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## Achieving Nation and Peace Building in Contemporary Nigerian Society: Imperative of Social Studies Teaching in Secondary Schools

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### ABSTRACT

*The study was carried out on social studies as a strategy towards achieving nation and peace building in contemporary Nigerian society: imperative of teaching social studies in secondary schools. Descriptive survey research design was used. The study population comprised the educated adults in twenty communities in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. The sample size of the study was One thousand and eighty (1,080) selected through a snowballing sampling technique. Five research questions were generated to guide the conduct of the study. A self-developed research instrument by the researcher entitled, "Questionnaire on achieving nation and peace building in contemporary Nigerian society: imperative of teaching social studies in secondary schools", fashioned on Yes and No questions. The research instrument was validated by an expert in test and measurement, while its reliability was done, through test retest method, and 0.67 coefficient reliability was obtained at two weeks interval. Five research questions were raised to guide the conduct of the study and analyzed using, descriptive statistics (frequency counts, simple percentages and mean). Based on the findings of the study, cohesion were made that teaching Social Studies could enhance social studies could enhance social peace stability, promote peaceful living, give people citizenry knowledge and create responsible citizens in Nigeria. Therefore, premised on the conclusions, recommendations were made that social studies should be made a compulsory subject at all levels of education, it should be taught also, using non-formal system and by using media devices etc.*

**Keywords:** Nation, Peace, Building, Social studies

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### Background to the Study

The quest to achieve sustainable nation peace and cohesion is a national issue that has been attracting the attention of key actors from all spheres of the nation, Nigeria. Nation building is synonymous to nation cohesion. Although, nation building occurs prominently in international politics, in practice it has an age-long history or lengthy history. The conceptualization of nation building is very slippery and a violation of definitional pluralism. However, Onuoha, et al (2018), simply explain nation cohesion to encompass building the tangible and intangible threads that hold a political entity together and gives it a sense of purpose. In this contention, nation building is thus, about having a strong structure that will harness diverse political structures and diverse or scattered ethnics towards striving towards a common goal(s) in order to sustain the nation Nigeria. It should be emphasized that one of the moving challenges militating against the nation today are; lack of national unity for national development (Oyekan, 2001).

Akoto (2015), sees a nation cohesion or refers it to a more abstract process of developing a shared sense of identity or community among the various groups making up the population of a particular state. Nation building focuses more on the relationship between the citizen and their country. The road towards achieving nation cohesion is characterized with many challenges. Nigeria as a nation has faced severe tests and trials in the drive towards nationalists (Benjamin and Osisoma, 2019).

Nation-building can therefore be explained as a conscious and focused application of bar people's collective resources, energies and knowledge to the task of liberating and developing the psychic and physical space that will identify as ours. Further, it involves the development of behaviour, values, languages institution and physical structures that elucidate our history and culture, concretize and protect the present, and insure the future identity and independence of the nation. Okorie (2015), says that, "nation building and cohesion is deliberate, keenly directed, focused energetic projection of national culture values and collective action to develop a political and economic system". It can be deciphered from the explanation and definitions above that nation building is a joint task or collective activity of citizens to create a nation where everyone sees themselves as one.

The diverse ethnic or ethnic complexity that characterized with the nation poses a serious challenge to achieving nation building in the country. Thus, Nigeria is a pluralistic society, comprising several ethnic groups with distinctive histories and cultures. Thus, there is need to make the individuals in the nation one and gives each individuals a sense of belonging to a polity. Right from the creation of the country, leaders in the nation have tried out of the disparate and diverse culture to make the country a geographical entity, called, Nigeria. The adoption of federalism character is a principle that is built on nation building. Thus, seen as a measure to take care of diverse interests of diverse ethnics or tribes in the country. Federalism was adopted in Nigeria to effectively managed her multi-nationalities through negotiations and compromises on issues of political and national importance and the submission

of Ajayi (1998) that through social studies the diverse ethnic groups that are living in different locations could be integrated. Today, inclusiveness have not been truly achieved, the nation polity is still trailing with conflict. Each region or ethnic group has a distinctive agenda in polity.

Anthony (2018), has identified education is a vital tool for nation cohesion. Education is an important means of growth and development of any nation. Education breeds the needed human resources that will foster nation building. For any country to achieve sustainable national building the level of illiteracy need to be reduced to be nearest minimum level. Educated citizens will be more effective and functional in politics and polity of the country. They will appreciate better the need for nation building. Oyekan (2000), contended that education equips people with the right attitudes, skill and values that will make them to contribute to nation building. Bholu (1984) and Rogers (1992), also maintained that there is a strong link between education and nation building. Man occupies a central stage in nation building and it is when they acquire the appropriate knowledge of its place value that it can become feasible, which can be applied through education, especially the formal education.

Cornelius et al (2013), stated that Nigeria is a victim of experiment of social cloning of the British government. There were about 250 ethnic nationalities in Nigeria prior to the amalgamation of the nation in 1914. Each of these nationalities had a distinct culture and tradition. However, with the Amalgamation policy in 1914, these distinctive ethnic groups were brought together as a nation. With the inherent negative effects of the policy to unite the disintegrated ethnics and adhere nation building, besides, federalism and other measures, introduced, with the problem of federalism, federal character principles were introduced along with a national integration and nation building as a palliative measures in 1979 and 1999 constitutions, respective.

Ezenwa et al (1987) posited that federal character was aimed to achieve equitable sharing of posts and even distribution of natural and economic resources. Federal character is a way to achieve fair distribution of nation cake and equal representation of regions in the nation, Nigeria. Thus, makes each ethnic group and region to have a feeling of unbiased and cheating, thus, having a sense of oneness and continual existence as members of a nation.

Fundamentally, federal character was introduced in Nigeria's polity to solve problems of federalism, issues of ethnic pluralism in terms of appointment, recruitment and performances of public officers (Okorie et al, 2015). Nation building is therefore contributing on a nation identity. Today, the search for a social cohesion in the nation is yet to be attained, completely. Ahmed Gamgun (2014) stated the following factors as logs in the wheel of the process;

1. The constitutional problem
2. The challenge of tribalism and religious affiliations
3. The challenge of national history
4. Unequal distribution of natural resources
5. The challenge from international community etc.

However, it has been suggested by the explanations or definitions on social studies that a social cohesion may be possibly, attained. For instance, Meziobi et al (2003), Esu et al (2004) and Meziobi (2007) have indicated that the essence of social studies instruction, specifically, at Junior Secondary Schools is to equip the learners with the attitudes, values, knowledge and skills for functional living in the Nigerian society. Ajayi (1998), noted that Nigeria is made up of diverse cultural groups with over 400 languages and dialects and these cultural groups live in different geographical locations. In order to promote peaceful co-existence among the groups there is a need for integration, which social studies could perform the roles.

In recent times, in Nigeria, due to several factors, achieving social cohesion is very illusive. Several researches had been conducted on Social Studies observably but much have not been done on Social studies as an imperative to achieve nation and peace building in the contemporary Nigerian society: imperative of social studies teaching in senior secondary schools in the area. Thus, precipitated the research.

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## Statement of the Problem

There is no gain saying the fact that nation and peace building and social cohesion in Nigeria is one of the prioritized and topical issues at an assemblage of stakeholders on good government polity in Nigeria, particularly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Although, efforts to achieve these cohesion started a long years ago, perhaps, since the partition of Africa as fall out of Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 which is also known as Congo conference which gave birth to the nation, Nigeria.

Past and present leaders at the political arena have devised strategies to hold the disintegrated people of ethnics of the country to work concertedly to achieve a nation building. Thus, necessitated in the recent time federal character and many more legislative frameworks and policies to achieve this task. However, achieving nation and peace building in the country today is still a mirage. The effort has been thwarted by many factors, such as; unfair distribution of the nation resources, ethnic pluralism coupled with many other factors.

Some scholars or academic however, have suggested that Social Studies as an area of discipline has tendency to make nation cohesion feasible and possible in Nigeria. However, some lingering questions minds are: will the teaching of Social Studies in Nigeria educational institutions across all levels of education, in the formal system is that why, why are Nigerians are not still united towards achieving common goals of a nation building despite several efforts to achieve this by the past and present government since, the country got independence in 1960.

It was against this background this study was carried out by the researcher.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The broad objective of the research was a study on achieving nation and peace building in contemporary Nigerian society: imperative of teaching Social Studies in secondary schools. Specifically, the study objectives are to:

- i. Determine the influence of Social Studies on equipping people with values and attitudes for social cohesion;
- ii. Examine the effect of Social Studies on people's orientation to live as members of a united community;
- iii. To examine the influence of teaching Social Studies on social peace stability in the country, Nigeria;
- iv. Determine the influence of Social Studies on acquisition of citizenship knowledge; and examine the effect of Social Studies at creating responsible citizens, who are defrasized .

## **Research Questions**

Five research questions were formulated to guide the conduct of the research.

1. Does Social Studies have effects equipping people with values and attitudes for a nation building?
2. Can Social Studies awe people of different ethnics groups the appropriate orientation to live as members of a united nation?
3. Can Social Studies promote social-peace stability?
4. Can Social Studies enhance acquisition of citizenship knowledge and education?
5. Will Social Studies create responsible citizenry?

## **Significance of the Study**

The findings of the research will be significant to stakeholders in polity and nation's (Nigeria) development in the following ways;

Firstly, findings will enable governments at various levels to know the place-value of teaching Social Studies and its inclusion in schools' curricula and its relevance towards achieving cohesion to the nation, Nigeria.

The results of the study will enable political leaders in political arena and all other stakeholders in polity to establish whether, through Social Studies, nation and peace buiding could be achieved or not in Nigeria.

Finally, the study will add to the existing literature in a nation building in Nigeria, which will be made accessible by the public through the internet services, thus, become a god source of material for researchers that will carry research in the study area in future.

## **Scope and Delimitations of the Study**

The study was restricted to communities in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State. The delimitations of the study were lack of money, time and work constraints which hindered an extensive conduct of the research by the researcher.

## **Definition of Terms**

The following terms as used contextually were explained, so as to avoid ambiguity in their meanings;

- **Cohesion:** This means act of living together without conflict
- **Stability:** This refers to consistence of peace in the community
- **Community:** A place where two or more people live.
- **Strategy:** This means a way of achieving cohesion
- **Ethnic Pluralism:** This refers to having many ethnics co-existing together.
- **Curriculum:** This refers to collections of indigenes of educated benefits
- **Adult:** This refers to the grown-up members of the community
- **Subjects:** These refer to the respondents used to generate data for the study

## Methodology

A descriptive method of research was used for the study, because, not all the subjects in the study population could be covered. Therefore, data generated from the sample size was generalized on the entire study population. The population of this study comprised all the students of public secondary schools who were offering Social studies in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. A total number of One thousand and eighty (1,080) respondents constituted the sample size of the study. They were selected through a snowballing sampling technique.

The research instruments used to generate data was self-developed questionnaire by the researcher, entitled, "Questionnaire on Achieving Nation and peace Building in contemporary Nigeria society: Imperative of Teaching Social Studies in Secondary schools", fashioned on Yes and No answer. The research instruments were validated by an expert in Test and measurement. All corrections made were effected in the final draft of the questionnaire. This made the research instruments to have both face and contents validity. The reliability of research instrument was done through test retest method and 0.67 coefficient reliability, obtained. This least value obtained made the research instrument to be adjudged to have reliability value and good enough for the study by the researcher. Data collected were analyzed, using descriptive statistics (frequency counts, simple percentage and mean).

## Presentation of Findings and Discussion of Results

### Presentation of Findings

**Research Question One:** Does Social Studies has effect on equipping people with values, attitudes for a nation building?

**Table 1: Showing frequency counts, simple percentage and mean on does Social Studies has effects on equipping people with values, attitudes for a nation building**

S/N	ITEMS	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	Remarks
1.	Social studies make me to know the value of national unity	5 0.5%	6 0.5%	63 5.8%	1006 93.1%	3.9	Accepted
2.	Without being social studies student, I can still know the value of national unity	856 79.2%	90 8.3%	89 8.2%	45 4.2%	1.4	Rejected
3.	Social Studies has make me to know the importance of tolerating other people culture outside my ethnic group in Nigeria	6 0.5%	10 0.9%	62 5.7%	1002 93%	3.9	Accepted
4.	My tolerance with other people culture outside my ethnic group is not a function of being a Social Studies students	769 71.2%	203 19%	65 6.0%	43 4%	1.4	Rejected
5.	Social Studies as a course can foster unity among people in Nigeria	12 1.1%	20 1.8%	88 8.1%	960 89%	3.8	Accepted
6.	Uniting Nigeria as member of a nation has nothing to do with social studies	759 70.2%	203 19%	69 6.4%	49 4.5%	1.4	Rejected
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2407 37.1%</b>	<b>532 8.2%</b>	<b>436 6.7%</b>	<b>3105 48%</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

Table 1 presents the result on research question one which states, does social studies has effects on equipping with values and attributes for a nation building? For item (1), 1006 (9.3%) among the respondents responded strongly agreed, 63 (5.8%) agreed, 6 (0.5%) disagreed, while 5 (0.5%) strongly disagreed.

For item (2), 45 (4.2%) strongly agreed, 89 (8.2%) agreed, 90 (8.3%) disagreed, while 856 (79.2%) strongly disagreed. For item (3), 1002 (93%), strongly agreed, 62 (5.7%) agreed, 10 (0.9%) disagreed while 6 (0.5%) obtained for strongly disagreed. For item (4), 43 (4%) strongly agreed, 65 (6.0%) agreed, 203 (19%) disagreed, while 769 (71.2%) strongly disagreed. On item (5), 960 (89%) strongly agreed, 88 (8.1%) agreed, 20 (1.8%) disagreed while 12 (1.1%) strongly disagreed.

Finally, 49 (4.5%) strongly agreed, 69 (4.5%) agreed, 203 (19%) disagreed while 759 (70.2%) strongly disagreed. The result generally indicates that the mean of average of rating scale of four ( $x = 0.6$ ) is greater than the average scale of four ( $x = 0.5$ ). Therefore, social studies could foster a nation building in Nigeria.

**Research Question Two:** Can social studies give people of different ethnic groups the appropriate orientation to have as members of a United Nation, Nigeria?

**Table 2: Showing frequency counts, simple percentages and mean on can social studies give people of different ethnic groups the appropriate orientation to live as ember of a United Nation, Nigeria.**

S/N	ITEMS	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	Remarks
7.	Through social studies I know how to be hospitable to other people outside my ethnic group	4 0.4%	6 0.5%	102 9.4%	968 90%	<b>3.9</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
8.	Without study social studies I cannot be hospitable to people out my tribe or ethnic group	42 3.9%	200 18.5%	203 19%	635 59%	<b>3.3</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
9.	Social studies has make me to be more tolerant with other people's culture	4 0.4%	15 1.4%	60 5.5%	1001 93%	<b>3.9</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
10.	Despite being a Social Studies student, I cannot still tolerate other people culture	15 1.4%	30 2.8%	50 4.6%	985 91.2%	<b>3.8</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
11.	Social studies has awaken my consciousness on importance of a nation building	30 2.8%	50 4.6%	200 18.5%	800 74%	<b>3.6</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
12.	I was not aware of importance of a nation building prior to my studying without Social Studies	47 4.3%	62 5.7%	435 40.2%	536 50%	<b>3.3</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>142 2.2%</b>	<b>363 5.6%</b>	<b>1050 16.2%</b>	<b>4925 76%</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

Table 2 shows the result on research question two that states can social studies give people of different ethnic groups in Nigeria the appropriate orientation on nation building. For item (7), 968 (90%) among the respondents strongly agreed, 102 (9.4%) agreed, 6 (0.5%) disagreed while 4 (0.4%) strongly disagreed. On item (8), 635 (59%) strongly agreed, 203 (19%) agreed, 200 (18.5%) disagreed while 42 (3.9%) strongly disagreed. On item (9), 1001 (93%) strongly agreed, 60 (5.5%) agreed, 15 (1.4%) disagreed, while 4 (0.4%) strongly disagreed.

On item (10), 985 (91.2%) strongly agreed, 50 (4.6%) agreed, 30 (2.8%) disagreed while 15 (1.4%) strongly disagreed. On item (11), 800 (74%) strongly agreed, 200 (18.5%) agreed, 50 (4.6%) disagreed while 30 (2.8%) strongly disagreed. Finally, on item (12), 536 (50%) strongly agreed, 435 (40.2%) agreed, 62 (5.7%) disagreed while 47 (4.3%) strongly disagreed.

**Research Question Three:** Can Social Studies promote social peace stability?

**Table 3: Presents frequency counts and simple percentages on can Social Studies promote peace stability**

S/N	ITEMS	YES	%	NO	%
13.	Through social studies social peace stability can be promoted	900	83.3	180	17
14.	Social peace stability can not be promoted through social studies	80	7.4	1000	92.5
15.	Social studies will enable people to know the value of peaceful using in the community	1,040	96.3	40	3.7
16.	Despite teaching and learning of social studies, peaceful living will still elude the community	20	1.8	1,060	98.1

Table three showing findings on research question three. On item (13), 900 (83.3%) and 180 (17%) among the respondents responded Yes and No. On item (14), 80 (7.4%) and 1,000 (92.5%) of the respondents responded Yes and No, respectively. On item (15), 1,040 (96.3%) and 40 (3.7%) responses were got for Yes and No. Finally, on item (16), 20 (1.8%) and 1,060 (98.1%) among the respondents responded, Yes and No.

**Research Question Four:** Can Social Studies enhance acquisition of citizenship knowledge?

**Table 4: Showing frequency counts and simple percentages on can social studies enhance acquisition of citizenship knowledge and education**

S/N	ITEMS	YES	%	NO	%
17.	Social studies contents contains a knowledge of citizenship rights	700	65	380	35.1
18.	Social studies will not make people to know their rights	280	26	800	74.0
19.	Through social studies people will know their civil rights	1,015	94	65	6.0
20.	The teaching of social studies has no link with knowing civil rights	59	5.5	1,021	94.5

Table 4 reveals findings on research question four. On items (17), (18), (19) and (20), the following responses were obtained for Yes and No; 700 (65%) and 380 (35.1%); 280 (26%) and 800 (74.0%); 1,015 (94%) and 65 (6.0%) and 59 (5.5%) and 1,021 (94.5%) were obtained respectively.

**Research Question Five:** Can Social studies create responsible citizenry?

**Table 5: Showing frequency counts and simple percentages on can social studies creates responsible citizenry**

S/N	ITEMS	YES	%	NO	%
21.	Social Studies will make people to be tolerant	1,030	95.4	50	4.6
22.	Social Studies cannot instill tolerance ideas to people	41	3.8	1,039	96.2
23.	Through Social Studies people will be law asiding	1,041	96.3	39	3.6
24.	Despite, Social Studies, people will not be law abiding	80	7.4	1000	92.6
25.	Security in the community can be guaranteed through social studies	1,056	98	24	2.2
26.	Social Studies is a threat to security in the community	37	3.4	1,043	96.6

Table 5 shows the results on research question five. On item (21), (22) and 23); 1,030 (95.4%) and 50 (4.6%); 41 (3.8%) and 1,039 (96.2%) and 1,041 (96.3%) and 39 (3.6%) were obtained as responses for Yes and No, respectively. On item (24), (25) and (26), the following responses were also obtained for Yes and No; 80 (7.4%) and 1,000 (92.6%); 1,056 (98%) and 24 (2.2%) and 37 (3.4%) and 1,043 (96.6%).

## Discussion of Results

The result on research question one agrees with the position of Kiskoek (1981) that, Social Studies could create a relationship of human feelings with one another. Also, the result buttress Ajayi (1998), view that the disintegrated ethnic groups living in different geographical locations could be integrated. Thus, the ethnic groups see themselves as members of a United Nation.

On research question two, generally, finding reveals ( $x = 3.6$ ) as a mean of average rating of four greater than ( $x = 2.5$ ), the average of rating scale of four. Thus, portends that social studies could orientate people of different ethnic groups or cultural diversity to live together as member of a nation, Nigeria. This is in consonance with the submission of Anthony (2018), who identified education by extension, social studies education as a vital tool to build a nation. It also aligns with the opinion of Meziobi (1992) that Social Studies could tackle conflicts that characterized inter-ethnics in Nigeria.

The findings on research question three indicates that Social Studies could promote socio-peace stability in the nation, Nigeria. The results align with the submission of the Meziobi (1992) that Social Studies offers the attributes of perseverance and endurance to people, thus, promote socio-peace stability in the society.

Also, the results on research question four reveals that Social Studies could make people to acquire citizenship knowledge. This result corroborated with the opinion of Meziobi and Osakwe (2003), and Inyang – abia (2004) and Meziobi (2007) that the teaching of social studies specifically at the Junior Secondary Schools is to equip the learners with the attitudes, values, knowledge and skills for functional living in the Nigerian society.

Finally, the result obtained on research question five indicated that Social Studies could create responsible citizenry. The result is in consonance with the submission of Meziobi (1992), that social studies could make people to have the following attributes; loyalty, obedience, truthfulness, cooperation etc.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of the research, conclusions were made that Social Studies incorporation into Nigeria curricula across all level of education could enhance nation peace building and cohesion in the nation, Nigeria. Since, it provides people with values and attitudes that made them to strive for a social cohesion by exhibiting tolerance, hospitality etc. Social studies could create a community, where social peace stability prevails.

Also, that social studies offers people with the appropriate orientation, knowledge and education of citizenry education.

## Recommendations

Premised on the conclusions of the study the following recommendations were made by the researcher:

Firstly, apart from Social Studies being a field of study, it should be made a compulsory subject at all levels of education in Nigeria.

Besides, social studies contents should be expanded on the values and ways to achieve nation building

Moreover, the teaching of Social Studies should not be restricted to formal system of education alone, rather in non-formal system it should be taught, using mass media devices and other strategies.

Finally, Social Studies contents should be taught at community level on a regular basis, and so on.

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