

## **Human Rights Education in Nigeria: Implementations, of Social Studies Curriculum**

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### **Abstract**

This is a literature based paper that looked at the role of social studies curriculum in teaching, promoting and advocating for human rights in Nigeria. This paper discussed the meaning of human rights education, in Nigeria. The paper also discussed the implementation of social studies curriculum in education. Human rights is a fundamental human rights and essential for the exercise of all other human rights. Human rights education is the learning process that seeks, to build up knowledge, values and proficiency in the rights that each person is entitled to understand human rights education as a right. Education is not a privilege. Human rights education means the rights to education which is guaranteed for all. The writers concluded by saying that since human rights education is a programme that includes both process dimension and content of social studies primary responsibility is to develop reflective citizens. The paper explained the need for effective implementation of social studies curriculum in Nigeria schools cannot be over emphasized. It also discussed the level of social studies curriculum had been should be effectively implemented in Nigeria schools. The teachers' qualification, training and retraining of teachers' and professionals in implementation of social studies curriculum to expose teachers knowledge and impact.

**Keywords: Human Rights, Education in Nigeria, and Social Studies Curriculum.**

### **Introduction**

Human rights education is away to teach people about their rights and how to uphold them. It can help create a more just and equitable society by promoting democratic values. The term human rights stem from the recognition of rights that belong to an individual as a consequence of being human. The encyclopedia Britannica (vol. 6) defined human rights as a wide continuum of values that are claimed for all human beings. "Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary", states that a right is a legal authority or claim to something, a just, proper or legal claim, a thing that one is entitled to do or have by law. By this definition human rights are legal claims, which suggest and prompt the behaviour of the people in a

given society. It gives the people the moduls of operandi to act and decide in certain ways. It vests upon them some inalienable freedom as human rights.

Human rights are those species of rights which are regarded as being peculiar to, or in born in man as a natural being and therefore, although, still protected by state law, they cannot be said to be right granted by the state because of the high premium attached to human rights, as entrenched in the constitution. As long it can be said that: Fundamental human rights are those aspects of human right entrenched in the constitution guaranteed and protected by written constitution (<https://www.nigerirights.gov.ng>. Retrieved February 8, 2024).

Claims made on society by individuals and groups on the basis of then humanity and regarded as human rights. Contemporary human rights can be summarized as claims made on society by individuals and groups, which have found expression in objective law, either at national and international levels and serve as a standard for measuring the conditions of human existence, below which no human being should enjoy. Some human rights provisions have been enacted into various national.

In some societies high premium is placed on the values of democracy and freedom enshrined in the modern bills of right, or covenants of human rights while in other societies, the form of government and legal practices accord such values partial recognition or at times reject them out rightly. The freedom one enjoys in any society is also a relative one considering the fact that in human societies minimum constraints on human behaviour are essential in order to avoid anarchy in the society. Consequently one may engage in such activities that the law does not prohibit. It is in this sense that the freedom under the law must be understood. All human rights and fundamental freedoms are also to be approached in this manner because rights and freedoms do not exist outside the law. Freedoms are powers conferred by the law and accordingly flow from the legal and social system. The subjects enjoying these freedoms are bound to accept the corresponding burdens. This is because rights are related to certain corresponding duties. The benefit of a right or education is the discretion to make a choice and have this protected by law. The duty attachable to human education rights is respect for the interest of society in general and members of the society (Segu, 1989).

No matter what shades of opinion modern conceptions of human rights education, it is essential to see them from an entirely new and different political, socio-economic and international environment in an ideologically divided world, in which two fundamental universal revolutions have been underway namely: the social revolution, the national liberation. As it can be seen, during the last two centuries, the fundamental human rights education have undergone a remarkable evolution from civil liberties and limited political

rights proclaimed by the 18<sup>th</sup> century bourgeois evolutions, to economic and social rights claimed by the proletariat in the course of 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial revolution, which culminated in the demands of the 1917 Russia Bolsherek Socialist Revolution.

Today, like in the past, human rights are still in the focus of the age long struggles of man for liberty and equality, against all forms of oppression and exploitation. In the present time, this struggle is going on against the background of the two earlier mentioned worldwide revolutions, for social justice, for freedom and people's rights for liberation from colonial rule and from the bonds of neocolonialism. In this struggle which is proceeding on both domestic and international fronts, the aspirations for promotion and protection of human rights play an ever important role and its results are apparent among others in the increasing number of progressive statutory, constitutional and international legal frameworks. In evaluating human rights in social studies curriculum, attention will be focused on three major areas namely freedom, equality of citizens and right to life, liberty and property. These rights or freedoms are enshrined in most written constitutes like the 1979 Nigerian constitution, in 1999 constitution as Amended.

**Freedom:** democratic governance is anchored on freedom of the people to choose their leaders hence the icon "government at the people, by the people and for the people", therefore it must be based on the citizens rights to speak freely, to question the decisions of government when necessary and to speak openly against it. It allows citizens the freedom to worship the way they like, freedom of the press to obtain news and to print it (Imogie, 2018).

### **Importance of Human Rights Education in Nigeria**

1. **Participation and inclusion:** All willing citizens have the right to participate in and access information relating to the decision making processes that affect their lives and well-being.
2. Human rights education is essential for empowering individual to know, understand, and defend their rights.
3. It foster respect for diversity and promotes equality among all individuals.
4. This education helps to create a culture of tolerance, empathy, and respect for others rights and freedoms.
5. Interdependence and interrelations: each one contributes to the realization of a person's human dignity through the satisfaction of his or her development physical, psychological and spiritual needs.

6. Human rights education promotes understanding and friendship among peoples and nations of the world. It is very essential because, it used to affirm that all individuals, irrespective of status, race or colour have moral rights which a society should not deny.

**Equality of Citizens:** That all citizens should be basically equal under the law. Equality before the law means equal subjection of all classes of citizens to the ordinary laws of the land administered by the law enforcement agencies. This in essence implies that no man should be treated indifferently above the law and adequate justice should be denied to no one. In Nigeria the equality of citizens is not guaranteed or allowed. It all depends on the class you belong and how much you have. The poor people in society are punished and treated badly by the rich before the law. Obviously the rights of few in Nigeria are entrenched by the corruption and bribery in higher places. This scenario has continued in spite of institutional measures to curb its excesses. Many poor citizens in Nigeria are left to the coercive and brutal force of the police and when their cases go to court, the interest of the rich takes precedence over the poor. Thus, equality of rights before the law does not apply to all Nigeria citizens.

**Right to Liberty:** The right to liberty and emphasizes the need not to be arbitrarily deprived of their individual rights. [www.liberty-humanrights.org](http://www.liberty-humanrights.org) (http://www.liberty-humanrights.org) retrieve.

**Right to life and Property:** This implies that citizens should not be deprived by government institutions or other citizens of their lives, liberty and property. This also includes the fact that it is the basic obligation of government to make the lives of its citizens worth living. This could be done through the provision of essential amenities, in Nigeria right to life is not guaranteed by government. Through religious crises, chieftaincy struggles and oil crises in most parts of Nigeria, many lives were lost in addition to those killed by armed men, and robbers. With regards to right to property, this has been exploited to the advantage of the rich in Nigeria. For example, in Nigeria under 1979 constitution, the right to own landed property, its acquisitions, holding and use, rest on government approvals, therefore not legally guaranteed. (Gasiok, 2018).

### **Empowers People**

Human rights education teaches people that they deserve dignity from society and that they can stand up when they don't receive it. Human rights are universal, meaning that everyone is born with and possesses the same rights, regardless of their background.

### **Human Right Principles:**

**Indivisibility:** Human rights are indivisible whether they relate to civil, cultural, economic, political or social issues, human rights are inherent to the dignity of every human person.

Consequently all human rights have equal status, and cannot be positioned in a hierarchical order.

### **Purposes of Human Rights Education**

Human rights education in still ideals belief and attitudes in all the people that motivate, then to protect their own and others rights, human rights education is a critical component of long-term preventive measure that hinders rights violations of any form with the aim to achieves the goal of just society in which all people rights are appreciated and respected and protected.

### **Is Education a right in Nigeria? (Yes/No)**

The provision of rights to education in chapter two of the 1999 constitution as amended made it mandatory for every citizen in Nigeria to have access to basic education as the primary and post-primary tiers of education.

The world viewpoint on universal basic education established by United Nation Organization (UNO) concretized the readiness of world leaders to make education as a compulsory instrument for self actualization of citizens in Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

However, the implementation in Nigeria is bedeviled by issues such as low enrolment, drop-out due to financial challenges of parents, particularly, drop-out driven by desire for apprenticeship in the south-eastern geo-political zone of the country, shortage and poor infrastructures, lack of water, electricity, furnitures among others.

To redeem and remedy the situation has been of concern to the three tiers of government and the effort of government agencies to encourage youths participation in education has achieved tremendous gains nationwide.

Social studies subjects is one of the subjects in the school curriculum that could enable persons to achieve moral, societal and educational goals. Social studies serve as an avenue to incorporate students into citizenship education, providing them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that would make them competent and responsible to contribute to the community, and display moral and civic excellence (National Council of the social Studies, 2014).

Social studies curriculum was designed in such a way that it has the potentials to equip the learners with the needed skills to be abreast and survive in their environment (Nigeria Educational research and Development Council, NERDC (2016). Curriculum is planned considering the target audience in order to achieve effective learning through an appropriate means or method of implementation. Curriculum is a systematic planned body of knowledge,

skills and attitudes grouped into subject topics taught to learners in schools (Ikeh, Ifeanuieze, & Ugwuoke, 2017).

The term curriculum implementation is often referred holistically as all aspects of educational experience within the reach of the student in the school (Mkpa & Izuagba, 2018). The implementation of social studies curriculum is based on the quality and qualification of teachers to have great impact on curriculum implementation. The teachers qualification is one of the major key in the implementation of social studies curriculum of the school delivery. The training and re-training of teachers' is expected to expose the teacher to every necessary skills, knowledge of the curriculum content, and proper utilization of instructional resources in order to become an (2014) effective teacher (Okoro, Emenyonu, 2014).

The teachers' coverage of social studies content is a vital aspect of curriculum implementation. It is traditionally known that for an input and output teaching and learning, the teacher must have the knowledge of the what to be taught which is content knowledge. Social studies curriculum overall objectives as development of ability of the students to the changing environment; becoming responsible and disciplined individuals who are capable and willing to contribute to the development of the society, inculcating the right type of values (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2020).

### **Conclusion**

Human rights education are the inalienable freedoms which citizens of the country enjoy through their government. In most constitutions, especially written ones, they are stated. However, the extent to which governments' guarantee these human rights education for her citizens depend on several factors including the type of 'democracy' in operation. In Nigeria, most of the rights practically are not guaranteed by the 'democratic' rule in operation be it first, second, third, fourth and fifth republic. It therefore, concludes that there is need to look for an alternative democratic system of governance where Nigerians will be made to control their human and material resources for their self development and not the present exploitative, dehumanizing and marginalizing 'democratic' rule.

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