given place or society over a period of time.

Strategies of Poverty Alleviation by Successive Administration in Nigeria

- General Yakubu Gowon introduced the National Accelerated Food Production Programme and Nigerian Agricultural and cooperative Bank in 1972.
- During the military administration of General Olusegun Obasanjo in 1976, Operation Feed the Nation was introduced.
- Shehu Shagari's administration equally introduced the Green Revolution Programme in 1979.
- General Mohammedu Buhari in 1984 introduced Operation Back to Land Programme in a bid to alleviate poverty and hunger.
- General Ibrahim B. Babangida in his bid to alleviate poverty and hunger equally introduced the Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRFRI) and Community Bank in 1986.
- The then First Lady, Mariam Babangida also introduced Better Life for Rural Women Programme to augment her husband's effort in alleviating poverty in Nigeria.

- General Sani Abacha introduced Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) in 1993 to reduce poverty as well.

General Sani Abacha's wife, Maryam Abacha also introduced Family Support Programme in support of her husband to alleviate poverty in Nigeria other programmes include; MDGS, NEEDS, NAPEP and of recent SDGS.

Social Studies Education

According to Galadanci in oyesikun and Philip-Ogoh (2015), Social Studies is an integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence with the aim of helping individuals to develop the ability to make informed and resolved decision for public good. It is also a holistic subject that is interested in social, physical and emotional development of man and their effects on the society.

Social Studies for Promoting Human Development

In order to correct the present ills and to ensure quality human development through more effective Social Studies delivery we need to:

Revisit the overall goal of education as enshrined in (NPE 2014) and the objectives of social studies at all levels of education in order to reposition the nation for the challenges of the 21st century.

Invest adequately to promote our socio-cultural and educational ideas through classroom dispensation of Social Studies to enhance human development.

Critically reassess the Social Studies education objectives at all level for relevance to the needs of the nation.

Provide regular professional development opportunities like workshops, conference, and seminar on how to practice education at all levels to engineer human development in Nigeria.

Explore the unique perspectives of Social Studies as a curricular instrument for development of effective citizenship in students which would in turn enhance human development.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Social Studies education can be used to enhance human development A Strategy for Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development in Nigeria. To achieve this, the subject should be adequately taught to reflect the three educational domains to prepare individual student for a functional and productive life that will add up to individual's development and that of the nation.

Efforts should also be made to provide adequate on the job or in-service training for teachers to empower them more in a way that would make them, in turn, to impart knowledge to student for the purpose of human development.

Our education system should be made to develop specific skills to prepare individuals for productive occupation and to carry out specific tasks effectively in a way that work would promote individual and societal development. Emphasis should be placed on provision of education that would lead to poverty reduction. This is imperative because, poverty can exert powerful and growth effects in the sense that people living in poverty will not develop the skill to provide an attractive labour force.

Successive governments should intensify effort to complete any viable development plan or programme embarked upon by their predecessors before initiating new ones.

Finally, Social Studies education should produce individuals who will pursue and promote development in all its facets and dimensions.

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