





## **The Role of Social Studies in the Implementation of Sexuality Education Curriculum in Lagos State, Nigeria**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The role of social studies in the implementation of sexuality in Lagos State cannot be underrated. Sexuality education being a new educational programme has been implemented in Lagos State through Social Studies as a carrier subject. In other words, sexuality education is not introduced in the schools as a subject but integrated into social studies. Sexuality education is a life long process of instilling in the young people positive values and attitudes towards human sexuality in order to develop self-esteem and the skills for making rational and responsible decisions concerning their sexual and reproductive behaviour. The purpose of this study is to determine the role of social studies in the implementation of sexuality education curriculum in Lagos State, Nigeria. Some research questions were raised to guide the study. Descriptive survey was employed to collect data. 300 teachers were involved in the study. Questionnaires developed by the researchers and duly validated were administered on the respondents to elicit information from them. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Results obtained revealed that the implementation of sexuality education is faced with many challenges vis-à-vis lack of subject specialists, inadequate training, and insufficient funding by government among others. The researchers recommend the following: 1. Recruitment of qualified teachers, 2. Pre-service and in-service training for teachers and 3. Adequate funding by the government to improve the implementation of the curriculum.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Students in Lagos State secondary schools are confronted with some aspects of sexuality problems in addition to sex related issues. They are faced with problems of abortion and its complications, pre-marital sex, prostitution and

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incidence of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI), Human Immune Virus (HIV), and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) among others. Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council reported that in 1998 alone 60% of all reported cases of HIV/AIDS came from the age group of 15 – 24 years who constitute more than 50% of the national population. The report further stated that 150 out of every 1000 women who gave birth are 19 years old and under, over 60% of patients presenting at Nigeria hospitals with abortion complications are adolescent girls (NERDC, 2001). The aforementioned problems pose a great challenge to any government that has the interest of its youths at heart. There is need to deal with these adolescent health issues. In view of these stated problems, Lagos State has introduced sexuality education into its upper basic school curriculum using social studies as one of its carrier subjects since 2004.

Social studies is the subject that deals with man and his environment. It entails studying people in the society. Social studies as a school subject studies man and his interaction with his physical and social environment. It is the study of how man is influenced by his entire environment and how man in turn influences his environment Falade (2008) opines that social studies deals with all the aspects of man's reality with a particular interest on how man can solve the problems he encounters in his environment. Ogunbare (2000) states that social studies is a study of problems of survival in an environment and how to find solution to them. It is a multidisciplinary study of a topic, a problem, an issue, a concern, attitudes, values and skills.

Social studies does not concern itself with only the acquisition of academic knowledge but also development of skills and values needed for effective citizenship and development of society.

Sexuality education is an entire body of knowledge that provides the learners with the information they require to cope with the challenges involved with their maleness and femaleness characteristics. Sexuality education is a lifelong training that empowers the learners with totality of sexuality knowledge they need to cope with challenges of growing up as well as adjustment to adult life (Uchegbu, 2008). Action Health Incorporation (2001) defined sexuality education as a lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, intimacy, beliefs and values about identity and relationship. Sexuality education instills in young people positive values and attitudes towards human sexuality and enables them to develop self-esteem and the skills for making rational and responsible decisions related to sexual and reproductive behaviour. Sexuality education avails the youths with the necessary information that will help them fight the scourge of HIV/AIDS spreading in the country now.

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Education in Nigeria is an instrument “par excellence” for affecting national development (FGN, 2004). According to Federal Government of Nigeria, educational goals of the country shall be clearly set out in terms of their relevance to the needs of the individual and those of the society, in consonance with the realities of our environment and the modern world.

Sexuality education has been implemented in Lagos State Upper Basic schools through integration into social studies curriculum.

Social studies uses integration approach to blend ideas, facts and concepts from sexuality education to produce a single and unified body of knowledge making it impossible to distinguish original discipline.

Implementation entails putting into action an already mapped out plan. Implementation of sexuality education indicates the actual teaching of sexuality education in schools.

Bolarin, Obebe and Olaniyonu (2000) posit that social studies as a school subject is widely believed to be a good way of studying people in the society. As a subject in school, social studies has the capacity to help the learner become a well informed citizen of the country. A learner who has gathered information from various areas that make up the content of social studies will be in a better position to analyze sexuality issues in the society and make quality decisions.

Social studies being the study of man and his environments entails the sum total of experience a learner is exposed to in his learning environment. Social studies as a school subject emphasizes the development and strengthening of a responsibility for the socializing and humanizing of individual child to develop certain basic concepts, understandings, values, attitudes and skills necessary for societal living. Implementing sexuality education through social studies would help to translate into the students the values, attitudes and skills already acquired through the study of social studies thereby making the learning of sexuality education concepts easy for them.

Social studies being a core subject in Upper Basic Schools serve as a carrier subject in the implementation of sexuality education in Lagos State upper basic schools. Implementing sexuality education through social studies helped to give the new curriculum wide coverage in the school system. This would enable the students to acquire skills to cope with their sexuality issues as well as prevention of HIV/AIDS pandemic among others.

Social studies education emphasizes effective learning and inculcation in the learner the citizenship ideals, norms and values that are essential for national development. When these ideals, norms and values are enhanced in the students through the teaching of social studies the students would not only be well informed but also equipped on the nature and quality of decisions, responses and actions they take when confronted with different sexual situations (Uchegbu, 2008).

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The pandemic nature of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI), Human Immune Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) among youths in Nigeria and the global attention engendered by the issues have brought into the fore the need for the introduction of sexuality education into the school curriculum (AHI, 2001).

Unwanted pregnancy among the secondary school students is on the increase. NERDC (2001) confirmed this notion in the guidelines for comprehensive sexuality education in Nigeria and stated that 150 out of every 1000 women who gave birth are 19 years old and under, over 60% of patients presenting at Nigeria hospitals with abortion complications are adolescent girls. NACA (2008) also stated that HIV/AIDS is more prevalent among the age group of 15 to 29 years in Nigeria today.

The above assertions pose a great challenge to any country that values her youths. In view of the seriousness of the above stated challenges there is the need to teach sexuality education in schools. Lagos State government in conjunction with an NGO Action health Incorporated (AHI) implemented sexuality education in its upper basic schools through social studies as carrier subject in 2004, yet the situation as stated earlier on has not improved as expected.

The purpose of the study includes the following:

- To determine the meaning of sexuality education.
- To identify the objectives of sexuality education.
- Ascertain the values inherent in sexuality education.
- Assess the problems of implementation of sexuality education.
- Suggest solutions to ameliorate the identified problems.

#### **Research Questions**

1. How do teachers perceive sexuality education in secondary schools?
2. What are the objectives of sexuality education?
3. What are values inherent in sexuality education?
4. What problems were encountered by teachers in the implementation by Lagos State, Nigeria?
5. How can these problems be solved to enhance implementation of the subject?

#### **METHODOLOGY**

Descriptive survey design was employed in collecting data for the study. The target population was the whole of Lagos State. The sample of the study consists of 300 teachers randomly from six Education District Headquarters of Lagos State. A structured questionnaire developed by the researchers on a 3 – point Likert scale was administered on the respondents to elicit information from them. The teachers were to rate the level of agreement on

each of the items. The instrument was validated by four (4) education experts in the Faculty of Education, University of Lagos for face and content validity. Applying a test – retest method, the scores were computed and a reliability coefficient was to be 0.82. This ensures a reasonable reliability of the instrument for the study. Respondents’ responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Research questions one which sought to find out the teachers’ knowledge of sexuality education revealed that 250 (83.3%) teachers have general understanding and knowledge of sexuality education concepts. This is quite encouraging. On the teachers’ knowledge of objectives of sexuality education research question two revealed that 246 (82.0%) have high knowledge of the objectives of sexuality education.

Research question three which sought to find out from the teachers about the values inherent in sexuality education showed that 270 (90.0%) of them agreed that sexuality education is capable of reducing unwanted pregnancy, abortion complications as well as HIV/AIDS among the youths in Lagos State upper basic schools.

Results from research question four which sought to ascertain the problems encountered in the implementation of sexuality education in schools revealed that 293 (97.6%) teachers agreed that such problems as religious belief, societal values, lack of instructional materials, lack of subject specialists, inadequate training, insufficient funding by the government among others were encountered in the implementation of sexuality education in Lagos State upper basic schools. To ameliorate the problems encountered in the implementation of the subject there is need for the government to sensitise the general public on the values of sexuality education to encourage positive perception and acceptance by the society.

For any new curriculum innovation like sexuality education to succeed there is need for the government to make adequate provisions for instructional materials, recruitment of subject specialists, training and re-training of teachers of social studies (carrier subject) for sexuality education in Lagos State for proper implementation of the subject in schools. Government should make funds available for effective implementation of the subject in schools.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

To solve the problem of lapses in the implementation of sexuality education, the researchers recommend the following:

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- Recruitment of qualified teachers
- Pre-service and in-service training for teachers
- Adequate funding by the government to improve the implementation of the curriculum

### **CONCLUSION**

It is pertinent to note that sexuality education has the capacity to instil in the youths positive values and attitudes that would engender them to acquire self worth and skills for making rational and responsible decisions concerning their sexuality and sexual behaviour. The role of social studies in the implementation of sexuality education cannot be overemphasized. Social studies being the subject that deals with man and his environment as well as a core subject in upper basic schools provide a spring board for the teaching of sexuality education in schools. Incorporating sexuality education in social studies makes it easier for most Nigeria youths to be taught the subject (sexuality education) which can help to curb the incidence of moral laxity as well as HIV/AIDS among them.

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