

# ROLE OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN CRIME CONTROL IN NIGERIA

By

Onwuasoanya, S.C.

## ABSTRACT

*The benefits of the introduction of the interdisciplinary problem solving discipline "Social Studies" in our national curriculum as a tool for crime control can never be overemphasized. The subject itself is regarded as a problem solving discipline which was introduced intentionally into the nation's school curriculum to serve as a means of developing and inculcating among the citizens, certain values, attitudes and norms that will help them live productively and effectively in the society as one family. This paper tries to look into the roles social studies play in crime control in Nigeria, such as creating awareness for our physical and social environment, inculcation of appropriate attitude, values and beliefs among our citizens, developing in the students appreciations for the diverse nature and interdependence of Nigerian communities, teaches the child to acquire relevant body of knowledge and information necessary for his personal development, inculcation of values of democracy, patriotism, tolerance and accommodation for one another. The paper further stresses on the challenges impeding on teaching so as to achieve the objectives for which it was created as well as possible strategies to overcome them. These challenges include; Lack of professionalism, lack of continuity, content factor, methodology, lack of incentives and motivation as well as problems of political patronage.*

**Keyword:** Social studies, Crime, Control

## INTRODUCTION

The introduction of social studies into the Nigerian national curriculum of schools as a corrective measure was designed to proffer solution to man's problems in a holistic form. As an interdisciplinary subject, it derives idea and knowledge that will help in the study of man from other social sciences.

As a tool for crime control, it tries to expose the child to the knowledge of his social and physical environment so as to appreciate and conserve it. It tries as much as possible to inculcate appropriate values and attitudes of effective citizenship among the students. However, for social studies to actually help to control crime in Nigeria, there should be a

re-orientation towards the yard sticks for assessing students and independent of different commissions.

## **CONCEPT OF SOCIAL STUDIES**

Social studies is a problem solving discipline which is designed to proffer solution to man's problems whether geographical, historical, sociological, economical, psychological, political "etcetera". It is an interdisciplinary subject which borrows ideas and knowledge from other disciplines such as geography, history, Anthropology, physics, politics, economics, sociology etcetera.

Ololobou (1998) in Ololobou, Jacob and Ndaziaga (1999:2) defined social studies as:

"An organized, integrated study of man and his environment, both physical and social, emphasizing on cognitive, functional skills and desirable attitudes and actions for the purpose of producing an effective citizenry".

Similarly, Meziobi (1992) defined social studies as an integrative fusion curriculum that borrows concepts, contents and methods from social sciences and humanities. Furthermore, Kissock (1981) viewed social studies as a programme of instructions or studies which a society uses to instill in students or pupils the knowledge, skills attitudes, values and actions concerned with the relationship human has with each other.

Social studies is a tool for instilling among the citizenry the common values of human relationship such as moral virtues and reasoned judgment for the purpose of living, interacting, interrelating and contributing positively and effectively to economic, social, political and cultural development of the society (Okobiah 1984).

It is also one of the subjects whose major concern is for propagating and instilling the norms and virtues associated with values as an effective entity in the minds of learners as prospective citizens.(Okam, 1998).

Social studies is the study of man's interaction with his physical and social environment; how it is concerning with man's survival efforts in the society. It is also concerned with how man is influenced by both his physical, social economic, political and cultural environment and how man on his own tries to influence or sharpen his environment for his survival.

## **THE OBJECTIVES STUDIES IN NIGERIA**

The objectives of social studies cannot be over emphasized. Philosophically, the introduction of social studies in Nigeria was to find a systematic and holistic way of solving human problems since it does not compactalise knowledge like other social sciences. The subject social studies was equally introduced as a corrective measure towards our already acquired educational system from our colonial masters who educated the Nigerians outside their environment for their political and economic interests. The objectives include:

- To create awareness and understanding of our social and physical environment among our citizens in order to conserve and preserve them for national development,
- To develop among the Nigerian citizens the positive attitudes towards the spirit of friendliness and co-operation necessary for a healthy nation and to inculcate appropriate values of honesty, integrity, hardwork, fairness and justice.
- To develop in the students appreciation for the diverse nature and interdependence of Nigerian communities, national and international communities.
- To inculcate the spirit of responsibility, respect for worth and dignity of individuals, production of effective citizenry, cultivation of values of democracy, patriotism, development of attitudes of tolerance and accommodation, increasing awareness of our physical and social environment for better human interaction and progress.
- To teach the child to acquire relevant body of knowledge and information necessary for personal development and to contribute to the betterment of mankind (IBE, 2007).

## **CRIME AND CRIME CONTROL**

The word crime refers to offence against the state. It is an action or omission which constitutes an offence and is punishable by law. Crime is an offence or a criminal offence, it is an act harmful not only to some individual but also to the community or the state (a public wrongs) such acts are forbidden and punishable by law. (Wikipedia).

Crime control refers to the methods to reduce crime in a society (Wikipedia). Crime control can equally be seen as the employment of ideas, wisdom as well as persuasion in the attempt to guide and mold behaviours and values of people towards the more profitable ones for effective citizenry.

### **CRIME AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA**

Crime is a threat to security. It may range from low –level civil disorder, to large scale violence or even an armed insurgency. Insecurity refers to the breach of peace and security which can either be religious, ethno/regional, civil, social, economic and political, that has contributed to reoccurring conflicts within a nation resulting to destruction and loss of lives and properties (Ajanya, 2013). It can equally be referred to as violation of national ethics, an act of lawlessness and insubordinations which makes a nation ungovernable.

In Nigeria, Crime and insecurity has been a serious threat to national security. Crime such as terrorism (Sharia Saga, Boko Haram), pipe-line vandalization, bunkering, kidnapping, robbery, cultism, piracy, political assassination, prostitution, women and child trafficking, drug abuse, suicide, ethno-religious conflicts etcetera' are among the security challenges facing Nigeria which calls for serious attention, thus the role of social studies in combating crime.

### **THE ROLE OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN CRIME CONTROL**

Social studies is an interdisciplinary subject that delves into other social sciences to extract ideas, concepts, methods and generalizations in order to study and solve the problems of man in a wholistic way, has lots of roles to play in crime control in Nigeria. These roles of social studies in controlling crimes are not farfetched. For instance, taking a look back at the roles of social studies in Nigeria, one should be able to see clearly its roles in crime control.

Through the awareness of our physical and social environment, citizens are made to understand the evils associated with the act of vandalizing our social and physical environment; such act as vandalization of government properties, oil bunkery, destruction of our natural resources, such as vegetation, the use of gamaline 20 in destroying our waterbodies. Social studies make the child aware that all these are criminal acts and have great effect on our environment.

The inculcation of appropriate attitude, values and beliefs among our citizens has a serious role to play in curbing crime among the youths. For instance, through the study of social studies, one is made to have feeling of concern towards some aspects of one's environment, love and concern for one another. It is believed that when positive attitudes, values, beliefs and love for one another are inculcated into the students, they should not involve themselves in anything that will infringe on another person's happiness. For instance, when "you" have feeling of concern for your neighbor, you will do everything to protect his interests. You will not rob, kill, kidnap, gossip, lie, conspire, or even plot against him. If such person is in government, instead of seeking his downfall, you rather encourage, support and advice him. This is why social studies is seen as a curricular subject whose major concern is for the propagating and instilling the norms and virtues associated with values as an effective entity in the minds of learners as prospective citizens(Okam 1988)

Similarly, since social studies help to develop in the students' appreciation for the diverse nature and interdependence of Nigerian communities the knowledge of social studies will help us to understand that even in the mist of our diverse nature i.e. cultural, religious, ethnicity, class etcetera; we need each other to survive. When these are at the back of our minds, the issues of religious crises, political crises, ethnic conflicts and other vices will begin to die a natural death.

In a similar vein as social studies teaches the child to acquire relevant body of knowledge and information necessary for his personal development. The knowledge of social studies automatically helps the child to have all it takes to be self reliant and responsible citizen who can fend for himself. These point out the issue poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and greed which are major causes of crime in every society. These four problems put together lead to: bribery, corruption, kidnapping, Robbery, killing, vandalization, cultism, drug trafficking, Examination malpractice, prostitution, suicide etc. But if one has the right knowledge and information needed to be self reliant, live comfortable and participate fully towards the development of the society as social studies portrays, no one will be involved in any of the above mentioned criminal acts thereby reducing the rate of crime in our society.

Since social studies is seen as an avenue for the inculcation of values of democracy, patriotism, tolerance and accommodation for one another, it plays the role of curbing and controlling of crime in our society. Through the value of democracy, one becomes a

way of his responsibilities as a citizen, his right to vote and to be voted for, the need for free and fair election, needs for independent judiciary, need for independent electoral commission etc. This has drastically reduced the rate at which the politicians buy up people's conscience, employ turgery and rigging of elections. Most people now know what they want and pursue it. The inculcation of the spirit of patriotism to the students through the study of social studies equally is a strong means of controlling crime in our society. Through the study of social studies, students are made to have a sense of belonging, know their responsibilities, rights, duties as citizens. They should be able to support, encourage as well as participate in the development of any good programme by the government and not sabotage to its own government

Social studies also help in the development of attitude of tolerance and accommodation among our students. It exposes the students to appreciate unity in diversity. This further helps the students to tolerate and to accommodate one another. When this attitude is developed in our students, they will grow to love, value, tolerate and accommodate one another and not becoming terror to his fellow citizens which was what led to different crisis the country has been facing in recent times such as the notorious "Boko Haram, Niger Delta Militants, Oduduwa People's Congress (OPC), MASOB (Movement for Actualization of Biafra), the Sharia crisis of 2000 and 2001, the miss world, electoral violence of 2003, 2007 and 2011 which claimed many lives and properties (Olawale, 2004)

## **CHALLENGES**

Social studies which is a problem solving discipline that was incorporated into the Nigerian educational curriculum as a tool for crime control has lots of challenges impeding its teaching so as to achieve the objectives for which it was created. Among these challenges are:

### **LACK OF PROFESSIONALISM**

The subject social studies lacks professionalism. They felt that everybody can teach it. The few professors in the area are either from history or geography. They see social studies as jack of all trade and master of none. This can equally be seen as a result of lack of theoretical framework. This is of serious concern because for any frame work to be professional, it must have gotten theoretical backing.

### **LACK OF CONTINUITY**

The curriculum organization of the subject has created more problems for social studies. There is no continuity. It ends at JSS III. One would have taught that it would have been a core course for everyone to continue. For instance the course ends in the Junior Secondary Class whereas more serious work should have been employed at the Senior Secondary Class to aid in the learners' development.

### **CONTENT FACTOR/ DURATION OF THE PROGRAMME AT WHATEVER LEVEL**

Time allotted to address the critical issues in social studies is too short. Even the three years were not really three years, there are long and short holidays, irrelevant public holidays including the ones students give to themselves by roaming about after resumption.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Inappropriate use of teaching methods and techniques in the teaching of social studies kills the interest of the learner and make the learning boring especially where the method does not emphasis practical approach, example the use of lecture method. This has equally made evaluation very difficult.

### **THE PROBLEM OF POLITICAL PATRONAGE**

The problem of God fatherism in the country is a serious factor affecting the use of social studies as a tool for crime control in Nigeria. The judiciary and the electoral commission that are supposed to be independent so as to discharge their duties judiciously to control crime and to ensure proper security are being directly and indirectly controlled by the governments, politicians as well as the highly respected persons in the society.

### **LACK OF INCENTIVES AND MOTIVATION**

Most of these young graduates who have acquired the right knowledge and information needed to be self reliant, live comfortable and participate fully in the development of the society which are not properly motivated

### **CONCLUSION**

The role of social studies in Nigeria as a tool for crime control has been stressed. As an interdisciplinary subject, it is designed to profer solution to man's social and physical problems: As a tool for controlling crime, social studies is designed to develop and

inculcate among our students the desirable attitudes, values, spirit of responsibility, democracy, patriotism, tolerance, accommodation etcetera. However, for social studies to achieve the stated goals, there is need for the independent of the judiciary, independent of the electoral commission, encouragement of small scale industries, there should be continuity of the subject in all levels and 'paper and pen' should not be the yardstick for assessment in social studies.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

However, for social studies to achieve the basis of its existence, as a tool for crime control, the following should be taken into consideration:

1. There is the need for continuity. The curriculum of social studies which ends at JSS III should be a continuous programme. It should not terminate at JSS level because at senior secondary level, students are expected to be more serious in whatever they do. If studies are drilled through social studies at this level, it will bear more fruit in controlling crime.
2. Paper and pen should not be a yardstick for assessment of students. They should rather be observed at work individually and in groups to see if actually the subject has inculcated the right type of attitudes and values that will enable them to appreciate the worth and dignity of individual.
3. Government should encourage small scale industries through granting of loans without interests. When this is done, the industries will grow and more people will be employed. When one is gainfully employed, he/she will not involve himself in those criminal acts of robbery, cultism, kidnapping, prostitution, vandalism, murder, suicide, bunkering and more.
4. The judiciary should be independent. The government should allow the judiciary to perform their duties without interference or influencing their judgment. This will help to scare people from committing crime since the decisions of the judiciary stands. There should be no Godfatherism of any type in the judiciary.
5. Independent of the electoral commission: the local, state, federal government as well as individuals should give the electoral commission free hand to operate. If this is done, the political parties, aspirants as well as their agents must have to

abide by the stated rules and regulations thereby curbing the rate of thuggery, kidnapping, assassination, abuse of power, rigging of election etc.

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