

EMERGING ISSUES IN SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM OF JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL IN OSUN STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study appraised emerging issues in social studies curriculum of Junior Secondary schools (JSS) owned by Osun State government. The paper examined the opinions of students about the concepts, the level of students' awareness and identified the methods and strategies employed in the teaching/learning of emerging issues in Social Studies Curriculum. The sample consisted of 227 students randomly selected from 6 Local Government Areas of Osun State. The subjects were selected using systematic random sampling techniques. The research instrument used was a self-designed questionnaire titled: Students' Appraisal of Social Studies Curriculum Questionnaire (SASSCO). Data collection was done by the researcher. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics. Result revealed that the students were aware of the contents/ topics of emerging issues in the Social Studies curriculum and as its being implemented in all the Junior Secondary Schools. It was found that the efficacy of different methods or strategies being employed by the teachers in implementing facts and ideas in the JSS varied from one school to another. Based on the findings, it was recommended that efforts should be made by curriculum developers, government and educational agencies not to employ just any teacher rather than Social Studies experts to teach the subject.

Introduction

Change is an inevitable aspect of human life. Thus, every new day confronts us with new challenges in every complex world. As observed by Akinlaye, F. A. Mansaray, A. and Ajiboye, J. O. (1996), human being's life is a series of confrontation, with oneself, with other people, with social institutions, and with the environment. Education is a

potent instrument for reducing this complexity within which human beings have found themselves. This implies that education should be able to equip people with the mechanism of dealing with the newly emerging dilemmas for themselves as individuals and the society as a corporate entity.

From the foregoing, it could be argued that because of the complexities in the environment, learners today need a unique

and peculiar type of education that will enable them to participate effectively in life (Ajiboye, 2009). Social Studies as a school subject stands out as one of the subjects in the school curriculum that could help human beings to achieve this aspiration. As noted by Ajiboye (2010), the nature and scope of Social Studies as a dynamic discipline allows for the incorporation of the emerging complex issues in the society. This dynamism in Social Studies is reflected in its capacity to absorb new and emerging issues in the society.

Social Studies students should be helped to construct a personal perspective that enables them to explore emerging events and persistent or recurring issues, considering implications for self, family and the whole national and world community. The teaching of Social Studies at the Junior Secondary education should take into consideration societal needs within the educational system. It also has to incorporate many of the emerging or contemporary issues of local and global concern.

Fadeiye (2005) defines contemporary issues as issues of much concern to the society. He stresses that, they are very crucial to the public and should be attended to in order to promote meaningful existence in the society.

Emerging issues

These are the contemporary problems in our society such as drug abuse, child/women trafficking, family life education, HIV/AIDS, gender issues, cultism, poverty, peace and conflict issues,

youth unemployment, Nigerian people and their cultures, youth restiveness, environmental issues, the mass media and globalisation.

Fageyinbo (2004) defines cultism as the practice of being a member of a cult cultism is the practice of being a member of an illegal union or association. It is an age long practice in ancient societies. It is an unalloyed devotion to a set of beliefs and practices usually shrouded in secrecy and restricted to the initiated members only. Since 1960s when it has been operational many secret cult groups had become established on our campuses. Even secondary schools are now unsafe for students, teachers and lecturers, as cultists embark on rampage, using riffles and other deadly weapons on their victims and at time pour acid on them.

HIV/AIDS was first diagnosed in 1981 (encyclopedia Americana) and no total cure has been found for it. Over 70 percent of those infected are in Africa. According to Nwana (2002), AIDS was identified in Nigeria in 1986, United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS, (UNAIDS). In 1999 it was estimated that above 2.7million people were living with AIDS in Nigeria, out of which 250,000 died within the same year. Not less than 60% of those infected are young men and women aged between 15-24years.

Women and children trafficking, from time immemorial has been in operation all over the world. In traditional African society, slavery was practiced and slavery was part of African system. In 1833, slave trade was

abolished throughout the British Empire and throughout the world. In Nigeria today, women and children are transported legally to other parts of the world, to be engaged in prostitution (as they are made sex hawkers) as domestic servants and doing other menial jobs. Fadeyiye (2008) refers to human trafficking as the illegal movement of people from one place to another or from one country to another usually for nefarious activities such as sexual exploitation or prostitution, forced labour and other wholesome activities.

Drug related crimes emerged as a major problem in Nigeria in the 1980's. But in recent years, drug trafficking has expanded at an alarming rate. Nigeria has become a notable transshipment country for large quantities, of cocaine and heroine from South American and Asia to Europe and other African countries.

Drug abuse has taken a worrisome dimension in our society with serious consequences in homes, schools and communities. It is a social problem mostly connected to youths or which has started in the youthful stages of life to chronic levels in adulthood. Drug abuse refers to the misuse of drugs or the indiscriminate use of it also means taking drugs unnecessarily without the recommendation or prescription of the doctor. Many of the people involved in it are into violent crimes like kidnapping, armed robbery, assassinations, rape and so on. Thus they pose serious threat to the security live and properties of both the present and future generations.

The government of Nigeria, through NDLEA (National Drug Law Enforcement agency) and NAFDAC (National Agency for Food and Drug Administration) have been making concerted efforts to curtail use of fake drugs, drug abuse and drug trafficking in Nigeria, the incidence of drug abuse has not reduced. Therefore, there is the need for an education programme that will prevent it rather than an agency that controls it. Webster-Stratton (1998) quoted by the National Institute of Drug abuse (NIDA) (2010) argues that a prevention programme can be designed to intervene as early as pre-school to address risk factors for drug abuse, such as aggressive behaviour, poor social skills and academic difficulties. NIDA (2010) advocates a prevention programme that focuses on learners; social skills and academic skills, including enhance peer relationships, self control, coping skills, social behaviour and drug refusal skills drug abuse education should be organised to correct learners; misconception about drug abuse, and strengthen protective factors including positive decision-making and commitment.

The issue of poverty alleviation is more about the parents and wider social constituency of primary and Junior Secondary education. This phenomenon impacts greatly on schooling particularly at Junior Secondary Schools. Owing to poverty, parents cannot afford to buy school uniforms, books, pay transportation cost and even provide good nutrition for their children. These impair both teaching and

learning, the school management should find a way of assisting students within the national framework of poverty alleviation scheme. Although, some states have already introduced free mid-day meal service to primary schools with the hope of extending same to Junior Secondary Schools.

A similar issue which could also impact seriously on junior education is that the teaching of emerging issues contents awareness has been included in Social Studies programme on the school curriculum for both learners, teachers and even parents.

Purpose of the study

Purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which the contents of emerging issues on the academic performance of Junior Secondary Schools Social Studies (JSS) in Osun State. It is therefore the concern of this paper to find out whether these students actually understand or are aware of what constitute emerging issues in Social Studies curriculum. And if the findings are negative, there will be the need to find out the factors responsible because Social Studies have been used as a career subject integrating most emerging issues across the globe. The following research questions were asked to guide the study.

1. What are the opinions of students about the emerging issues?
2. What are the emerging issues contents taught by the teachers?
3. What are the methods/strategies being employed in the

teaching/learning of the emerging issues?

Methodology

The study adopted survey design to determine whether the teaching and learning of emerging issues in Social Studies curriculum have been implemented in Junior Secondary Schools in Osun State. Also, to determine the methods and strategies been employed to teach the emerging issues. *The sample consisted of 227 students randomly selected from 6 Local Government Areas of Osun State. The subjects were selected using systematic random sampling techniques. The research instrument used was a self-designed questionnaire titled: Students' Appraisal of Social Studies Curriculum Questionnaire (SASSCQ). It contains five sections; Section A: Personal data, and to know how often teachers carried out some activities in the classroom; Section B: Consists of students' perception on emerging issues in Social Studies Curriculum; Section C: Topics/Contents of emerging issues that the teacher taught the students; Section D: The students' are expected to indicate how often their teachers use some methods to teach emerging issues; Section E: Facilities and materials available in the schools for the teaching/ learning of emerging issues contents. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire. Data collection was done by the researcher. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics. Frequency counting, mean, simple percentage and standard deviation were used*

as shown in the table below.

opinions of students about emerging issues in social studies curriculum in Osun State are presented in table 1.

Findings and discussion

Research question 1: What are the opinions of students on emerging issues?

The perception and rating of the

Table 1: Perception of students' awareness of emerging issues

STATEMENT	S	%	A	%	D	%	S	%	ME	S
	A						D		AN	D
The content of emerging issues are too wide	4	1.8	6	2.6	14	61.	7	33.	3.28	.60
Teaching/learning emerging issues is very interesting	1 2	5.3	2 8	12. 3	10 0	44. 1	8 7	38. 3	3.15	.84
The teaching/learning emerging issues gives me a lot of satisfaction	1 0	4.4	2 2	9.7	12 4	54. 6	7 1	31. 3	3.13	.76
I like the emerging issues aspect of social studies curriculum	1 3	5.7	2 6	11. 5	11 0	48. 5	7 8	34. 4	3.11	.82
At times learning emerging issues bores me	8 1	35. 7	4 8	21. 1	62	27. 3	3 6	15. 9	2.23	1.1 0
There are no adequate and available textbooks for the teaching/learning of emerging issues contents	8 4	37. 0	5 3	23. 3	53	23. 3	3 7	16. 3	2.19	1.1 1

Table 1 shows the mean score is 3.28, the SD is .60. This implies that few students agreed with the opinion that the contents of emerging issues are too wide, which is the most homogenous while majority of students agreed with the opinion, that there are no adequate and available textbooks for the teaching and learning of emerging issues

content, the mean score is 2.19 and SD is 1.11, this means it is heterogeneous.

Research question 2: What are the emerging issues contents taught by the teachersE

The contents of emerging issues taught by the teachers as perceived by the students are present in table 2.

Table 2: The perception and rating of the contents on emerging issues taught by the teachers.

CONTENTS OF EMERGING ISSUES	YES	%	NO	%	MEAN	SD
Youth restiveness	69	30.0	159	70.0	1.70	.46
Youth unemployment	83	36.6	114	63.4	1.63	.48
Global co-operation	93	41.0	134	59.0	1.59	.49
Child/women trafficking	114	50.2	113	49.8	1.50	.50
Gender issues	120	52.9	107	47.1	1.47	.50
Peace and conflicts issues	152	67.0	75	33.0	1.33	.47
Environmental issues	152	67.0	75	33.0	1.33	.47
Family life education	173	76.2	54	23.8	1.24	.43
Cultism	180	79.3	47	20.7	1.21	.41
Poverty	188	82.8	39	17.2	1.17	.38
HIV/AIDS prevention education	202	89.0	25	11.0	1.11	.31
Drug abuse	207	91.2	20	8.8	1.09	.28

Table 2 shows students' perception and rating of the contents on emerging issues taught by the teachers in social studies curriculum of Junior Secondary Schools in Osun State with the above analysis and results, one can say that the content youth restiveness has a mean score of 1.70 and SD is .46, the content could be said to be homogenous while drug abuse, with a mean

score of 1.09 and SD is .28 is heterogeneous.

Research question 3: What are the methods or strategies being employed in the teaching/learning of emerging issues? The perception of students on the methods and techniques being employed in the teaching/learning of emerging issues are present in table 3.

Table 3: The perception and rating on the methods/techniques being employed by the teachers in teaching/learning of emerging issues as perceived by the students.

METHODS/TECHNIQUES	OFTE N	%	RARE LY	%	NEVER	%	MEAN	SD
Discussion method	39	17.2	39	17.2	149	65.6	2.48	.77
Story telling method	25	11.0	89	39.2	113	49.8	2.39	.68
Students activities	53	23.3	60	26.4	114	50.2	2.27	.82
Debate	24	10.6	126	55.5	77	33.9	2.23	.63
Questioning techniques	53	23.3	70	30.8	104	45.8	2.22	.80
Dramatization	40	17.6	113	49.8	74	32.6	2.15	.69
Role play method	83	36.6	88	38.8	56	24.7	1.88	.78
Radio/television jingles	113	49.8	61	26.9	53	23.3	1.74	.82
Listening to radio jingles	121	53.3	67	29.5	39	17.2	1.64	.76
Excursion/field trip	138	60.8	38	16.7	51	22.5	1.62	.83
Television programme/documentaries	151	66.5	47	20.7	29	12.8	1.46	.71

Table 3 shows students rating of the teachers' performance in the various methods/techniques. Students are said to perceive fairly in discussion and storytelling methods. The two methods have mean scores of 2.48, 2.39 respectively and a standard deviation of .77, .68 each. Students' perception is average in student's activities, debate, questioning techniques, and dramatization. Satisfactory perception of students is in role play method, radio/television jingles, listening to radio jingles and excursion/field trip techniques mean score of 1.88, 1.74 1.64 and 1.62 respectively. No poor perception of student in any method or technique.

Conclusion

Based on the outcome of this study and their corresponding discussions, there seems to be high level of awareness of emerging issues by the students just as teachers taught them almost aspect of the contents. The teacher should always engage the students to watch television programmes or documentaries on emerging issues and to invite an expert as guest speakers to handle topic or content that cannot be taught by the teacher.

It is concluded that the emerging issues teaching/learning in schools may become a mirage if their implementation is placed in the hands of unqualified and inexperienced teachers. The practice of assigning just anybody to teach Social Studies should be stopped.

Recommendations

There is need for the teachers to use a variety of teaching methods in disseminating their facts and ideas to students on emerging issues, through creation of awareness programmes on the school curriculum for both learners, teachers and even parents. Experts could be invited to assist in enlightening the school community on how to combat the spreading of issues like youth restiveness, drug abuse, cultism, poverty and HIV/AIDS and so on.

There should be adequate financial allocations for the purchase of instructional materials that will boost the morale of teachers in the teaching of emerging issues and students are to be encouraged by the teachers when teaching them.

There is also the need for school authorities to increase the periods allotted to Social Studies per week so that the bulk of these emerging issues topics or contents will be covered before the commencement of examination.

Ministry of Education should try as much as possible to provide and ensure the availability and use of some basic resources in schools for social studies such as facilities and equipments like television, radio, film chips or video, audio recorder, filmstrip, projector, computer and so on to teaching emerging issues topics or contents.

Social Studies professional workshops and seminars should be organised by stakeholders, schools and

Social Studies association at both local and state levels for teachers during sessions and long vacation, that would enable them to interact with their colleagues from other schools and in the process raise and discuss issues connected with effective teaching and utilisation of teaching methods and techniques on emerging issues.

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