



The Nexus between Social Studies and Social Science

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Abstract: *Even though social studies make use of social science disciplines, it has different orientation. The study of social studies should remain an integral part of the educational system at all levels. This study examines the nexus between social studies and social science. It traces their relationships, differences and contributions to education. We utilized interdisciplinary approach in this our study, having regard the nature of the topical issue. We observed that there are differences between social studies an social science, in spite of the fact that both of them deals with the society, but there exist some interrelationship and interconnectivity between them. The study concludes that both of them deals with study of the society, its environment and human behaviours. We conclude that if the social studies and social sciences did not permeate and cooperate with each other in the long run human beings and society would fail to develop smoothly. The study of social studies will also help learners to appreciate their own cultures and other people's culture. It will help the students to have respect for the dignity of man and labour, have understanding of the value of co-operation, and interdependence among communities. However, as a result of the accelerating development of the human capacity to remake the world, people now notice that in re-making the external world one, at the same time, changes oneself. This synchronous phenomenon appears in the social relations between persons, as well as in the powers of human knowledge, the values chosen, the aesthetic needs, etc. Therefore, the natural sciences are internally related to the social sciences*

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1. Introduction

Social Studies is the integrated study of Social Science and humanities to promote effective citizenry. Social Science is the field of sciences concerned with the studies of the social life of human groups and individuals, including economics, geography, history, political science, psychology, social studies, and sociology. This refers to the merit or relevance of social studies questions such as why do we study social studies? How is it different from other social science disciplines or other disciplines? These questions will be answered as we analyses the relevance of social studies to education. Social studies as a distinct discipline creates suitable learning experiences for learners, i.e. interactions between learners and their environments which creates behavioral changes in them. This is what Nwana-Nzenwa and Okoh identifies as problem solving attitude in pupils. What these scholars meant is that the knowledge of social studies would enable pupils to live with mutual understanding in any community they find themselves later in their life. It will also provide learners with understand basic needs and activities in which he engages in order to meet his needs (Nzenwunwa and Okoh 2001:3).

Society is the dimension that a group of persons live together and have business, culture, religion with their proper value. These elements are the fields of social sciences research. So those two units are inseparable because without social sciences, society cannot evolve without society, the social sciences has no reason to be. Society is the dimension that a group of persons live together and have business, culture, religion with their proper value. These elements are the fields of social sciences research. So those two units are inseparable because without social sciences, society cannot evolve without society, the social sciences has no reason to be.

In order to emphasize its interdisciplinary nature, social studies curriculum is usually organized with the use of appropriate social science disciplines. Generally, social problems are not limited to the particular discipline, various discipline need to be brought under focus so that materials from them will be of immense help (Bruce 1972:2810).

It should be noted that problems within any society are not separated from political, economic and social problems. The study of social problems therefore requires interdisciplinary efforts. To get a clearer understanding of this argument, we shall examine the relationship between social studies and some social science courses like geography, history, economics and political science.

History as the study of man and his past activities has contributed to the teaching of social studies. Historical records and information provide the student of social studies with essential information and facts about the past events and social experiences of man which is a prelude decisions. Hence (Udoh, 1984) could say that “the broader the various experiences gained by the student through such guidelines and facts the better prepared would be to make intelligent decisions and conclusions about events of present life”.

Social studies discipline studies the totality of man, how he lives in his environment and how his life is affected by things around him. It is an integrative course that makes use of other disciplines to build its theme. The overall analysis shows that the later disciplinary nature of social studies helps it to provide solution to the prevailing contemporary social problems. The main concern of social studies therefore is to create awareness in man for the events and potentialities of his environment so that he gets himself prepared to utilize them and solve problems.

2. Conceptualization

Akude (1988:11) identifies some concepts that, are generally common to both history and social studies. These includes independence, liberation struggles emancipation (political, economic, social colonization, decolonization and so on). He therefore concluded that if concepts of history and social studies are well taught, that opportunities could be provided for inculcating different kinds of skills and attitudes.

There is also linkage between social studies and economics. For example some economic concepts are very vital tool to the study of social studies. Although, there is no standard or definite definition of economics because most definitions do not cover everything that is being studied in economics. The definition by Robbins L., sees “economics as the science which studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses” (Scruton, 1982:138). This definition seems to agree with BBC English dictionary meaning of economics which defines economics as the study of the way in which money, industry and trade are organized in a society.

These definitions centre on man and how he utilizes his available resources to produce things that could sustain him in life. An economists make use of certain concepts like

interdependence, demand and supply and maximization of profit. Some of these concepts are geared towards economic property which one way or the other affects the morality of man in a negative way. Some of these concepts are hoarding, creation of artificial scarcity, profiteering, inflation or hiking of prices points to social problems which concern social studies.

In all, some economics concepts are useful to social studies. Whether social studies or economics, all human activities are centred on social and physical aspects of our environment. Political science is another discipline that shares common concepts with social studies. Political science is the study of the ways in which power is acquired and used in a country. It concerns itself with political institutions and essential organs of public administration.

The fundamental concepts of political science that social studies absorb authority, leadership, fellowship cooperation conflict resolution and the rest. Other areas of political science such as political integration, political socialization and political recruitment center on man in order to make him functional, socialized and fit in the society. In essence all these processes concern modification, controlment and channeling human life and behaviour and are therefore veritable tools in social studies teaching.

3. Discussion

"Man and Nature" and "Man and Society" seem to concern different problems, yet this is not really so. To a certain extent the problem of the relation between the human being and nature is the problem of that between human beings and society because the social relation among persons is built upon their remaking of nature. Conversely, the relationship which binds human beings to a society gives them ever greater power for the work of remaking Nature. Many conflicts in modern society have arisen from a failure to understand the dialectical relation between 'Man and Nature', on the one hand, and 'Man and Society', on the other. The higher the level of the development of human civilization the more significant the dialectical relation. Hence, the two issues are both same and different. "Dialectical relation" is a very broad term; it is used here with regard to the union of the natural sciences and the social sciences. In dealing with the problem of the union of these two types of sciences, we must first acknowledge the scientific status of social studies, otherwise there could be no question of their return to natural sciences. However, though the problem of this relation has been solved partially, in its essence it remains unsolved. The key to the solution of the problem lies in the relation between subject and object. In sense intuition, the subject stands in absolute opposition to the object; this rules out speaking of the social sciences at the same level as the natural sciences.

However, the object does not simply exclude the subject, but sublates the external independence of the subject, and makes the subject an internal element. For the same reason, the subject does not simply exclude the object, but sublates the external independence of the object which is made an internal element of the subject. The reason the relation between subject and object is so understood is a fundamental feature of human existence. Whereas animals and beings other than humans exist and reproduce by adapting to the external world, human beings exist and develop themselves by remaking the external world. If human activity were not objective, human beings would not differ from animals, or would be reduced to the animal level. Hence Marx noted: "Whatever relation exists, it always exists for me. Animals do not enter into a 'relation' to anything," they have no 'relations' at all: animals are not relational beings. This is essential for understanding the real meaning of subject and object, and hence what science is.

As a matter of fact, the human being was not fully aware of the conflict between nature

and himself in the early stages of human civilization; he considered himself a part of nature, though an intelligent part. As there was no sharp distinction between the natural and the social, truth was often identical with good and beauty.

4. Conclusion

Even though social studies makes use of social science disciplines, it has different orientation. The study of social studies should remain an integral part of the educational system at all levels. We conclude that if the social studies and social sciences did not permeate and cooperate with each other in the long run human beings and society would fail to develop smoothly. The study of social studies will also help learners to appreciate their own cultures and other people's culture. It will help the students to have respect for the dignity of man and labour, have understanding of the value of co-operation, and interdependence among communities. However, as a result of the accelerating development of the human capacity to remake the world, people now notice that in re-making the external world one, at the same time, changes oneself. This synchronous phenomenon appears in the social relations between persons, as well as in the powers of human knowledge, the values chosen, the aesthetic needs, etc. Therefore, the natural sciences are internally related to the social sciences.

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