The Role of Teaching History and Government in Fostering National Cohesion and Integration in Kenya: Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract: **The teaching of History and Government should serve to enable a country meet its needs and aspirations. One such need in Kenya, which has remained largely elusive, is national cohesion and integration. The objectives of teaching History and Government are; to demonstrate an understanding of how people and events of the past have influenced the ways in which people lived and behaved; appreciate the need for an importance of mutual responsibility, and to develop a sense of patriotism and national pride through participation in various development activities in the country. Research has revealed that the teaching of History and Government contributes to the development of an individual by increasing his/her propensity to be tolerant. Learning has a strong influence on the development of shared norms and the value placed on tolerance and understanding within a community. Integration is the process by which immigrants become accepted into society, both as individuals and as groups. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: to establish whether the objectives of teaching History and Government subject in Secondary school are being met and to establish the role of History and Government education in enhancing National Integration in Kenya. The target population of the study comprised of History and Government teachers, History and Government students, community leaders, Youth leaders, and Church leaders in Bomet County. Focus group discussions, Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data from the respondents. Qualitative data collected was analyzed using content analysis while quantitative data analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results indicated that there is a need to have History and Government subject compulsory in secondary school curriculum to allow the subject objectives to be met. The study also revealed challenges facing the teaching of History and Government subject fails to meet the needs of the Country in terms of cohesion and integration.**

Key words: **Cohesion, History and Government, National integration, Teaching, Kenya.**

I. INTRODUCTION

History and government is an important subject in the secondary school curriculum for producing a strong feeling of nationalism and integrity of Kenya. History and Government must inspire its students with love of motherland. It should be taught as a story of mankind. In Kenya, History and Government should give us a panoramic view of a long period through which we have maintained the essentials of our culture.

Kenya has always been seen as a beacon of peace and stability in the region. However, the country has suffered low intensity conflicts mainly associated with competition for scarce resources such as pasture, water and livestock in the pastoralists regions. Land has also been seen as an issue that has caused disputes among bordering communities. The advent of Multi-party pluralistic democracy in the 1960s led to increased political competition accompanied by incidences of politically motivated violence. The violence witnessed in 2007 and early months of 2008 post-election period was seen by many as a trigger of what has always been a simmering conflict. The level of violence, destruction of property and the loss of lives, displacement of persons and the general negative impacts of the social, political and economic affairs of Kenya in the magnitude witnessed in the after math of the recent elections shocked the national and international community [15]. The situation sparked regional and international interventions culminating in the mediation efforts of former UN secretary General Koffi Annan. The success of the mediation and the eventual signing of the National Accord and Reconciliation Agreement (NARA) signified restoration.

Peace restoration form a crucial element of strategies to restore security. However, one key weakness is that agreements are usually made on the political level thus conspicuously excluding broad based participation ([15]). "National integration cannot be built by brick and mortar, it cannot be built by chisel and hammer. It has to grow silently in the minds and hearts of men'' by Dr. S. Radhakrisshman ([5]). Reference [13] notes that out of the fifty-three (53) African countries seventeen (17) are either in conflict or emerging from conflict. He further states that these conflicts have divided the continent along ethnic cultural, political, social and economic lines as well as retarded development and destroyed the existing infrastructure. It is both a historical fact and current reality that most Kenyans are haunted by actual or potential armed conflicts. These, as has been noted are due to issues that remain unresolved ([7]). Failure to address the main causes of violent conflicts has led to reoccurrence of such conflicts which is now a usual routine in Kenya. In addition, there are other underlying factors, such as impunity, weak accountability in governance, corruption. Politicized ethnicity, inequitable resource distribution, poverty and

marginalization which continues to fuel the animosity and rage create a conducive environment for more armed conflict.

Politics are and will continue to be a powerful element in the tension and polarization between and within societies with different cultural and religious values. The role of political leaders in peace building can win the trust of the warring sides, both on the personal and communal levels. Trust could be won through persuasion when those in conflict negotiate their differences through mutual dialogue. In the process, the role of political leaders serves as a bridge between social groups, in supporting social interaction and mutual care. Developing methodologies in peace building is a crucial step towards social transformation that generates a new resilience in the continent. Different stakeholders have noted with concern that these conflicts have been developing in a much faster rate in complexity and sophistication than the available means of mediation, intervention, resolution and transformation. Formulating sustainable means of addressing the conflicts is a daunting task especially in the face of the multifaceted and diverse variables. This therefore calls for more practical way in the pursuit such as genuineness, fairness, honesty, deference for all and care of the environment. It advocates for truth, justice and forgiveness as the main and true path to true and lasting peace ([4]). History and Government education offers a way for the peace and considering the intensity and dire consequences of conflicts in Africa we find a necessity to further this study and find out what role History and Government education plays in enhancing National integration in Bomet county.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:

   a) To establish whether the objectives of teaching History and Government subject in Secondary school are being met.
   b) To establish the role of History and Government education in enhancing National Integration in Kenya.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conflict and Peace Building

Conflict in the present times is almost usual occurrence especially in the third world countries. Armed conflict continues to plaque the continent of Africa and Kenya in particular hindering development and achievement of the major goals of the nations. These conflicts especially armed conflicts bear threats of harm to human life and nation's development at large. According to [7] armed conflicts have at best prevented people from developing their bountiful human and natural potential. At worst, the conflicts have given rise to conditions of near hopelessness. Conflicts involved aggression and confrontation when two or more parties have incompatible goals. Reference [7] notes that, as concerning armed conflicts the vast majority of groups define

themselves on the basis of their identity, whether of a national, ethnic or cultural character. The Kenyan scenario of the 2007/2008 armed conflicts saw perpetrators included state and non- state actors alike committing crime.

Politics play a very important role in armed conflict in Africa and more so in Kenya. These conflicts are attributes to political incitement, tribal tensions and polarizations. Politics especially is an important factor in cases where the rivaling parties in conflict perceived that their security, perhaps their very survival, can be ensured only through control of power by the one of "their own" making conflicts inevitable. The struggle for power can thus be said to be a cause of armed conflict. Another cause of armed conflict within Africa is scramble for limited resources. Most of the civil clashes that go on in Kenya involve tussle between and among communities over the control of various resource. Some of these conflicts include resource-based conflict, such as land conflicts and cattle rustling. Armed conflicts have far reaching effects on the parties involved and at times on some innocent individuals. Conflicts lead to loss of property and displacement like burning crops, houses, cattle raiding. It affects the running of social and economic activities and in extreme cases it caused injury and deaths.

A continuity of these armed conflicts will cause more harm and destruction, and thus the need for a long lasting solution. Peace building is now more than ever best way for African nations to go for the achievement of National integration. Peace building means to intertwine, network, link up, build a consensus for action against the negative attitudes, belief system, structure of governance whether economic, political, social, cultural or religious ([13]). The term 'peacebuilding' was coined by Johan Galtung in 1975 to mean addressing and removing the root causes of violence, therefore ownership and participation in the process of peace building.

Peacebuilding is a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development ([18]). Its strategies must be coherent and tailored to specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced, and therefore relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives. It involves creating innovative avenues of hope that bring new life to marginalized poor or people excluded from enjoying the benefits of the common good. Reference [13] notes that peace building brings peace initiatives with an aim of recognizing the different contributions towards creating and fostering peace.

2.2 History and Government as a Subject

According to [16] stresses that culture and education are intertwined and that it is necessary to accept individual pupils' cultural identity as well as to develop their intercultural competence. Reference [17] looks at education as the means by which successive generations develop the values,

knowledge and skills for their personal health and safety and for future political, economic, social and cultural developments.

According to [5] there is a continuous effort to develop specific teaching strategies to overcome the efforts of long standing conflicts between national/religious/cultural groups throughout the world. Teaching of history and government education in secondary schools should work among the students both when they are in school and even after they leave and join the world. It fosters cultural tolerance in a society of diversity.

History and Government education in Kenya is taught right from the elementary level through to the secondary level and later tertiary level. It is taught in all the way through primary level though it is not examinable in the final examination called Kenya National Primary Certificate (KCPE). In the secondary level it is taught to all students in form one and two, however it becomes an optional subject in from three and therefore examinable to few students in form four who opt to continue studying the subject. In tertiary level History and Government is completely optional and is mostly done for professional purposes. The content of the subject is steady and changes as it grows and advances. In lower level the content is still predominantly the significant historical elements and figures of the history of Kenya. In the upper level the content changes and the focus is mainly comprehensive where the learner is exposed to Historical issues of the world for example democracies, origins, systems of governments, trade among others. History and Government as a subject in secondary school curriculum is divided into national and world history. National History is basically Kenya history. World history Involves Historical developments of other countries across the world. History and government plays an important role in helping the learners be part of the society as well as fit into society ([2]).

When it comes to National integration, History and Government education seems to be effective in promoting tolerance and democratic awareness. National integration is one of the main topics in form one syllabus in secondary school level. As an educational tool, History and Government education makes it possible to take the intercultural dimension into account, by creating a space where pupils can confront other people's views, enhances diversity, promote open-mindedness learn peoples culture and appreciate differences in cultural elements as well as promoting patriotism and responsible citizenship.

2.3 The link between History and Government education and promotion of National integration

From the very beginning of this discourse it is clear that there exists a disparity among the habitant of every community and due to a variety of reasons. There will always be a reason that trigger armed conflict among different parties. The society is today characterized by a social and political strives and economic disparities ([3]). Research indicate that politics can both encourage conflict and build peace, reflecting growing evidence that political forces can play a constructive role in helping to resolve conflicts.

Religion and those who practice play an important role, not only as a source of conflict but also as a tool for conflict resolution and peace- building and contributing to advocacy, mediational and reconciliation. Religion and beliefs inform our values and are reflecting in what we say and how we behave. History and Government education contributes to pupil's personal development and well-being and community cohesion by promoting mutual respect and tolerance in a diverse society. History and Government can also make important contributions to other parts of the school curriculum such as citizenship, personal development, social development, healthy relations and economic development, education for sustainable development and among others. It offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development, deepening the understanding of the significance of religion in the lives of others- individually, communally and cross- culturally. History and Government presents sets of political and societal values and views that potentially underpins its ability to provide positive contributions to conflict resolution and peace building [9].

Peace building is crucial step towards social transformation that generates a new resilience in the content. It involves formulating sustainable means of addressing the conflicts which is a daunting task especially in the face of the multifaceted and diverse variable. This therefore calls for more practical way in the pursuit of peace and prosperity within Africa. History and Government makes an important contribution towards this objective by promoting community cohesion. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity. Education promotes community cohesion at each of the four levels outlined in Department for Schools, Children and Families (DCSF) guidance ([3]). Peace enhances good relations within the country and with her neighbors. This makes it possible for people to assist each other in times of need ([12]).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To answer the research questions of this study, survey research design was applied. Surveys are conducted in the case of descriptive research studies. Descriptive research studies are those studies which are concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual or group. According to [11] a survey is an attempt to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables. According to Reference [6] surveys are only concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident or trends that are developing. The study which was will qualitative study used in-depth studies of small groups of people to guide and support the construction of hypotheses. A focus group is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are

asked about their perception, opinions, beliefs attitudes towards a product, service, concept, service, advertisement, idea or packaging. Focus groups are used for generating information on collective views, and the meanings that lie behind those views. They are also useful in generating a rich understanding of participants' experiences and beliefs ([10]; [1]). The method of data collection happens to either observation or interviews or questionnaire ([6]). Survey research is advantageous because it seeks to obtain information that describes existing phenomenon. It also helps to explain and explore the existing status of two or more variables at a given point in time. Surveys are also used in collecting data from large population that are not easy to observe directly.

3.1 Target population

The target population consisted of History and Government teachers, History and Government students, community leaders in Bomet County as well as educated elite and professional individuals were selected for the study.

3.2 Study location

Bomet County has a population of 875,690 and an area of 1,630.0 km^2. The county has five electoral constituencies which include Bomet Central, Bomet East, Chepalungu, Sotik and Konoin constituency. Majority of the inhabitants in the area are the Kipsigis, a sub-tribe of the Highland Nilotes, that is, Kalenjin community. There is no main cash crop in the county however majority of farmers grow maize both as a cash crop and food crop. Most roads in the region are tarmac roads.

3.3 Research instruments

The main instrument of the study research was interview guide that was used in the focus groups that is youth leaders, church leaders, community leaders as well professional individuals. The selected individuals were interviewed by the research herself in order to collect data to find out the role of History and Government education in promotion of National integration. The instrument was preferred due to its suitability to this study. It allowed the researcher to gather more information openly and with ease in accordance with the needs of the study. It also ensured confidentiality and thus eliciting objective responses. The purpose of the research interview is to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and or motivations of individuals on specific matters. Qualitative methods, such as interviews are believed to provide a deeper understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely qualitative methods such as questionnaires ([14]). Interviews are therefore most appropriate where little is already known about the study phenomenon or where detailed insights are required from individual participants. They are also particularly appropriate for exploring sensitive topics where participants may not talk about such issues in a group environment.

3.4 Data collection procedures

The study was carried out in the following phases; the researcher first obtained data collection permit from University. There after the researcher visited the participants whom the researcher interviewed each one of them independently. The selected groups included the History and Government teachers, History and Government students, community leaders and professional individuals. The researcher compiled the data from the interviews before analyzing the data.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

The qualitative data generated from the interview guide was presented in a narrative from. Once data had been collected it was coded and categorized according to the items in the interview using frequency distribution table prepared by the researcher. Qualitative data was analyzed by identifying coding and categorizing patterns or themes found in the data.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Adequacy of Subject Objectives

The respondents were asked whether the objectives of teaching History and Government subject in Secondary school are being met [8]. From table 1, the findings show that 78% of participants agreed that there are inadequate materials for History and Government subject in Secondary schools in Kenya. 93% said there is a need to have History and Government subject compulsory in secondary school curriculum. 80% agreed that teaching hours for History and Government need to be increased. 78% commented that there is a need for in-service training for History and Government teachers.

Table 1: Review of the objectives of teaching History and Government at the secondary school level

	Inadequate Resource materials history in secondary school curriculum (%)	Need to have History be made compulsory subject (%)	Need to have History and Government teaching hours increased (%)	Need for In-service training for history teachers (%)
Youth leaders	70	90	80	70
Church leaders	80	90	70	90
Community/political leaders	70	80	70	80
Professional individuals	90	100	100	70
TOTAL	78	93	80	78

4.2 Enhancement of National Cohesion and integration

The study also sought to find out whether History and Government as a subject in enhanced National integration. As shown in table 2, 78% said there is a need to have History and Government syllabus revised. 90% said that History and

Government subject is significant and should be given more attention. However, 78% commented that because of challenges in facing History and Government subject it fails to meet the needs of the society.70% indicated that learners have negative attitude towards the subject.

Table 2: The role of History and Government subject in enhancing National integration

	Need to have History syllabus up to dated (%)	Importance of History and Government achievement of national goals of education(%)	History and Government subject meets the needs of society (%)	Students have negative attitude of students towards the subject (%)
History and Government teachers	70	90	80	70
History and Government students	80	90	70	60
Community/political leaders	70	80	80	80
Professional individuals	90	100	80	70
TOTAL	**78**	**90**	**78**	**70**

4.3 Opportunities for fostering national cohesion and integration

Considering the volatile area and how it is prone to violence, the focus group mainly suggested love to be the way forward in terms of tolerance of one another despite the diversity that characterizes the region. Peace and unity go together and also promote an end to conflict that for long period ailed the region.

Apart from the school and academic curriculum, the study underlines the need for more to be done in terms of training, creating awareness and reaching more youths in the regions to preach and foster peace.

4.4 Challenges of fostering national cohesion and integration

There are many challenges the education sector faces in fostering national cohesion and integration through the curriculum. Through content, methods and devices History and Government subject should develop the following:

a) Understanding that Kenya is one nation.
b) The understanding that there is a basic unity underling the diversities of Kenya culture.
c) An appreciation that the different parts of the country are economically interdependent and that the country faces many common problems across the counties.
d) That the country's social and economic progress depends upon the cooperation of all parts and all people of Kenya, and also upon the balanced development of every part of the country.

e) A feeling that the cooperation and effort of every citizen is essential for the attainment of the country's ideals enshrined in our constitution.
f) Respect of other individuals and their belief, irrespective of the place of birth, religion and language.
g) An appreciation of steps the country has taken and is taking towards the attainment of national integration.
h) Thus we must strive for promotion of national emotional integration among our students for the following reasons:

(i) To preserve unity in diversity.
(ii) To ensure rapid socio, economic and educational progress.
(iii) To enrich the cultural life of the nation by developing the culture of the various group part of a single nation.
(iv) To check fissiparous tendencies.
(v) To ensure security from internal danger and external aggression.

V. CONCLUSION

In this study, we have found out that the teaching of history and government is still a very important vehicle for fostering national cohesion and integration. However, there is need to reflect a little more on the strategies that have been adopted in curriculum design, implementation and the context of implementation.

Some curriculum dimensions like the informal are very critical and need to be planned in a holistic way to include policies of school staffing and the role models the society is creating for the children.

Finally, social capital should not be subordinated to human capital as both are equally important for national cohesion and integration.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to bring about national cohesion and integration in the country, our schools need to make a deliberate effort to reorient their educational programs to educate the children and the youth on the virtues of culture and civilization on. This orientation is required under various aspects of school programs like aims of education the content, the teaching process, textbooks and the research in History and Government subject.

Education, properly oriented in respect of the knowledge which imparts, the capacity for thinking which develops, the training of emotions which it undertakes and practical activities which it organizes, can be a potent instrument in making the people of the country an integrated nation. It is the ignorance of the other people's ways of living and thinking, ignorance of the democratic and secular nature of our constitution which strengthen the separatists' tendencies and it the function of education to remove the ignorance.

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