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**Social Studies Curriculum Implementation for Sustainable National Development:  
The Critical Nexus**

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**BY**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The study investigated the extent to which social studies curriculum implementation in Federal Universities in the south-south geo-political zone has affected the attainment of sustainable national development goals in Nigeria. Two research questions were posed and addressed in the study. The population of the study consisted of all the social studies lecturers in the Federal Universities in south-south geo-political zone. The population was estimated to be 178 from where the sample size of 98 was drawn using purposive and random sampling technique. Data was generated through a researcher's developed instrument called Social Studies Curriculum Implementation for Sustainable National Development Questionnaire (SSCISMOQ) with reliability co-efficient of 0.92 established through correlational statistics analysis. Data generated was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that the implementation of social studies curriculum in terms of provision of facilities and resource centres, adequate lecture halls and theatres, provision of ICT equipment were not in line with sustainable national development goals, while the curriculum was aligned in terms of contents, teaching methods and admission policy. Based on the conclusion drawn, the major recommendation made among others was that the University authorities should provide adequate learning facilities and research centres for teaching and learning of social studies. Sufficient and adequate lecture halls and theatres should also be provided in order to align the programme with sustainable national development goals.*

**KEYWORDS: Social Studies, Curriculum Implementation, National Development and Critical Nexus**

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**Introduction**

Social studies curriculum is a reformatory school discipline whose curriculum is designed to equip learners with desirable attitude values, skill and knowledge for cohesive social existence in the society. Its curriculum contents, pedagogies and objectives are projected to address and accommodate contemporary changes, challenges and progress stride of the nation for sustainable national development. The emphasis from the forgoing is that social studies being one of the core subjects in both the lower, middle and upper basic educational level up to doctorate degree is

primarily concern with man and his activities in relation to his social, political economic, cultural and physical environments as well as his desire to proffer solutions to problems that arises from his interaction with these environments. There is no general accepted definition(s) of social studies education, definition often reflect orientation based on social studies derivatives for example, a political scientist would define social studies with emphasis on man and his political environment or activities, while an historian would define social studies based on historical point of view. Even social studies experts have contradictory definition of the subject. It is against the backdrop of variation and confusion of the meaning of social studies that Onyabe (1980) described social studies as a “Bastard Child”.

Ezegbe, ESKAN, Anyanwu and Abiogu (2014) defined social studies as a discipline that deals with social change and ensures that meaningful interaction of the recipients with their physical, social and cultural environment is attained. Social studies education is seen as a programme of study which a society uses to instill in students the knowledge, skill, attitudes and actions it considers important concerning the relationship which human beings have with each other, their world and themselves. The idea of social studies education was first conceived in the United States of America in 1916. It was after the Second World War that social studies was fully identified as a course that is relevant to the understanding of man and his problems in the society. According to KISSOCK (1981) in Umar (2007) the success recorded in the use of social studies as a tool for nation building by the Americans became a spring board for adoption of this subject in Europe and other countries of the world. Several conferences were held in different locations including Mombassa conference in Kenya in 1968 where it was unanimously agreed that the teaching of history and geography should be reviewed. Many African countries such as Sierra-Leon, Kenya, Ghana, Uganda and Nigeria attended the conference.

Back home in Nigeria, the first serious attempt to develop social studies as a school subject was made at Aiyetoro Comprehensive High School through the assistance of the food foundation in conjunction with the Western Region Ministry of Education and Comparative Education Studies and Adaptation Centre (CESAC). In furthering the development of the subject, many seminars and workshop Council (NEDRDC) Social Studies Association of Nigeria (SOSAN) and a host of other bodies NTI (2007). The target of any sustainable national development is to address social, economic, political and cultural problems. This implies that a nation should be able to provide qualitative life for her citizenry through effective utilization of available human and natural resources in a way which is sustainable in the long run. The realization of sustainable national development can be enhanced through group cohesion and mutual existence as well as right implementation of social studies curriculum which its contents revolve around national development imperatives. Akulaye *et al.*, (1997) as indicated in Mazieobi *et al*, (2013) viewed social studies curriculum as an educational programme which embraces knowledge, methods, resources, evaluation and social experiences offered to the learner’s in an effort to promote effective democratic values and skills for effective citizenship.

### **Statement of Problem**

Sustainable national development has attracted a global attention. Almost all countries of the world are striving to provide qualitative life for her citizenry. The realization of sustainable national development is yet to be actualized in Nigeria and other nations of the world. It is observed that millions of universities and other tertiary institutions graduates are roaming the streets without jobs. The 15th march, 2014 Nigeria Immigration Recruitment exercise conducted

at the Abuja International Stadium was a clear evidence. In that recruitment, 6.5 million people representing 38 percent of the entire Nigeria population were shortlisted for only 4000 vacant positions in the Nigeria Immigration Service (Punch Newspaper 2014). This is an indication that the employment level is alarming. Onuma (2016) lamented on the state of unemployment in Nigeria. He concluded that most graduates have remained at home without job for about five years after graduation. Nigeria's economy is going down on a daily basis. Entrepreneurs and business operators are engaging in different kinds of loans disputes due to lack of trust, copyright and other intellectual right violations.

In the area of governance and social equity, Nigeria is characterized by poor governance, insincerity of purpose and endemic corruption, even the judiciary sector which is believed to be the last hope of the common man in equally undergoing corruptible experience in recent times. Primary, secondary and as well as universities and other tertiary institutions were established with structured curriculum and programmes to disseminate basic knowledge and train individuals so as to address these problems. But it appears that most of the school programmes have not contributed positively towards full realization of the sustainable national development objectives. At this juncture, one may ask, can adequate implementation of social studies curriculum help to train, develop and position individuals for full realization of sustainable national development? What constitute the critical nexus in the implementation of social studies curriculum? It is the gap that exists between these pertinent questions that have rise to this paper.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this paper is to examine the extent to which social studies curriculum implementation has contributed to the sustainable national development in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives

1. To train Nigeria to be good citizens and nation builders by helping students to develop good skills, habits and positive attitudes towards one another and towards the nation.
2. To enable Nigerians to know and use the resources of their physical environment effectively.
3. To make people understand their own culture and the culture of other Nigerians so as to appreciate their differences and the need to live together in one great nation.
4. To help people to develop a good sense of judgment and sense of moral and social responsibility so that they can become useful members of their society and nation.
5. To develop in students, positive attitudes of togetherness, comradeship and co-operation towards a healthy nation.
6. To inculcate appropriate values of honesty, integrity, hard work, fairness and justice at work and play as one's contribution to the development of the nation.
7. Create an awareness and understanding of our physical environment and the evolving social and cultural processes.

- 8 Develop a capacity to learn and acquire basic skills including those of listening, reading, speaking writing, observation and analysis.

Based on the aims and goals of social studies education enumerated above, it could be educated that social studies curriculum is concerned with the development of a “Total Man”. Social studies curriculum is designed to awaken in studies the desire for academic learning.

Most scholars and researcher have attempted to link social studies with citizenship education and civic education. Though it is obvious that the three disciplines are closely related but they are not exactly the same. Citizenship education in terms of goals and objectives are almost the same with social studies but different methodology. Citizenship education takes the look of a single subject approach while social studies take an integrated approach. Similarly, civic education has been introduced to co-exist with social studies. Civic education as a single approach discipline is designed to teach the learners about our right and what duties and responsibilities. The governance and leaders should do, the introduction of civic education is to further deepen the knowledge of the learners on democratic culture and to encourage qualitative participation in the governance process.

### **Social Studies Curriculum Implementation for Sustainable National Development Challenges and Straggles**

The essence of social studies curriculum in Nigeria school system as earlier mentioned in this paper is to equip the learner with contemporary requisite values, attitudes, skills and knowledge that are sustainable to withstand national and global challenges of man. But the implementation of social studies curriculum in Nigeria is faced with certain challenges among which are, curriculum implementation in line with sustainable national Development, Challenge of social studies derivative and it contents delivery, funding of social studies education curriculum.

### **The Challenge of Implementation of Social Studies Curriculum in line with Sustainable National Development**

One of the critical challenges facing social studies education is its curriculum implementation. Maduwesi (2005) maintained that the curriculum is the basic mechanism through which the educational system inculcates into the learners the knowledge skills and attitudes which educational society prescribed. This implies that no meaningful educational outcome could be feasible and realizable without a coherent attention to curriculum implementation. Mkpa (2005) opined that the extent of curriculum implementation determined the extent to which educational objectives are achieved. Most educational policies and programmes have failed due to implementations challenges.

There is a notable mis-link on the implementation of social studies curriculum in the Nigeria school system. Social studies have been introduced in the primary school, junior secondary school and at the tertiary institutions up to Ph.D level, but is it not taught at the senior secondary level. Mezieobi (1995:3) is of the opinion that this policy stance has aroused controversy as to why this is so. There is no justification for the exclusion of social studies in the senior secondary school level, the subject is not in the West African Examination Council (WAEC) syllabus but it is taught as a degree course in the universities.

At this juncture, one may be forced to ask; what then are the admission criteria for those who want to read social studies in the university? The gap created at the senior secondary level makes social studies education implementation unrealistic and half haphazard. The implementation of social studies curriculum goes beyond the gap mentioned above, it also includes the availability of the right and trained social studies teaching personnel to mount this programme in different strata of education, the evaluation of the curriculum itself as well as the use of the right and adequate instructional materials. Instructional materials in this context include relevant and appropriate textbooks, visual and audio-visual materials like globes, charts, slides, maps, etc. these instructional materials are also educational imputed and they are of vital importance in the success implementation of social studies curriculum.

### **Challenges of social studies derivation and its contexts delivery:**

Social studies is comparatively a new subject in the school curriculum. As a new subject, teachers who teach this subject are drawn from its derivatives such as history, government, geography and economics. These teachers are not expert in the subject matter of social studies education and as such are not competent in the delivery of social studies curriculum. Mgbekam (2004) noted that inability of the classroom teachers to teach a new subject arising from professional deficiency may cause a delay in the implementation. Developing the needed manpower to teach any new subject for the actualization of its goals and objectives required quantitative and qualitative training through workshops, conferences, seminars and other forms of in-service training. It is against this backdrop, the needed manpower to handle social studies programme at any level of education in Nigeria should be professionally trained in the area of mastery of the epistemology and ontology of social studies. He/she should be acquainted with the aims and objectives that prompted the introduction and teaching of social studies curriculum in Nigeria. Such intending teacher should appreciate the rationale behind the employment. Commitment to the availability and the use of resource materials in order to help learners achieve the objectives of social studies curriculum should be employed. It is also expedient for social studies teachers to master the varieties of requisite evaluation processes and procedures in ascertaining student attainment of social studies objectives at all levels and domains of learning.

In his opinion, Okam (2002) stated that the social studies teacher represents a major source of success in his process of actualizing the curriculum content as an instrument for effective inculcation of success citizenship norms and virtues among students in Nigerian schools. He observed that if the social studies curriculum is to contribute its quota in generating positive orientations among students for the purpose of achieving its objective to enhance human and social development. It must capitalize on the assets on the teacher's factor in bringing about this. He affirmed that whenever social studies is taught, the classroom teachers are qualified as well as trained, the greater the success in achieving social studies goals and objectives.

Conclusively, the curriculum implementation is realized at the classroom level where teacher and students are the major actors. Implementation requires that teachers select appropriate content on the curriculum and the appropriate method of content delivery. This further implies that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. Okam (2002) expresses that the problem of qualified social studies with professional experiences to accomplish curriculum delivery has affected the implementation of social curriculum especially at the classroom level.

### **Challenges of Funding of Social Studies Education Curriculum**

The issue of funding of education in Nigeria is vital since education is an important tool to affect national development and progress. Given the demand of today's world, including the need to eradicate poverty and reduce unemployment, it has become necessary for the government and private sector to adequately fund education in Nigeria. Over the years, funding to education generally has been poor and this ugly trend has negatively affected the implementation of social studies curriculum.

There is no meaningful discussion on how to enhance the quality and relevance of education without considering the issue of funding. Funding is the life-wire of every venture. Etuk (2006) state categorically that the need for money for educational purpose is numerous. Educational funding calls for hiring of manpower, acquisition of materials for research and development, maintenance of educational facilities. Abagbodi (2016) opined that educational funding has no limit. This implies that there is no amount of money that is too much to fund education in Nigeria.

Based on its goals and objectives, the place of social studies in developing personalities for national development is not in doubt. The government at the federal, state and local government levels should appreciate the need for funding research in social studies education as investment to regenerating values for cooperation, ethnic harmony and strategic peace building in Nigeria. These bodies should adequately sponsor social studies teachers to attend conferences and seminars that would be of transformative contributions to social studies programme in the development of the economy. Social studies teachers at all levels should be made to benefit from this sponsorship.

### **Strategies for Social Studies Curriculum Implementation for Sustainable National Development**

Strategies for social studies curriculum implementation for sustainable development could be discussed as follows

#### **1. Regular revision of social studies curriculum**

Okam (2012) dynamics of social studies curriculum at all level of education demands a regular and intermitted revision. It is necessary to review its content and pedagogies so as to make the instruction relevant to societal needs. Timely renewal of curriculum is necessary so as to take account of changes in social order, societal values and goals change with time. If the social studies curriculum is to be effective, these changes will have to be reflected in the curriculum.

#### **2. Regular training of social studies teachers**

Okam (2012) admonished those professionally trained social studies teachers that can achieve instructional effectiveness in the delivery of social studies instruction. These teachers should be trained in the use of diverse pedagogies, integration of knowledge, information technology in order to meet up with the global communication technologies in teaching social studies reduce the potentials of student in coming face to face with societal challenges.

#### **3. Support in funding social studies education**

The issue of funding social studies education will enhance its curriculum implementation. Since social studies is a sub-set of the nation's education, it is pertinent for the government and spirited individuals to rise up and support in the area of funding researches in the social studies education.

## **Methodology**

The study was under taken using the following methods.

### **Design of the study**

The design adopted for this study is a description survey design, which aimed at investigating the extent of social studies curriculum implementation among universities in the south-south geo – political zone. According to Ofo (2001) descriptive survey design makes it possible for a study to assess people’s opinion towards situation such as events, procedures or organizations.

### **Population of the study**

The population of the study consists of all social studies lecturers in the federal Universities in the south-south geo-political zone in Nigeria. The population is estimated to be 178 (Field survey 2016).

### **Sample and sampling technique**

The sample size of the study is 98 respondents comprises of 60 males and 38 females selected through purposive and random sampling technique.

### **Instrumentation**

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled, “Social Studies Curriculum Implementation for Sustainable National Development Questionnaire (SSCISNDQ)” which was designed to answer the two research questions.

### **Validation of the instrument**

The instrument was validated by the social studies experts and one expert in measurement and evaluation. In this respect, weak items were rephrased or totally dropped to enhance qualitative evaluation.

### **Reliability of Instrument**

The reliability of the instrument was established through a test retest method. A pilot study was carried out on social studies lecturers from the state universities within the south-south geo-political zone who were not target of the study. After an interval of two weeks the same respondents were used and the result showed a positive reliability index of 0.92 meaning that the instrument was reliable for the study.

### **Administration of Instrument**

The copies of the instrument SSCINDQ were distributed personally by the researcher with help of a trained field assistant who is also a graduate of social studies. The exercise yielded a 100% retrieval of administered questionnaires.

### **Method of Data Analysis**



Data generated for the study was analysed using descriptive statistics.

**Results and Discussion of Findings**

The results and findings are provided accordingly. Data generated to provide answer to research question 1 and 2 were subjected to mean analysis and the results are presented as follows:

**Table 1: Demographic Status of Respondents**

Variable	Respondents	Percentage
Male	60	61.2
Female	38	38.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 2: Academic Qualification(s) of Respondents**

Variable	Respondents	Percentage
ME.d/MSc	18	18.4
Ph.D	80	81.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 and 2 above showed the demographic status of the respondents. It further revealed that 60 respondents representing 61.2 percentages were males while 38 respondents representing 38.8 percentages were females. Similarly, 18 respondents representing 18.4% holds master degree in social studies education while 80 respondents representing 81.6% holds Doctors of Philosophy PhD in social studies.

Data generated to provide answer to research questions 1 and 2 are subjected to simple percent analysis and the result presented in table 3 and 4 below.

**Table 3**

To what extent have universities in the south- south geo-political zone implemented social studies curriculum for sustainable national development? Please indicate by ticking the appropriate rating scale to which your school have implemented social studies curriculum in line with sustainable national development.

S/N	STATEMENT	25%	50%	75%	100%
1	Provision of facilities and adequate resource centers.	53(54.1)	20(20.4)	7(7.1)	18(18.4)
2	Recruitment of adequate number of experts.	8(8.2)	10(10.2)	20(20.4)	60(61.2)
3	Provision of accurate/adequate lectures halls and theaters	48(49.1)	22(22.4)	12(12.2)	16(16.3)
4	Provision of adequate ICT equipment	45(45.9)	25(25.5)	20(20.4)	8(8.2)

The result presented in table 3 revealed that in item 1, 53 respondents representing 55.4% out of 98 respondents responded that the provision of the facilities and resources centers for social studies programme in their various universities were 25% inadequate, while in item 2, 60 respondents out of 98 representing 61.2% responded that the recruitment of adequate number of social studies experts in their respective universities was 100% adequate. In item 3, 48 respondents out of 98 respondents representing 49.1% responded that the provision of lecture halls and theaters for social studies programme was 25% inadequate and lastly, in item 4, 45 respondents out of 98 respondents representing 45.9% responded that the provision or adequate ICT equipment for social studies programme was 25% inadequate.

**Table 4**

To what extent have universities in south-south geo-political zone aligned social studies curriculum with sustainable national development goals? Please indicate by ticking the appropriate rating scale to which your school have aligned studies curriculum with sustainable national development.

S/N	STATEMENT	25%	50%	75%	100%
1	Adequate contents	8(8.2)	10(10.2)	15(15.3)	65(66.3)
2	Adequate teaching methods strategies	6(6.1)	12(12.2)	20(20.4)	60(61.2)
3	Instrumental Materials/resource	64(65.3)	20(20.4)	13(13.3)	1(1.0)
4	Admission Policy	1(1.0)	2(2.0)	25(25.5)	70(71.4)

The result in table 4 revealed that item 1 and 65 respondents representing 66.3% out of 98 respondents indicating that the content of social studies curriculum is adequate and in line with sustainable national development goals. In item 2, 60 respondents representing 61.2% equally indicated that teaching methods. Strategies are adequate. In item 3, 64 respondents representing 63.3% were of opinion that instructional materials and other teaching resources was inadequate, while in item 4, 70 respondents representing 71.4% indicated that the admission policy of their various universities were in line with sustainable national development.

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this paper are not palatable in views of the rationale behind the implementation of social studies curriculum in line with the sustainable national development. Looking at the implementation index of adequate facilities and resource centers, recruitment of adequate experts, sufficient lecture halls and adequate ICT equipment, majority of the respondents were of opinion that these facilities were grossly inadequate indicate low provision of facilities and inadequate resources centers, 48 out of 98 respondents on the other hand also indicated that ICT equipment were inadequate in their schools. 60 respondents out of 98 were also of the opinion recruitment of experts to teach social studies were adequate and in line with sustainable national development goals. On the alignment of social studies curriculum with sustainable national

development goals, it was also observed from the study that social studies contents, teaching method as well as strategies and admission policy were adequately aligned with sustainable national development goals, while provision of instrumental materials and resources were grossly inadequate.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has discussed among others the implantation and alignment of social studies curriculum for sustainable national development. The paper also unveils the critical nexus in the implementation of social studies curriculum. These critical nexuses include the challenges of social studies derivation and its contents delivery, the challenges of the curriculum funding, exclusion of social studies in the senior secondary school level.

This paper concludes that the implementation of social studies curriculum in the areas of provision of facilities and adequate resource centers, adequate lecture halls and theatres, provision of adequate ICT equipment by the universities in the south-south geo-political zone are not in line with sustainable national development goals. While adequate social studies contents, teaching method/strategies and admission policy are aligned with sustainable national development goals.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the conclusion drawn in paper and resource letters recommendations are made:

1. The University authorities should provide adequate learning facilities and resource centers for teaching and learning of social studies.
2. Accurate and sufficient lecture halls and theatre should be provided to enhance social studies programme
3. Adequate ICT equipment and other relevance instructional materials should be provided to align with sustainable national development goals.

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