

## **CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ISSUES IN SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **OVERVIEW**

One distinguishing character of Social Studies is its deliberate focus on the problems of man, his inter-relationship with his environment and the orientation of the discipline to provide informed and practical solutions to human challenges. It is not concerned with the mere accumulation of knowledge for the sake of knowledge.

Module 3 highlights a few social issues that are of concern to Social Studies as a distinct area of knowledge. The unit sets out the context within which Social Studies emerged and developed in Nigeria to tackle its chosen assignment. The module brings out areas such as Integration, Values, Social problems and issues as illustrations of Social Studies commitment to the problems of man.

## **UNIT 1: EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN NIGERIA**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In unit 1, you have learnt the basic ideas about the meaning of Social Studies as a field of study, its aims, objectives and focus. What you are about to learn in unit 2 are: how the discipline was brought into the Nigerian educational system, when it was introduced and why. You will gain some ideas about how the subject has fared since its introduction, up to the present time.

### **OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- (i) explain the phases in the development of Social Studies in Nigeria.
- (ii) differentiate between Social Studies as an integrated subject and as a combination of Social Science subjects.
- (iii) state the problems encountered with the introduction of Social Studies in Nigerian schools.

### **HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT**

1. Glance through the unit. Note the salient points as you glance. Take note of the unfamiliar words and check for their meanings in your dictionary.
2. Now from the beginning read and digest the unit thoroughly and systematically as arranged. Make sure you attempt all the activities stated. Before attempting the exercises avoid looking at the answers provided.
3. Observe the stated rules strictly.

### **WORD STUDY**

**Integration:** a combination of two or more parts to form a whole or something new.

**NERC:** Nigerian Educational Research Council.

### **EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN NIGERIA**

How old is Social Studies in Nigeria? The answer is twofold. If we are to respond in terms of the subject matter alone, then the answer is that it has always been part of the school curriculum since the earliest days of western education in Nigeria. This is because Social Studies content is the content of History, Geography and the other Social Sciences.

Yet, Social Studies is a relatively new comer to Nigeria as a distinct field, in its own right. Its introduction can be traced to the modern wave of good educational practice, which stresses the importance of the process of learning, and its relevance to the community. In this sense, Social Studies was introduced in the early 1960s.

The concept of Social Studies originally comes from the U.S.A. where the subject had been evolved for over seventy years. It was brought to U. K. in World War II years. Then, in the

late 1960s, the need for Social Studies for Africa was discussed. In 1969, the African Social Studies programme was set up in Nairobi, Kenya, to assist with the development of the discipline in Africa.

Earlier, in the 1960s, pioneering efforts had been made to introduce Social Studies as a distinct programme in Nigeria. This was the pilot programme carried out in 1963 by the Western Region Ministry of Education in collaboration with United States Agency for International Development and the Ford Foundation. It produced a syllabus and two books for teaching Social Studies.

In the North, the Northern Nigerian Teacher Education Project (NNTEP) consisting of Americans and Nigerians, also produced a methods books for the teachers' colleges.

Social Studies was introduced on a national basis at the 1969 National Curriculum Conference. This has finally resulted in the Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education (Lagos, 1977) which states the philosophy of Nigerian education. The problem it addresses are:

*'the need to make education more relevant to the needs of individuals' and  
'the need to use education as a tool for national integration, as an attempt to  
heal the wounds of the (Nigerian) civil war.*

These sentiments come out of the general feeling that the British inherited education had been a disappointment in meeting Nigerian problems of national cohesion. There was the feeling that the existing content and method of traditional geography and history, among other disciplines, were foreign and were not meeting the needs of Nigeria's rapidly changing society. Thus, Social Studies came at a time of great expectations as to what education could do to transform Nigeria. Its introduction was part and parcel of that movement to make education suitable for needs of the country.

So many changes had occurred since the 1970s. Courses in Social Studies at the universities, at the postgraduate diploma, degree, and the masters and PhD levels have been offered in Nigeria. The Nigerian Educational Research Council has produced curricula for Social Studies for primary and post-primary schools. Social Studies is now a core discipline in Nigeria right from the primary to the first three years of secondary education. It is also offered at the NCE level.

Social Studies has come far, but there is still a lot to be done. Teachers have yet to be trained in appreciable numbers and books with a Nigerian flavor are yet to be produced. But a commendable beginning has been made.

### **THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN NIGERIA**

The teaching and learning of Social Studies in Nigeria has a bright and an encouraging future based on the following factors.

Social Studies is being taught and learnt in Nigeria through an integrated approach which makes the discipline to be favourite of other subjects in the curriculum at all levels of our educational system in the country. Therefore, this makes the subject to gain more recognition among other disciplines thus making its future to be more prosperous and encouraging.

Furthermore, Social Studies is being taught in all levels of our educational system in the country viz: primary, secondary and tertiary institutions, thus many students are developing keen interest in learning the subject.

Teachers are specializing in the subject at Colleges of Education and University levels in the country thus making it easier for the institutions at various levels to get competent hands in teaching the subject.

Many universities have introduced degree programmes at various levels viz: undergraduate, master and doctorate degree levels in Social Studies which has encouraged many students to specialize in this discipline at their various levels thus projecting the image of the discipline.

At present, there is an association of the Social Studies Educators (Social Studies Association of Nigeria) formed at the tertiary level of our education in the country. This association organizes annual conferences, symposia, workshops, and seminars so as to improve the teaching and learning of Social Studies in the country.

Finally, since Social Studies teaches and encourages the students to imbibe the culture of patriotism, dynamism, progressiveness, unity and peace in the country, government should try as much as possible to provide financial aids and instructional materials for the teaching and learning of this subject at our various levels of education in the country. These will therefore, further boost the teaching and learning of Social Studies in the country, and make its future more reassuring.

### **ACTIVITY I**

1. State the major achievement of Social Studies in Nigeria.
2. Highlight three (3) major problems still in the way of Social Studies as a respectable field of knowledge.

### **SUMMARY**

- The historical development of Social Studies in Nigeria was discussed. Its origins were discussed. The role of universities, government, and foreign agencies were highlighted. Its future as a discipline struggling to find its feet was also discussed.
- With more books written on the subjects and competent graduates and spokesmen, the future appears bright for Social Studies.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Find out the historical factors which have promoted the growth of Social Studies in different parts of the world.
2. Explain the factors that have hindered the fast development of Social Studies in Nigeria.

### **REFERENCES**

Allen J. (1967) "Assessing Recent Development in the Social Studies" *Social Education* 33(2) 99-103.

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## **UNIT 2: THE CONCEPTS OF INTEGRATION AND VALUES IN SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The discussion in this unit centres on the philosophy behind the introduction of Social Studies in Nigeria, the concept of integration in Social Studies and sources of the concept of integration.

You would recall in the previous units, that you have learnt the meaning and focus of Social Studies. You would remember that you have learnt also about the many approaches to defining the meaning of the discipline. What has been stressed, in this regard, is the emphasis of Social Studies on man and his interrelationship with his environment, his struggle for survival, and for a decent and productive life. You cannot learn about man in this kind of setting by putting man in compartments, in bits and pieces. His struggles are multi-dimensional, or multi-faceted. These can only be understood, not from one angle, but from their different facets – political, social, economic, psychological and so forth.

It is therefore, important to understand properly how Social Studies goes about facilitating an understanding of the complexity of man, his problems, challenges and solutions, by using an all-out learning technique and strategy known as “Integration”.

You need to know this to be a successful teacher of Social Studies. There is also a definition of and a discussion on the concepts of values. You need to know these to be a successful teacher of Social Studies. This is the aim of this unit.

### **OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- (i) explain the philosophical background of Social Studies in Nigeria
- (ii) discuss the concepts of integration and values in Social Studies
- (iii) state the sources of the concepts in Social Studies.

### **HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT**

1. Read through the unit. Note the cogent points as you read. Take note of the unfamiliar words and check for their meaning in your dictionary.
2. Now with patience, read the unit thoroughly and systematically as arranged. Attempt all the activities given. **DO NOT** look at the answers provided before attempting the exercise.
3. Stick to the rules stated

### **WORD STUDY**

**Concept:** is an abstract word or phrase used in classifying or categorizing groups of ideas, event or thing, into real or concrete activity or things. Example, culture, leadership, corruption etc.

**Generalisation:** is a statement about the relationship between two concepts. Example, the environment of a community dictates the kind of occupation it practices.

<b>Integration:</b>	A process of uniting various forms or parts of knowledge to produce a single or unified knowledge.
<b>Philosophy:</b>	The study of the basic ideas and thoughts behind a body of knowledge.
<b>Value:</b>	Something you admire.

## THE PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND OF SOCIAL STUDIES

Although, Social Studies is now given various names in different parts of the world, the discipline originated and developed from history as a subject. Therefore, an understanding of how Social Studies passed through its various phases of evolution will be required to provide a philosophical background needed in order to appreciate the present trends in teaching the subject in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. It all started as history, but what was history like then, what was it meant to achieve and how did history originate? The origin of history can be traced to the natural practice whereby a society in an attempt to perpetuate itself passes on its traditions, customs, mythologies and aspirations in various ways other than written method from one generation of people to another. In other words, historical tradition dates back into antiquity. The written history was pioneered by the Greeks. In fact, the meaning of the original Greek word from which the word “history” was derived is “inquiry” or knowledge gained from “inquiry”. Thus, in the teaching of Social Studies, inquiry method is vigorously emphasized. Moreover, during the Greek civilization, the sciences were also regarded as part of history, because history was originally applied to all kinds of knowledge. Therefore, it could be concluded that the philosophical background of Social Studies could be traced to the origin of history most especially during the Greek’ civilization.

### ACTIVITY I

1. Discuss concisely, the philosophical background of Social Studies.
2. Describe the relationship between History and Social Studies.

## CONCEPT OF INTEGRATION IN SOCIAL STUDIES

Social Studies, as a discipline, is no longer an appendage of the Social Sciences. The discipline has gone a long way in emerging as a distinctive area of learning. The era when it was treated as “a bit of history”, “a bit of geography” has passed. It is no longer a “hotchpotch”, a confused addition of bits and pieces of the Social Sciences and Humanities. This was sometimes referred to as “inter-disciplinary” form of teaching.

The new emphasis is to conceive and implement Social Studies as an integrative discipline, and to impart themes from a unified angle.

What is integration? What difficulties do we face in promoting learning through integrated approach? What are the advantages of the integration approach?

We would illustrate by giving a concrete example from a theme,” the “problem” or “issue” of “corruption” in Nigeria. Note that the reference to “problem” is to a specific challenge that requires solution through careful study and investigation. This is a matter that investigation inquiry, and discussion that would test to a solution.

The first step is to define “corruption” from different angles. In so doing, you are not limited to finding answers in the content of the Social Sciences only but from a wider field. Answers

to man's problems are wide and varied. It is all the data collected from the several sources or disciplines that are used, not just one or two sources.

Usually, the teacher raises questions to guide or lead the student in making his or her inquiry, so that he or she would follow a logical line of finding out, one that could lead to a conclusion that may not have been thought of.

For example, such lead questions are asked:

1. Find out the types of corruption that are common in Nigeria.
2. What factors bring them about?
3. What factors appear to be most responsible?
4. Is one factor linked to another?
5. How, in the light of 3 and 4, do we solve the problem?

**The steps followed are:**

1. Definition of the concept.
2. Gathering of information.
3. Examining the information to arrive at conclusions (solution).
4. Making observations.
5. Arriving at conclusion (or solution) based on the information collected.

Usually, the kind of conclusion or solution on corruption arrived at cannot be the same by all the students. Various solutions would be proffered, but each would be according to the values of each student, according to his or her background.

**Difficulties in applying integrative approach:**

1. It is rigorous and difficult to define or limit the area to cover.
2. It is difficult to gather the material from various sources.

**Usefulness of applying integrative learning process:**

1. It avoids the division of subject - matter into singular discipline or subject fields.
2. It avoids the weakness of teaching of little and bits of everything in disjointed, Unconnected manner such that they make little sense and meaning to young learners.
3. Integration advocates and utilizes the "Wholistic Approach" to teaching and learning. According to Okam, "Its structure is in line with Gestalt theory whose slogan stipulates that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts' "(300). He goes on", "An issue, a problem or a topic is best tackled by making use of appropriate knowledge for different subject disciplines. In this manner, the topic is seen as a whole. Children do not naturally observe the world from the perspectives of academic disciplines". He concludes: "A child sees the world as one unit and naturally asks questions which cut across artificial subject divisions. An integrated approach to learning attempts to follow the child's natural ways of learning, viewing the world as a whole, the teacher's role being to provide experiences and to assist the inquiry process by suggesting further lines which might be followed "(Okam 1998:301).



4. Integration promotes independent learning for self-discovery and self-reliance, one of the foremost goals of Social Studies.
5. Finally, it encourages greater flexibility, imagination and creativity on the part of both the learner and the teacher.

### ACTIVITY I

1. Define integration. What are its values to a student?

### TEACHING OF VALUES IN SOCIAL STUDIES

When you look closely at the Social Studies objectives, you would find that most of them have their origin in the system of values, which give direction to individual's personal behaviours and decision-making process. However, the emphasis given to the formation of desirable attitudes and values in Social Studies education, through the careful design of programmes of related activities, and the deliberate and systematic teaching of these values, is another area in which the subject is unique. Its uniqueness in this case places it in the best privileged position where it can contribute much more than the contributions of all the other subjects added together to the achievement of an important national aim of education; that is, the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society.

In the primitive cultures, value structures hardly change over a long period of time and these values are generally accepted by the people almost without question. But in present-day Nigeria, changes are taking place fast. One important educational implication of this phenomenon is that the Nigerian Social Studies teacher of primary school children has to be exemplary, dynamic and open-minded because his interpersonal relationship, movements, gestures, actions, utterances, discussion topics, reading assignments, and class activities indicate that he believes in certain ideas, events, objects and people to be important for others to consider.

Another implication is that, in face of this unprecedented rapidity of change, the primary school teacher of Social Studies can no longer rely solely on the use of memorization, direct formal instruction, reading, and other indoctrination techniques in the teaching and learning of values. The point being made is that it is no more a simple matter to foster in children the desirable attitudes and values. Firstly, the Social Studies teacher has to be familiar with these values. There are three basic ones, namely, the substantive, behavioural and procedural values.

The substantive values, consisting of instrumental and terminal values are concerned with enduring issues of life time – religion, capitalism, socialism, education, honour and glory etc. However, because of the plural nature of Nigeria's society and the fact that particular substantive values may differ from one family to another, they are better taught in the home and reinforced at school.

The behavioural values involve the use and observance by the learners of specific rules to ensure orderliness in the school and classroom. The extent to which a learner

Obeys these rules is a direct measure of the value he attaches to interpersonal relationship, orderliness, care of equipments and materials, the rule of law, and institutional authority. Procedural values include the use of the process of logical reasoning, critical thinking, experimental and inquiry method in the treatment of data and information. It should be clear

from the foregoing that both the behavioural and procedural values have to be taught conscientiously and effectively as a prerequisite to the creation of a conducive environment for successful teaching and learning to take place.

Therefore, the role of the Social Studies teacher would include the following:

- (a) To organize the pupils in groups, each group consisting of pupils from various stages of moral development in order that pupils of lower moral development could benefit from their interaction with pupils of higher level of moral reasoning.
- (b) To ascertain or identify the level of moral development of each child and provide individual experiences suitable to his or her abilities.
- (c) To help the child to improve on his self-concept, by holding him very dearly and important, by taking interest in his ideas, remembering him, listening patiently to him encouraging him to like himself and seek for achievement. The more he achieves, the more he likes himself. By doing all these, the teacher is most likely to help improve the child's self-concept which directly affects the success of the moral-development education he receives.
- (d) To frequently expose the children to situations containing moral issues and moral-conflicts and encourage them to give judgement supported by reasons on the various actions taken by the different characters in the cases presented to them.
- (e) To open up the pupils to face a number of alternative values from which they should be allowed to choose freely without fear of reprisal or coercion.
- (f) To encourage and give pupils the chances for the sharing of ideas with teachers and peers as often as possible under varying circumstances and situations.
- (g) To disabuse pupils' minds of the belief that the teacher is the regular source of right "answers" and to impress it on them that "the most important products of moral discussions are their ideas and feelings.
- (h) To avoid passing unnecessary remarks on pupils ideas such as 'beautiful', 'wonderful', 'fantastic' 'good', or 'bad'. Apart from the fact that these words do not convey any definite meaning on the status (right/wrong) of the ideas expressed, discussion on values should never be a closed matter. However, it is still possible to accept a child's ideas, tentatively, without making any judgement, without agreeing or praising.

## **ACTIVITY II**

1. Discuss with teachers in your school the list of suggestions a Social Studies instructor has to follow in teaching values. Write down those that are not implementable and why?

## **SUMMARY**

- In this unit the philosophical background of Social Studies is traced to the Greeks civilization, which was rooted in the origin of history, as a discipline.
- The concept of integration in Social Studies is also discussed, that is, Social Studies is an interdisciplinary discipline.

- The advantages and disadvantages of the integration approach are discussed for the Social Studies discipline.
- Also discussed, is how values can be acquired in the teaching of Social Studies.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Discuss this philosophical background of Social Studies in relation to Greeks' civilization.
2. Explain the concept of integration in Social Studies.

**REFERENCES**

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- Alstyn R. M. (1977) **Social Studies Versus Social Science**. The Social Studies 28(3)70-85.
- Du Bey, D.L. Barth J.L. (1980) **The Inquiry Method Approach for Social Studies in Nigeria**. Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd., Nairobi.
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## **UNIT 3: SOCIAL ISSUES AND PROBLEMS IN SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This unit deals with the social issues and problems highlighted by the Social Studies discipline. Riot, arson, thuggery, revolts and revolutions are some of the social issues.

As a discipline Social Studies is not concerned with acquiring knowledge for its sake. It is a curriculum package to serve as a tool in solving societal problems. It is a problem centred, problem-solving discipline. In this unit, we would ask and answer: What are the problems and issues? Why do they exist?

### **OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- (i) Define issues and problems in Social studies.
- (ii) Mention and explain issues and problems in social studies

### **HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT**

1. Read through the unit, Note the salient points as you read. Take note of the unfamiliar words and check for their meaning in your dictionary.
2. from the beginning read and digest the unit thoroughly and systematically as arranged. Make sure you attempt all the activities stated. Avoid looking at the answers provided before attempting the exercises.
3. Strictly adhere to the rules.

### **WORD STUDY**

<b>Alcoholism:</b>	perpetual and excessive use of alcoholic drinks.
<b>Issues:</b>	an important subject that people are arguing about or discussing.
<b>Homicide:</b>	deliberate, unlawful killing of a person.
<b>Social Issues:</b>	matter that need urgent attention about the welfare of person.
<b>Social Problems:</b>	an unsatisfactory thing or situation that causes difficult for the killing of self deliberately.
<b>Thuggery:</b>	lawless violence.

Alcoholisms means continued excessive use of alcohol drink, otherwise known as “Compulsive drinking: It is manifested by repeated drinking of alcoholic drinks in excess to an extent that interferes with the drinker’s health and economic functioning. Alcoholism is a great health problem. It has great negative impact with family. Beside, its existence contributes greatly to delinquency (Mc Nall 1975). Alcoholism is a dependence and the heavy use of alcohol at the extreme end, is considered deviant. At a recent United Nations Conference on drug abuse, it was determine3d that the misuse of heavy use of alcohol is

“associated “with many forms of deviant behavior including violent crimes such as homicide, rape, and child molestation. (Goodman 1971).

### **DRUG ADDICTION**

Drug addiction, like Alcoholism, is a form of deviant that can have serious social consequences Today, in many countries of the world, the buying, selling, and possession of certain drugs (such as narcotics, marijuana, heroin and cocaine) are illegal. When the excessive use of drug interferes with people’s health and their economic and social functioning, it becomes “drug abuse” which is eminently considered a “social problem” (Clinard and Meier 1975). In fact, drug abuse places heavy burden on police forces and court in civilized countries (Goodman 1976).

### **SUICIDE**

Suicide means self-murder or self-physical elimination. The phenomenon is traced to meaninglessness, isolation, powerlessness and self-estrangement (Schneider 1975).

Emile Durkheim, a French founding father of sociology and the first man ever to have made a scientific study of suicides defines suicide as “death, resulting from behaviour that individual knows will lead to his own demise” (Durkheim 1976).

### **DEVIANCE**

Deviance” means, “norm violations” or “violations of norms”. In the words of Merton (1949), deviant behaviour refers to conduct that departs significantly from the norms set for people in their social status, It is violation of any rule anywhere as long as the violation excites some disapproval and indignation (Kelly 1979; Goode 1978 and Silver 1981).

### **ACTIVITY**

1. Define Social Issues.
2. What are social problems?

### **SUMMARY**

- Problems are those harmful occurrences in society and become issues of public concern and debate. Such issues cry out for resolution, to avoid degeneration into uncontrollable crises.
- Social issues such as alcoholism, drug addiction and suicide are discussed. These areas are of interest to Social Studies because its focus and orientation is that of problem resolution in society.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Mention five social problems that are rampant in Nigeria.
2. Unemployment is a social problem. Suggest 5 ways of tackling the problem.

**REFERENCES**

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