

Utilization of Community Resources for Effective Sustainability of Social Studies Education

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Abstract: *The objective of this paper is an examination of the utilization of community resources as a fostering ingredient towards curriculum development and sustainable social studies education in Nigeria. The inadequate sources of information, structure and content for curriculum planning and development in social studies education calls for a review. This paper defines some key concepts like curriculum, community development, resources, education, field trip and school camping. It analyzed the various community resources that could be used to promote the sustainability of social studies education. The paper made use of historical and descriptive methods in analyzing issues raised. The importance of the community and community resources to social studies education were discussed. Some recommendations are also suggested to the facilitators of educational programme. It concludes by making it known that the community and the school can't be divorced. The community serves as a resource laboratory for social studies education.*

Keywords: school camping, field trip development, laboratory, curriculum and community.

1. Introduction

Community resources are a group of services and/or assisted programme that are provided to the members of a community for free or at an affordable price. Each resource is made available to community members to help them become self-reliant and maintain their human rights and well-being [3]. A community can be many things; it is people who live in the same neighborhood or city, people with the same interest or background, or even organizations or communities that have something in common. Resources tangible and intangible, meet the need of the community by providing assistance, ideas and solutions. Depending on the community, whether it is a geographic area or a group with common goals or characteristics. Resources can cover a wide range of services or provide limited specialized assistance. This paper has introduction as the first part. The conceptual framework which includes community and community resources forms the second aspect; importance of the community forms the third part of the paper. The importance of community resources to social studies education occupies the fourth part of the paper. The fifth part of the paper is the methods of utilizing community resources. While the role of the teacher and conclusion forms the sixth part of the paper.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1 Community

The world community is derived from the old French word "communité" which is derived from the Latin "Communitas" i.e (Cum, "with/together" + munus, "gift") a broad term for fellowship or organized society [2]. The term community has two distinct commutative meanings: community can refer to a usually small social unit of any size that shares common values. It can also be referring to the national community or international community and secondly it is a group of interacting living organisms sharing a populated environment [8]. According to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, Community is defined as "all the people who live in a particular area, country e.t.c hence, and community are all about a group in a geographical area.

2.2 Community Resources

Community Resources development is all about quality of life and engagement by building stronger communities through civil engagement and using resources in the best manner for desirable organizations or individuals Knight [8]. Community resources vary from community to community. The opportunities which the teacher in an open rural area has are only slightly related to those of a teacher in an urban area. But community study opportunities are available to every school and should be explored. As we contemplate the many sources of information that are open to investigation, we must no longer overlook those which lie within "walking distance" the local factory, retail shop, business office are real facts school children can see, hear, ask questions about them and examine them minutely. [5] Opined that it is the responsibility of the teacher to investigate the community, particularly those resources which seem to identify themselves with clear-cut full understanding of social experience [7] is of the opinion that the importance of community resources to the development of social studies education can't be over-emphasized. Resources which include factories, health institutions, culture, infrastructure business office religion institution, to mention a little are a veritable source of course content and experiences.

2.3 Importance of Community

Educationist and curriculum planners have, after all, come to realize that the immediate community is a wonderful curriculum laboratory which can provide extremely dynamic, interesting and real life opportunities for learning. Every community has in its historical records the stories of people and resources woven into the pattern of our national development [7].

Basic social processes and problems operate in every community and may be observed in action as well as worked with, for or against. Government can be understood in local, state and regional terms through people who are familiar to students. Social problems become concrete as we investigate them in our own communities. Thus, the community provides concrete data on cultural, industrial, political and

geographical facts and relationship. These data are tangible, seeable and described. This is the reason that the school should take itself to the community, regard it as laboratory, discover its resources, understand its culture, appreciate its problems and also suggest solutions to these problems.

2.4 Importance of Community Resources for Social Studies Education

Community experiences can enrich social studies in instructions in ways more than one. To achieve the purposes of social studies, the child must, become a real part of the community in which he lives, interact with it and contribute to it. To become an effective citizen, the child must become a responsible member of community with civic attitudes and ideals compatible with the spirit of democracy. There is no more effective way of becoming this kind of person than through practicing what such a person will do [1]. A variety of community experiences offer the child the laboratory in which he may experiment with life in the community and begin to find his place in it.

Again, venturing into the community, gives children an opportunity to observe and sometime to participate in the basic human activities that characterize living in the social group. Children can go almost everywhere under the careful guidance of the school and of cooperating community groups – asking questions, gathering data and pooling information. They can investigate many phases of human activity in the community. Visits to radio and television stations, telephone, newspaper and telegraph offices clarify ideas about communication, study trips to airports and other transportation centre as well as rides in a variety of vehicles, show how people and goods are moved about. Production and consumption can be understood better when pupils see the stores, the markets and factories of the community. Education, government, religious activities, protection and conservation are all there for children as they venture forth, hearing, seeing and sometimes taking part in the life of the community. [7] Is of the opinion that there are so many community problems which constitute the subject – matter of social studies. Traffic problems, protection of public property, community beautification, conservation and law of observation are but a few to which children can actually make a contribution appropriate to their level of development. A problem shared builds interest, concern and a feeling of kinship, the principle works well when pupils and community are thrown together in the consideration of vital problems. Pupils develop a sense of belonging and the community is benefited because of the sense of responsibility develop in the pupils. Thus, the social studies classroom is as big as the community if teachers and pupils take advantages of all that the world outside the school has to offer. The wise use of community resources is a boon for vitalizing the teaching of social studies.

If the teacher is resourceful, pragmatic and the class is enthusiastic and clever, there will be no difficulty in preparing a catalogue for the available resources for proper and detail study. Cataloguing of the available resources may be done under the following heads:

1. Resources of geographical interest such as hills and valleys, lakes and waterfalls, rivers, springs, sea-port,

dams and river – valley projects, mines, rocks and fossils, tea gardens, etc.

2. Resources of historical interest such as forts, pillars and monuments, gurdwaras, temples, mosques and churches, old relics and inscriptions, excavations and caves, etc.
3. Resources of cultural interest such as art theatres and galleries, museum, zooms, cinema halls, radio stations, universities, firm studios, schools and colleges, Bal Bhawans, Doll museums, Kala kendras, organization like boy scouts, girl guides, emporium, newspaper offices, etc.
4. Resources of economic interest such as market places, commercial centres, brick kilns, dairies, banks, mills and factories railway junctions, post and telegraph offices, telephone exchanges, agricultural farms, water work, printing presses etc.
5. Resources of scientific interest such as scientific laboratories thermal and hydro-power generating stations, radio transmission stations, workshop, factories, power transmissions, distributing stations, engineering colleges broadcasting and television stations.
6. Government buildings such as municipalities, district board, hospital, law courts, police stations, fire stations, and parliament house Rashtrapati Bhawan, Assembly Halls, secretariats, military installations etc.
7. Forms of social control such as traditions, customs usages rituals, mores, belief and attitudes of the local community Kochhar (2012).

3. Methods of Utilizing Community Resources

There are basically two ways in which the teacher may make use of community resources. One method is to take the school to the community; the other method is to bring some portion of the community to the classroom.

3.1 Taking the School to the Community

They say ‘the emotions of children are most easily reached not by words but by sights and sounds. It is actually when they see the things, that they remember them [6]. This is possible through field trips surveys, camping, services projects etc.

1. **Field Trips:** Few social teaching programmes are complete without a field trip. Field trips may be undertaken for securing information, changing attitudes, awakening interest, developing appreciation, promoting ideals, enjoying new experiences. They can initiate a unit of study, they can be a part of the core of it or they can give it the finishing touch. They are a very good means of getting knowledge first hand of confirming and supplementing second hand knowledge. They are a means for sharpening observation, testing principles and doing everything which social studies requires.

Field trips are useful for educational purposes in ways more than one:

- (i) They stimulate imagination and learning by providing sensory perceptions e.g. the breath taking heat of a glass furnace, the metallic hum of a weaving room. The sights of real things in the real world of adults.
- (ii) They integrate classroom instruction by exposing the artificially of traditional subject matter divisions and

enable the pupils to view facts and forces as they exist in their everyday relationship in living communities.

- (iii) Through the filled trips, the students may come to realize community in ways which bookish learning cannot by its very nature allow.
- (iv) They enable the pupils to learn the art of living with others such as travelling in the same conveyances, sharing rooms, sitting at the same table.
- (v) They expand emotional and intellectual horizons by making them acquainted with people whose manner, customs, living standards, outlook and interests may be quite different from their own.

2. Community Surveys: Community surveys can provide excellent educational experience particularly senior pupils. They are one of the organized and systematic methods for an accurate determination of social or physical data. Survey foster comprehensive understanding of community structure and processes in their everyday operation interaction and complexity. They are extremely useful in stimulating depth of insight into vital community problems which should be met. Also, they suggest possibilities for student participation in the affairs of the community. Any aspect of the community which has meaning for young people may be considered an appropriate field for school survey.

3. School Camping: The camp, a classroom in the woods, is a part of the larger community. The outdoor environment, in and around the camp, offers tremendous possibilities for true education. The opportunities to learn, work and play amidst the natural resources of the area stimulate interest and concern for the protection and wise use of the natural resources of the community. The drift to cities and the rapid tempo of modern living is creating a need for people in cities to find more opportunities for roots in the soil, thus developing a closer relationship between human beings and natural resources. School camping encourages direct learning experiences and has potential life – situations that are conducive to the most effective teaching methods, that is, through learning by doing, seeing, hearing, testing, smelling and feeling with a minimum of answers given by teachers and resource leaders.

The following service projects can prove quite useful:

1. Social service among the backward population of the town such as cleanliness, anti mosquito campaigns, bathing young children, attending on the sick.
2. School labor service being organized on special occasions such as republic day, Independence Day, activities like planting of trees, road repairs and erection of platforms, cleaning of lanes, digging of manure pits and drains, may be taken up.
3. Animal welfare through provision of water facilities, fodder and medical aid.
4. Beautification of villages through planting of trees, lying out of avenues, clearing up of public places like streets, temples, drains, etc.

3.2 The community can be brought to the school in a number of ways

1. Inviting Resource Persons: Every community, no matter how small or isolated, has within it, the score of people of rich and varied background who can “open doors” to vivid

learning experiences. The banker, the doctor, the engineer, the editor all these and many more are community’s human resources which can be utilized by the enterprising teacher to enrich and vitalize the school programmes. These distinguished persons can explain to students their own important role in the community and services rendered by them to community in the different directions.

2. Parent – Teacher Association: They say people “cares when they share”. The constructive involvement of parents in the school policy and programme planning, execution and evaluation is very useful. Parent – teacher association can co-operate in efforts to make the school a real community centre, to locate and list resource visitors to the school. Parents will know what is going on in the school and what is expected of their wards. Parents have the opportunity to appreciate the work of teachers in the school.
3. Social Service Activities: School map can be made the centre of social education. Bulletin boards may be set up, containing daily news and other useful information about the local community in particular and the country in general. The school furniture, the rooms, the towns, the playgrounds, the school hall, the school gymnasium and audio – visual aids may be freely lent to the adult community for purposes of education and recreation.
4. Celebration of fairs, festivals and national days. Social studies can be very well taught with the help of fair, festivals and national days to be celebrated in the community. Every child is interested to know the significance of these social events. These opportunities provide extremely dynamic, interesting, real life opportunities for learning. Celebrations of the birth and death anniversaries of great men can make the children familiar with the noble ideas and deeds of the great men. Not only that, there are certain national days – these can help to indicate a sense of patriotism in the children. These are U.N. Day, Human Rights Day and Red Cross Day which can very well develop international understanding and make the children understand the rights of human beings all over the world. Celebration of children’s day will enable them to realize their own charter of rights.
5. Arranging talks on national and international problems adults are interested in current problems of national and international interest. When such talks are arranged by the school authorities’ members of the community may be cordially invited to listen and participate in the discussion.
6. Financial aid by the community members. Well – to – do members of the community can help the school enterprise financially too?
7. Local trades can provide apprenticeship experiences to the students.

4. The Role of Teacher

The role of the teacher can never be overemphasized. As the pilot of class activities and as a facilitator, he or she occupies an important position to the proper utilization of the community resources. In the community life, there is always the likelihood of the existence of evil trends like favoritism, nepotism, dishonesty, hypocrisy, etc. it is the duty of the teacher to bring home to the pupils the idea that children are not only to study the community life for its own sake, it is the pupils ultimately who can guide it by fighting these evil trends. He should neither suppress fact nor ignore them. It is

the duty of the teacher to make a wise and judicious study of community life so that reasonable pride on its past achievements and faith in its future possibilities is built. Alertness on the part of the teacher is required to make the pupils alert about the process of the community. The teacher must be careful in developing the right attitudes towards the community – local, national and international. He must display initiative and resourcefulness, foresight and patience to build the community understanding of the pupils. Only in this way can he prepare them to be worthy members of the community.

5. Conclusion

It is good to note that it is impossible to divorce the school from the community. They are glued together the aspirations of the community are the manifestations of the school system. The idea of making the community the best of the school and the school the best of the community represents a fruitful and essential extension of accepted educational thinking and practice. In order to nourish and invigorate democracy, community study and service through school education must be made essential. This movement is the most significant single development of its kind in our generation, and it seem destined to grow greatly with continuing sound experimentation at all school levels, in all teaching field, with all types of students, and in all community areas – local, regional, national and international.

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