
Promotion of Cultural Values and Political Stability in Nigeria: Exploring Social Studies Education

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Abstract

The Nigerian nation in attaining national integration for sustainable development among its ethnically diverse people has not so easy. The effect of the essence of shared or common values is reflected in the political process where there is evidence of violence, rigging of elections, dishonesty and corruption in order to secure power. Although various governments and leaders in Nigeria have attempted to implement programmes and strategies aimed at instituting and stabilizing democracy in the quest and pursuit of national integration in the country. This study explores the cultural, social and political problems in Nigeria and maintains that social studies education if well handled in the Nigerian educational system will help in the promotion of cultural values and political stability for national integration in order to achieve sustainable development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Cultural Values, Nigeria, Political Stability, Promotion, Social-Studies, Sustainable-development

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Background to the Study

Nigeria as a plural state or society is faced with many forces tending to pull it apart. The plurality of Nigerian state can be seen in terms of the numerous ethnic groups, cultures, religions and languages. In his view, Okam (1991) opined that one of the major challenges confronting Nigeria nascent democracy relates to the issues of achieving a greater measure of peace, unity, national integration and stability among the different national groups. In a related development, Okam and Chukwu (2005) assert that Nigerian state has become so excruciatingly tensed, so charged with hatred, so filled with adversity and depression, which most people have lost their power of balanced judgement which is needed for getting away from the sloughed which its populace is experiencing. In addition, Alemika (2007) argued that the government and the people of Nigeria engage in antidemocratic actions despite the Nigerian state is formally affirmed as a democratic state. He further said these antidemocratic actions thereby promotes anarchy and public disorder making the roles of the generality of the masses in contributing their own quota in the maintenance of peace and order in the polity exceedingly difficult to discharge. Similarly, Eke(2005), Okafor (2005) and Alemika (2007) affirm that the reluctance of the Nigerian government to recognize, promote and protect the rule of law; and high prevalence and incidences of violence, crime and public disorder have complicated the promotion of acceptable cultural values and political stability in Nigeria.

It may be observed that one of the cardinal responsibilities of government in any given society is to promote acceptable cultural values and political stability for any meaningful sustainable development to be achieved. However, the present situation in Nigerian polity appears that the cultural values transmitted in the society is the culture of violence, rigging of elections, corruption, immorality, dishonesty, conflicts, drug abuse, kidnapping and raping among others. These are certainly not worthwhile values that can move any country forward. Furthermore, the political instability in Nigeria is apparent and can be seen clearly from the successive elections, Boko Haram insurgency, Niger Delta militancy, Oduduwa People Congress violence, Bakassi Boys militia group and persistent ethno-religious violence among others.

Therefore, it is pertinent to note that Nigerian as a polity requires acceptable cultural values and political stability for sustainable development attainment and inculcation of social studies education at all levels of educational system in Nigeria can serves as remedy to some of these social problems. Social studies education plays a vital role in inculcating acceptable cultural values and political stability in children and adults. In his view, Obasanjo (2012) opined that education must foster in the individual those values which make for good citizenship such as honest, selflessness, tolerance, dedication, hard work, personal integrity, all of which provide the rich soil from which good leadership is produced. Similarly, Igbuzor(2006) assert that social studies education is a tool for societal emancipations, equity and justice, public sensitization and other developmental initiatives. In addition, Omoyibo and Agbonzeke (2010) state that the former Secretary of United Nations Organizations (UNO) Boutrous B. Ghali, in May, 1994 that development can be categorized into five dimensions which are peace, economy, environment, social studies and democracy.

It is worth to note that Nigerian society is characterized by displays of disharmony, problems of uncertainties and instability which militate against acceptable cultural values and political stability which are catalysts for sustainable development. Thus, social studies education if well handled in the schools can help in the promotion of acceptable cultural values and political stability in Nigeria for the attainment of sustainable development.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to explore the promotion of social studies education in inculcating acceptable cultural values and political stability among Nigerian citizens.

Statement of Research Problem

The multi-ethnic and religious structure of Nigeria generally accounts for constant ethno-religious violence. Obanya (2014) posited that a crisis becomes manifest in human life whenever things fall apart, whenever in personal and societal life things do not go the way and manner they are expected, when plans do not work out as expected and abnormal becomes normal. Similarly, Ayeni-Akeke (2008) opined that bloodshed is a major attribute of every society all over the world, although violence differs in intensity, trends and dimensions from one society system to another.

It can be observed that Nigerian state in the contemporary era is overwhelmed by violence stretching from different forms of upheaval such as Niger Delta militancy, Oduduwa People Congress violence, Boko Haram insurgency, ethno-religious violence among others that has lead into high pervasiveness of uprisings, crime and public disorder that are impediments to the promotion of acceptable cultural values and political stability in Nigeria. It is therefore, imperative to understand the challenges of unacceptable cultural values and political instability as they affect the national integration among the Nigerian citizens for sustainable development of the country since in contemporary Nigeria, most of the violence that mostly leads to massive destruction of lives and property, social disintegration, disobedience, raping among others.

Significance of the Study

The study will be vital to the government, policy makers and other stakeholders in using social studies education to curb the menace of social disintegration in Nigerian plural state as well as promoting acceptable cultural values and political stability for national development.

Conceptualization of Culture and Cultural Values

Radda (2009) describe culture as a total way of life. It covers what one does and what is done to and for him in the society and throughout life. In his on view, Otite and Ogionwo (2006) affirm culture as the complex whole of man's acquisition of knowledge, moral, belief, art, custom, technology which are transmitted from generation to generation. In a related development, Ogunbameru (2006) opined that culture is derivative of three elements namely values, norms and artifacts. He said values are ideas about what is important in life. They guide the result of culture. Whereas norms are expectation of how

people will behave in different situations and each culture has different methods of sanctions as means of enforcing its norms. Also artifacts are materially observable things used by the people.

Furthermore, Nwuzor (2002) and Radda (2009) assert that cultural values are those worthwhile and acceptable aspects of non-material of a people which help in moulding the character of the people. They further argued that cultural values are the heart of the society. The values believed in the society assist in shaping the behaviours of the people. Since these values are good for human endeavours, they are expected to be transmitted from generation to generation. It is therefore important that the values of respect for constituted authority, religious tolerance, patriotism, honesty, integrity, nationalism and discipline among others should be promoted among Nigerians as means of attaining national integration for sustainable development of Nigerian state.

Political Instability and its Consequences in Nigeria

It is a common fact that no society is totally free from one form of political stability or other. Political stability can be described as the various political problems and disorders which the Nigerian state or political system experiences from time in memorial such as ethno-religious crises, election violence and succession threats among others. Political instability has been part of human history; it is a prevailing attribute of most of the developing world which Nigeria is one of the countries. Nigeria history is full of instances of political instability. Thus, this paper would briefly look at the history of political instability in Nigeria from independence to date.

Nigeria became an independent country on October 1, 1960. The post-independence actions illustrate the country's post-independence record as being overshadowed by the depredations of a progression of corrupt, abusive, and unaccountable governments. This depiction is important for the reason that Nigerians have acquired a culture of political instability particularly after independence. For instance, at independence, Nigeria as a nation adopted a parliamentary system of government related to the British style. The first post-independence election organized by that government led by Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa and President Nnamdi Azikiwe in 1964 and 1965 were characterized by widespread complaints of fraud, violence and intimidation. Protest in the wake of the regional elections, which in some areas degenerated into a violent exercise in competitive rigging, led to widespread violence and inter-communal rioting that claimed more than 200 lives and later in January 1966, the military struck and the fledging Nigerian democracy was frustrated by the action of its very own practitioners and this later resulted into civil war with loss of lives, property, hunger and hunger among others. Since 1966, the military held control until 1979 when they handed over to another civilian government headed by Alhaji Shehu Shagari of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). The Shagari-led government organized a civilian to civilian transition election, again, like its First Republic counterparts, repeated history and massively rigged the 1983 general elections through very violent means with the support of the electoral body, Federal Election Commission (FEDECO), and security forces. Yet again set the stage for the second wave of military intervention in the nation's political panorama on December 31,

1983. The military from then remained in power until May 29, 1999 after several attempts to democratize. Furthermore, Nigeria as a nation had witnessed serious political instability in the recent time, such as Yoruba-Hausa community in Shagamu and Idi Araba, Eleme-Okrika, Zango-Kataf, Tiv-Jukun, Aguleri-Umuleri, Offa-Erin Ile, Ife-Modakeke, Yelwa- Shendam, Fulani-Irigwe, Boko Haram insurgency, Niger Delta Militancy among others that have claimed lives of innocent citizens, destruction of property, hunger, loss of time and investment opportunity. In addition, ever since the reinstatement of civil rule in 1999, Nigeria has only added to its history of political instability. The various general elections of 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011 that brought President Olusegun Obasanjo and later late President Umaru Yar'Adua and Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan to power were blemished by such widespread fraud causing political instability. Consequently, the trend of political instability which begins since early 1960 led to current democratic experiment which started in May, 1999, with incredible degrees of power struggle and violence killings (Egwu 2007, Abah 2009, Alabi 2009, Malu 2009, Usman 2009, Ojo 2011, Adeleke 2012, Eme and Ibietan 2012 and Anyadik and Nkechi 2013). Thus, it is imperative to be conscious of need to bring to standstill the desire for power, ethnic bigotry, regionalism, self-centeredness, pride, annoyance and settling of scores in Nigerian political arena. We ought to learn to be patriotic Nigerians; dialogue should be allowed to reign in order for our country to achieve political stability in order to attain sustainable development.

The Role of Social Studies Education in Promotion of Cultural and Political Values in Nigeria

It may be observed that the main philosophy behind teaching and learning social studies education in Nigeria is aimed at producing effective citizens as well as forging a solid society that will support an idea of nation building and national development through classroom intervention of curriculum programmes in the subject area. Afolabi and Loto (2009) state that the goals of social studies took root from the National Policy on Education. They further illustrate that social studies education supplies the needed manpower for national development making each person or citizen occupy his or her rightful position to enhance the growth of the society. In addition, Ajayi and Afolabi (2012) view social studies education in Nigeria as indispensable tools which assist in meeting the Nation's social, political, moral, cultural and economic aspirations which foster national development and self-actualization as road map to sustainable development. Also, Obasanjo (2012) described social studies as a system that fosters cultural and political values in the individual that make him or her a good citizen which good leadership is spawned. It is worth noting that social studies education trains individuals to be useful members of the society and to meet up with the need of the society for national development. It also provides the culture of productivity and appropriate patterns of interpersonal relations. Thus, social studies education develops the cultural and political values which make good citizenships such as honesty, selflessness, tolerance, hard work, personal integrity, respect for constituted authority, patriotism among others. Consequently, if those Nigerians that are indulging in culture of violence and political instability such as Niger Delta militancy, Oduduwa People Congress violence, Boko Haram insurgency, ethno-religious violence among others that has led into high

pervasiveness of uprisings, crime and public disorder that are impediments to the promotion of acceptable cultural values and political stability in Nigeria have received quality and sound social studies education, they would have abstained from violence. Therefore, teaching and learning of social studies among the citizens of Nigeria should be encouraged in order to achieve acceptable values and political stability for national development and attaining sustainable development.

Conclusion

Nigeria as a vast and plural society needs to promote acceptable cultural values and political stability. The unity of the country must be anchored by exerting efforts towards reducing cultural differences between the different ethnic groups. However, social studies must be constructively taught because of the positive changes the subject can make in the minds of Nigerians.

Recommendations

Social studies education should be used to make Nigerians understand the diversity of Nigeria as a state; it should focus on the teachings of means of tackling as well as reducing some of the social vices in Nigeria. In addition, social studies education can be used to develop acceptable cultural and political values among the citizens. Also social studies education can be used to foster national integration among citizens of Nigeria for sustainable development.

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