

The Role of Social Studies Education towards Re-Invention of Values and Leadership in Northern Nigeria

Tata Umar Sa'ad¹, Shu'aibu Adamu Mohammed², Yalwaji Shehu³

School of Undergraduate Studies (Affiliated to the University of Maiduguri) College of Education, Azare Bauchi State, Nigeria

Social Studies Department College of Education, Azare Bauchi State, Nigeria

Psychology Department School of Education College of Education, Azare Bauchi State, Nigeria

Abstract: *Nigeria is country of great contradictions. The country is endowed rich, but its people are poor. It also has a vastly fertile land, yet it depends on foreign food supply. Nigeria also has a lot of intellectuals of international reputation, but much of its population is illiterate. It also has abundant resources to produce everything, yet, it depends much on imports. It is one of the most populous countries in the world, but its people are yet to manage themselves for the common good for all. Many of these contradictions go on; much of it blamed on poor value and leadership systems. This review focuses on the most common values in Northern Nigeria and their impacts on leadership in the area. It also explore the role of social studies education towards re-inventing these common values and leadership systems with the aim of repositioning these values and leadership systems in order to confront the most common challenges facing Northern Nigeria today in particular and country in general.*

Key words: *Social Studies Education, Values, Leadership, Northern Nigeria.*

I. Introduction

Nigeria came into existence in 1914 after the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates. Prior to this amalgamation, each part of the country was uniquely separate in terms of land areas, administration, justice, politics, cultures, religious and experiences. But with the conquest and domination of these two separate areas by the colonial powers (British), some abrupt changes were introduced, leading to several other changes in various spheres of their development. However, the amalgamation in 1914 was made with the prime purpose of creating and administering one large country called Nigeria, both for their administrative convenience and to reduce the cost of the operations. In keeping with these aspirations and through their educational system and value orientation, they attempted to move the entire country both North and South towards one larger colonial state with the Westminster model (Yahaya, 1980).

Consequence to this amalgamation, Northern areas became part of a greater Nigeria. But the North of the country have had a history of itself, with a defined cultural, religious, social, political, economic and educational systems already firmly established. The geographical location of the North enabled it with early contacts with the Arab culture and religion (Islam), making the area predominantly Muslims. This suggested that the North have certain distinct cultural, values and leadership systems highly organized and dispensed throughout the jurisdiction of this great part of the country, before colonial adventures (Tukur, 1999).

However, many contacts with the outside world and its diverse cultural settings of various societies posed great threats of not only preserving their well established values and virtues but also of protecting them. This further pointed out that the early contacts the North and with emphasis to the introduction of colonial administration in the area, the sustained core values and leadership systems of the area was adversely affected by these changes (Dauda, 2002).

This paper examines the common values of the North, the impacts of these core values on effective leadership and the role social studies education is expected to play in bringing back the lost glory of the North in terms of the leadership challenges in the area and Nigeria as a whole.

II. Conceptual Framework

Values and leadership are undisputedly joined together as their relationship seems to be very strong in every society including Nigeria. The relationship is such that one depended on the other for prosperity and progress of the society.

The geo-political entity called Northern Nigeria has peculiarly distinct values inherent among its communities, whether this community is said to be Christian or Muslim dominated. These distinct values inherent in this part of Nigeria existed before colonial adventures. They equally set the standards and ideals

required of the behavior of its people, hence the conditions necessary of acquiring leadership roles or positions (Tukur, 1999).

By 1903, what came to be known as Northern Nigeria, though largely Islamized and under the Sokoto caliphate, still contained sizeable population of diverse cultures and religious beliefs. With the conquest of the North by the British colonial masters, there was equally a slowing down of Islamization in the North while there was also an introduction and intensification of Christianity by the large number of missionaries who succeeded in concerting non-Muslim communities of Plateau region, and parts of present Adamawa and the Jukun territory of Wukari (Gbadamosi and Ajayi, 1980 and Dauda, 2002). However, both Islamization and conversion to Christianity went side by side amicably then with limited areas of friction and conflict. Both Muslims and Christians lived side by side in peace and harmony under the Sokoto Caliphate, before, during and somewhat after the colonial era (Yahaya, 1980).

It should also be noted that the people inhabiting the Northern part of Nigeria both Muslims and Christians alike were very much contented and confident of their political personalities who were highly regarded, respected and recognized by the people. The leadership of the North at that time was more organized, purposeful and directed towards uplifting the general living standard, security and interest of its people. Thus, the leadership of the North prior to colonial adventures acted in line with the values and virtues of its people (Dauda, 2000).

Consequently, new political elites emerged from the North who still maintained certain traces of the Northern Islamic and Christian value systems. To the Muslims in the North, Islam had specific code of conduct and guidance to both leaders and followers on how to relate among themselves. For instance, Paden, (1986) reported that:

“Sardauna had developed enormous pride and self confidence in what he presented to his subjects, a blend of the past and future. He was forceful and purposeful in asserting himself in almost everything and every institution; he simply emerged as a national leader. It is a point to note here that Sardauna was a product of both western and Islamic value systems, a devout Muslim who believed in the traditional Northern values”.

Dauda (2000) stated that:

“Sardauna believes that a truly peaceful, stable, prosperous, united and happy Nigerian nation can only be built through an honest, straight forward, frank and realistic assessment and appreciation of historical political, cultural and religious-moral background of the various nationalities which make up what on 1st January, 1914 came to be called Nigeria”.

Paden, (1986) also stated that the Sardauna was a strong proponent of northern nationalism. He emphasized those elements which various northern groups share in common from specific economic interests to cultural and historical connections. Part of the logic of northern nationalism is to provide a counter balance to southern nationalism. Despite many of the sub-nationalisms within the north, there was a sense in which Sardauna was a catalyst for a long process of community consolidation among Northern provinces (Dauda, 2008).

III. Key Issues Related To Values And Leadership In The North

Today, Nigeria as nation particularly the North as a region has woefully failed in its search for the establishment of a viable political system in terms of responsible leadership which emphasis national pride and service delivery to the people of the country. Western democratic models which the Nigerian or Northern elites copied have become cumbersome and meaningless, largely blamed on poor value and leadership systems, especially in the North (Dauda, 2000).

The failure of the Nigerian political experiments since 1960 was largely due to the fact that the country have had bad leaderships in almost all the stages of these experiments, while the system lacked clear purpose and originality. The poverty of leadership which we continue to have in the North results from the complete neglect of knowledge of the core-values cherished in the North as due regards was not accorded to them (Gbadamosi and Ajayi, 1980).

Nigerian society at the present time is in some difficulty, some would say chaos, because of the lack of any consensus on the subject of ideals which Nigerians should seek in their public and private lives. Many authorities take the view that the impact of western imperialism in this country has had the effect of destroying the basic ideals which people here cherished before the coming of Europeans without replacing them with any new ideas which can guide their thoughts and outlook in the future. The Islamic education and culture were well established before the advent of western education and that was the reason the Northern Muslims either rejected or coldly and suspiciously received the western education, which has fundamental ideological incompatibilities

with what they knew (Dauda, 2008). It is therefore, common source of complaint that Nigeria, especially the Northern part lacks an ideology of its own.

It should be added here that the Nine Point Programme of General Yakubu Gowon meant to usher in an “Egalitarian Society” did not go beyond the simple declaration. Other related policies and programmes of the government such as Universal Primary Education 1973, Operation Feed the Nation 1975, Agricultural Development Programme 1980, Structural Adjustment Programme 1986, Health for All by 2015 and so on failed to take the country to greater heights. The reasons for this failure are not far-fetched. First, while the old value system inherited and cherished were sidelined or abandoned, they were replaced by new counter-cultural and irrelevant ethos (Dauda, 2008). Secondly, the entire Northern region and Nigeria as a whole was engulfed in corruption, dishonesty and injustice which made the progress towards establishing a viable political system nearly impossible. It can be said that but for the resilience and endurance of the North towards keeping the country together at almost all the points of disintegration, the nation would have collapsed. Thirdly, and probably the most significant issue, is the absence of any value system that holds the society together for the common good of all its members (Dauda, 2008).

Tukur, (1999) identified the core ideals mostly cherished in the North and shared among other parts of Nigeria as justice, ease and kindness, humility, modesty, integrity, honesty, service to community, neighborliness and brotherhood, faithfulness, truthfulness, fairness, equality, respect, tolerance, diligence, hard work, loyalty and obedience among others that formed the traditional value system in this area. On leadership, he stated “justice” as “the highest frequency score” shown in the above categorization. He further said that “justice means political action in accordance with all the various aspects of the society, both public and private. Consequently, both the value and leadership systems have an important determining role in the workings of a political system predicted upon the conceptualization of justice as a core-value in the area called Northern Nigeria today.

Some Challenges

The absence or near absence of responsible leadership in the North, unlike before, as well as rate of development in both human and material resources taking place in other parts of Nigeria who largely depended on the North in the past is quite enough to serve as a clarion call for people and communities of the North to realize their chances in this greater Nigeria.

It is also worthy to say that it is totally unfair to blame the colonialists for all our failures today, both in the North and Nigeria in general, especially after fifty-five years of political independence. It should also be added that it was Nigerians especially northerners who failed to take their destiny into their own hands by continuing to uphold alien value and leadership systems, hinging much of the pride and aspirations on colonial ethos and value system.

There is no doubt that the colonial masters and their allies both at home and abroad ensured that countries like Nigeria were not left off the hook. They should remain, according to their plan part of and subservient to wider western imperialism and neo-colonialist designs.

Social Studies as a Way-Forward

Various scholars and institutions posit their definition of social studies education, particularly in Nigeria. Nigerian Educational Research Council (NERC, 1980) now referred to as Nigerian Educational and Research Development Council (NERDC) defines it as a way of life and conceptualizing things and issues in their proper places and manner especially as they function in the re-ordering and management of man’s total natural and technological way of life. Akinyele, (1996) in Adamu, (2008) sees it as the study of man in his environment, dealing with man’s interaction in his physical, economic, cultural, religious, scientific and technological environment. Other conceptions refer to social studies as a discipline to taught as citizenship education, an ecological studies, social science, cultural integration, dynamic education and skill development resources. Sunal and Hass, (2002) in Adamu, (2008) observed that social studies as a discipline changes in both scope and content, keeping abreast with changes overtime.

The national goals of social studies education in Nigeria are summed up in the by the FGN, (1981) in the National Policy of Education as thus:

- The inculcation of the right types of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society.
- The training of the mind in understanding the world around us.
- The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences both mental and physical.

The above objectives of social studies education perfectly correspond with the objectives of the Nigeria's education. Therefore, the role of social studies education in re-inventing values and leadership in northern Nigeria and Nigeria as whole cannot be overemphasized. Both, the content, methodology and techniques of teaching social studies education centers around development of positive attitudes and values in the youth as well as imparting the necessary knowledge and skills for future leadership roles at local and national level.

Kazi, (2007) listed the main goals of social studies world over as:

- The values and attitudes to be inculcated in the learners. The social studies programme the world over deals with certain values, attitudes, beliefs, ideals and appreciations of the society examples of these worthwhile values and attitudes are cooperation, loyalty, tolerance, respect, friendliness, patriotism, justice and democracy.
- Acquisition of skills like social, group, intellectual and manipulative.
- Acquisition of understanding and knowledge.
- The development of social studies as a discipline

In addition to that, the objectives of social studies in post primary education in Nigeria as stated by Muhammad, (2008) are as follows:

- To make students aware of the problems of his country and the world in general, to appreciate interdependence among people.
- To create an awareness and understanding of the evolving social and physical environments, its natural, man-made, cultural and spiritual resources, together with the rational use and conservation of these resources for development.
- To develop in students the positive attitudes to citizenship and a desire to make positive personal contribution to the creation of united Nigeria.
- To develop capacity to learn and acquire skills essential to a formation of a satisfactory professional life.
- To develop in the students an appreciation of his cultural and desire to preserve it.

Note that point number 1, 3 and 5 are most suitable for this paper as a point of reference. In fact, social studies education is very relevant in re-inventing values and leadership in northern Nigeria and Nigeria as a whole. FGN, (2013) stated the goals of education in Nigeria as enshrined in the National Policy of Education as:

- Development of the individual into a morally sound, patriotic and effective citizen;
- Total integration of the individual into immediate community, the Nigerian society and the world;
- Provision of equal access to qualitative educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels of education, within and outside the formal school system;
- Inculcation of national consciousness, values and national unity;
- Development of appropriate skills, mental, physical and social abilities and competencies to empower the individual to live in and contribute positively to the society.

Ezema, (2001) in Adamu, (2014) noted that with social studies education, the students are able to:

- Appreciate the diversity and interdependence of members of different communities the world over;
- Appreciate the need for cooperation, justice, fair-play, tolerance, honesty and patience, all of which are indispensable for the well-being, progress and development of every human community.

Thus, social studies education centers on the development of values which are central to the development of responsible and effective leadership not only in the northern part of the country but Nigeria in general.

IV. Conclusion

The current position in which northern Nigeria stand in its corporate existence with other parts of the country, a situation in which the area is seen as burden to those it fed sheltered and clothed, considering the rate of poverty disease, malnutrition, child maternal mortality rates, street begging, poor infrastructures, illiteracy and most recently bombings and killing of innocently productive men and women in the area is more than enough to justify the need to re-invent and re-position our values and leadership systems for the north to reclaim its rightful position in this great country.

V. Recommendation

This paper recommends among other things the following:

- The various communities forming the northern geo-political entity must identify their common ideology for the common good of all and sundry without regard to sectional or ethnic considerations for their corporate existence in the greater Nigeria.

- Both traditional/community, religious and political leaders must steer the cause for redeeming these lost cardinal values which northern Nigeria was known for the progress and development of the region.
- Those in position of authority both locally and nationally should emphasize objectively, purpose, diligence, honesty and brotherhood in the region with emphasis to the northern agenda.
- There is general need to live and lead by utmost examples in both public and private endeavours in line with the established code of conduct of all communities and faiths of the north in particular and Nigeria in general.
- Social studies should be included in the course outline of GST and GSE of undergraduate and NCE respectively to enable all categories of students acquire the necessary importance of it in the area of good values and leadership.

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