

National Aspirations: Preparing the Effective Citizens in Botswana and Nigeria

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(Received: 17-5-13 / Accepted: 28-6-13)

Abstract

The main purpose of education is the production of effective citizens who would be able to contribute their quotas to international, national and local developments. To this end, nations have goals or aspirations in form of national principles and visions. Botswana and Nigeria are not left out of countries aspiring to better the lives of their citizens through the formulation and implementations of those principles and visions, in the continuous attempts to make their peoples function effectively in their respective democracy. This paper discusses the national principles and visions of the two countries and identifies the predominant method of instruction in schools and its associated problems militating against the achievement of the national dreams in the two countries. Finally, some pertinent recommendations were made.

Keywords: National principles, visions, Botswana, Nigeria, Citizens, Instructional Method.

1. Introduction

To educators in Africa, social studies is an American 'invention' imported into the continent to make education more relevant to the needs and aspiration of the people. Solely, it is regarded as a tool for the production of citizens who would be able to contribute to the social, psychological, political, technological and economic development of their nations and to the global society at large. It is designed to prepare the overall citizen who would be effective and efficient in the day to day activities of his or her local and global environments.

Social Studies Education in the modern sense is a transnational subject. Although American in origin, it is spoken in many languages. It is interpreted as a type of citizenship education with a strong dose of ethical training for character and the overall development of citizens. Pedagogical programmes, generally unsuitable to meet the needs and aspirations of the youth and the society at large were designed by the British Colonial Office for implementation in the colonies (Akinlaye, 1981; Adeyemi and Adeyinka, 2003). Since independence, efforts have been made to redefine educational goals and values to suit the contexts in Botswana and Nigeria. Some of these efforts have been to use social studies to prepare effective citizens who possess the knowledge, attitudes and skills to participate in the national and international arenas. To this end, the main objective of this paper is to highlight the trend of how social studies is being used as a tool in Botswana and Nigeria to prepare the effective citizens for participation in democracies.

1.1 Objectives of this Paper

This paper is therefore premised on:

1. Discussing the national principles and visions of Botswana and Nigeria in the effort to prepare effective citizens;
2. Identifying the predominant method of instructional delivery and its associated problem militating against the achievement of the visions of the two nations; and
3. Making pertinent recommendations.

1.2 The Case of Botswana and Nigeria in Preparing Effective Citizens for the Local and Global Contexts

Of all the seventeen African countries where social studies was introduced in Africa: Botswana, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zambia, The Gambia, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Liberia, Somalia, Sudan, Malawi, Swaziland and Zimbabwe, the choice of Botswana and Nigeria is deliberate. They share the same colonial experience having been under British rule in the colonial era. Therefore, their school curricula were influenced by the British school curriculum and examination systems. Another reason is that the author is conversant with both the Nigerian and Botswana education systems; having trained in Nigeria and worked in both countries as a Social studies teacher and expert for many years. Further, the author also studied in the American school system; from where Social Studies was introduced into Africa.

To avoid a lengthy write-up, the pedagogy of social studies as a tool for the preparation of effective citizens in the two countries is limited to junior secondary schools in both countries. By effective citizen, the individual should be able to contribute his/her quota to the overall development in a democracy. As stated earlier, arising from the Mombasa Accord of 1968, African countries started to embrace Social Studies into their various curricula. Aside from other African countries, notable conferences were held in Botswana and Nigeria to make education more appropriate to the yearnings and needs of the citizens of the two countries, particularly in the teaching of national values or principles. In Botswana, Mautle (2000) highlighted how in 1969, the Primary School Syllabus Committee was constituted and charged with the task of producing an appropriate primary school curriculum. In the same year, a national curriculum conference attended by representatives of parents, workers, youth clubs, farmers, business men and women and other social groups was held in Nigeria to deliberate on the type of education suited to the needs of the country. The proceedings of this important meeting were published in a book entitled, *A Philosophy of Nigerian Education* (Adaralegbe, 1972).

2.0 National Principles of Botswana and Nigeria

Following their independence from Britain, Botswana and Nigeria have had education sector reviews with a view to making their education relevant to their local and global contexts. Subsequent to the reviews, educational policies were developed. The policies preach values that can contribute to the development of the effective citizens.

2.1 In Botswana, two education policies, the *National Policy on Education* (Republic of Botswana, 1977), and the *Revised National Policy on Education* (Republic of Botswana, 1994) were formulated from the reviews to make the education system relevant and fulfil its aim of improving lives. The Report of the Botswana's National Commission on Education, otherwise known as *Education for Kagisano* (Republic of Botswana, 1977: 24) spells out the four national principles that form the basis for education as:

- Democracy;
- Development;
- Self-reliance; and
- Unity.

2.2 By the same token, Nigeria has also produced the *National Policy on Education* (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1977), the *Revised National Policy on Education* (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1981, 1991). The following principles/objectives form the basis for education in Nigeria: The building of

- A free and democratic society;
- A just and egalitarian society;
- A united, strong and self-reliant nation;
- A great and dynamic economy; and
- A land of bright and full opportunities for all (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1981: 7).

A closer look at the values of the two countries reveals that they are very similar.

2.3 Vision 2016 in Botswana and Vision 2020 in Nigeria

Each one of the two countries has a national vision. Apart from the national values enunciated in the principles, there are also implications for the global society. In Botswana, *Vision 2016* envisions the effective preparation of students for life, citizenship and the world of work. Such an individual will have *botho*. In other words, the individual will be well-rounded, well-mannered, courteous and disciplined as well as realise his or her full potential both as an individual and as a part of the community to which he or she belongs (Presidential Task Group, 1997: 2). The value of *botho* has profound implications for teacher education programmes and Social Studies pedagogy in the country. *Vision 2016* in Botswana talks of an education that would promote seven pillars or values such as:

- An educated, informed nation;
- A prosperous, productive and innovative nation;
- A compassionate, just and caring nation;
- A safe and secure nation;
- A moral and tolerant nation;
- An open, democratic and accountable nation;
- A united and proud nation (Presidential Task Group, 1997: 5-12).

Nigeria's *Vision 2020* also referred to as *20:2020* envisages a country that will be amongst the twenty (20) largest economies in the world by the year 2020. Additionally, Nigeria will be able to consolidate its leadership role in Africa and establish itself as a significant player in the global and political arena. The vision has seven parameters:

- A peaceful, harmonious and a stable democracy;
- A sound, stable and globally competitive economy;
- Adequate infrastructure services;
- A modern and vibrant education system;
- A health sector that supports and sustains a life expectancy of not less than 70 years;
- A modern agricultural sector; and
- A vibrant and globally competitive manufacturing sector (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2008: 2).

From the afore-going, it is apparent that the role of schools in the realisation of the dreams listed above cannot be over-emphasised. Therefore, what is it that is happening in the classroom settings in the two countries regarding classroom practices at the junior secondary level? There are many areas of concern but the main focus here is on the methodology of teaching and learning at the junior secondary level in the two countries.

3.0 Method of Instructional Delivery in Social Studies

As earlier noted, there are other areas of concern in social studies in the two countries such as the preparation of pre-service and in-service teachers, instructional materials and problems dealing with evaluation of objectives, problems dealing with methodology of teaching are receiving attention in the two countries.

The resolution of the Mombasa conference to employ the learner-centred approach in teaching and learning Social Studies was meant to make students active rather than passive in the learning process, a situation that would enhance democratic practices at the classroom level. This is a paradigm shift from teaching students through the authoritarian and rote memorisation to the learner-centred pedagogy. For that reason, teacher education in Botswana and Nigeria implies the need for the training of reflective Social Studies teachers who can help students in the classroom settings to use knowledge by employing data.

An aspect of the *Long-Term Vision for Botswana* (Vision 2016) is the building of an educated and informed nation. For this to materialise, teacher education in Botswana must, as theorised by Dewey (1933) and Schon (1987), aim to develop the art of inquiry and decision making amongst citizens). *Vision 2020* in Nigeria also proposes the production of literate citizenry who will move the country forward to become one of the leading economies in the world. An instructional model for reflective inquiry draws on the ability of students to search out and discover knowledge. This discourages expository styles that focus on telling, memorising, and recalling of information.

However, various studies (Adeyemi 1998, 2001, 2003, 2008b) indicate a gap in the mode of instructional delivery in Botswana and Nigeria. In spite of the call for a paradigm shift from the banking of knowledge to the learner-centred education pedagogy, studies have revealed that there is a gap between the ideal and the real in the teaching-learning process.

As ideal as the learner-centred pedagogical practices are and encouraged by various documents, evidence suggests that the prevailing mode of teaching is the transmission of knowledge at various levels of education. Adeyemi (2003, 2006) found that Social Studies teachers in Botswana and Nigeria perceived their teaching as democratic and often use the inquiry approach to teach Social Studies topics. The mean percentage scores of their perceived performances in the classroom were 89% for Botswana and 90% for Nigeria. These mean percentage scores for their perceived performances were very high for the Social Studies teachers in both countries. Because beauty is perceived in the eyes of the beholder, Adeyemi (2002, 2003) then observed samples of Social Studies teachers in both countries in their classrooms and arrived at a slightly low to moderate relationships (Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients of 0.44 and 0.46) between the perceptions and the real classroom teaching performances for the two countries respectively.

At this point, it is necessary to recognize the context in which Social Studies teachers in Botswana and Nigeria operate. Teacher education in Botswana and Nigeria faces great challenges. More often than not, Adeyemi (2003, 2005) found that the Social Studies teachers in the two countries assume authority in the classroom and use such strategies as memorisation, recitation and regurgitation of facts and figures in the classrooms. Some of the innovations to help problem solving activities at the junior secondary level in Botswana and

Nigeria such as the project method, field work, and group work have not worked effectively. The progressive way of making students learn by way of problem solving, which is often talked about at Social Studies seminars, workshops and conferences still remain elusive.

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter has traced the origin and the potentials of Social Studies as pedagogically used for preparing future generations with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will make them cope with rapid change in the society. In doing so, two countries were identified for discussion.

In view of the problems militating against the use of appropriate methods of teaching social studies, the following recommendations:

4.1 Improvement in the Methodology of Teaching Social Studies

While the African Social Studies and Environmental Programme (ASSEP) has adopted the problem solving approach to teaching and learning of Social Studies, its use has been found to be idealistic rather than realistic. Efforts should therefore be geared toward the review of teacher education programmes in the two countries to further equip would-be and practising teachers with the wherewithal to deal with the proper use of the problem solving approach in their classrooms. Further, our teacher education programmes should take cognisance of the tension between the local cultures of African countries and the Western world. Teaching about a topic which requires the use of the inquiry approach should take into consideration the cultural norms of the African environments. I suggest the use of African traditional educators in the form of chiefs, ward heads, story tellers, local historians, and other custodians of traditional knowledge to help bridge the gap between African traditional education and modern education (Adeyemi, 2008a).

4.2 Production of Qualified Social Studies Teachers

Invariably, Social Studies teachers in Botswana and Nigeria should be trained to be excellent curriculum developers and designers who can keep abreast of current issues. Both the pre-service and the in-service education should equip the Social Studies teachers with the skills of curriculum development, in addition to other essential skills to enable them to teach relevant content to their learners. A crucial factor in achieving quality education at any level is the teacher. The saying; 'like teacher, like students' is applicable to the relationship between the quality of the teacher and the quality of his/her products. If the teachers are 'half-baked', then their products would be of poor quality. It thus becomes imperative for teachers in Botswana and Nigeria to demonstrate high quality knowledge, skills and attitudes in Social Studies content, method of instructional delivery, use of educational technology, and an awareness of global education, among others, in order to achieve the value statements of Botswana's *Vision 2016* and Nigeria's *Vision 2020*.

4.3 The Use of Relevant Materials and Modern Technology in Social Studies

Evidence suggests that instructional materials based on the interdisciplinary approach and inquiry method are few. Many of these materials are based on foreign concepts and examples. The use of soft and hardware to enhance classroom teaching should be taken into consideration. While it is difficult for governments and communities to supply the much-needed equipment to schools, Social Studies teachers should also, where possible, improvise with the use of local materials to teach content to anxious learners.

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