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**Social Studies Education as A Tool for Rebranding Nigerians: Implications for National Development****U.K. Emoeffe EKIUGBO (Ph.D.)***Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti, Nigeria.***Corresponding Author\***

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**Abstract:** Nigeria holds a strategic place in the African continent and the global community. This is not unconnected with the fact that Nigeria is a diplomatic force in West Africa and a major player in African politics. Nigeria is home to one-fifth of the population of sub-saharan Africa and the most populous black nation in the world. Nigeria surpassed South Africa at the continent's largest economy in 2014. Belying tremendous resources, with a maximum crude oil production capacity of 2.5 million barrels per day, Nigeria however presents an interesting but paradoxical case study in the comity of nations. To all intents and purpose, the Nigerian state remains privatized, unpopular, and unhegemonic without discipline, strong working ethnics, integrity and good citizenship at the individual and corporate levels. Because of this, Nigeria has been branded with negative names and attributes which include corruption, drug, and human trafficking, insecurity, land of darkness, God-forgotten country, a country where

nothing works amongst others. For this reason, Social Studies is assigned the responsibility to develop in Nigerian youth an understanding of their societal values, knowledge, values, and skills that would enable them to deal with and manage the forces of the world in which they live, and learn how to live harmoniously in the society. This study examines the philosophy and objectives of social studies education in Nigeria. the contents and purposes of the social studies education with consideration to its ability to instil high-quality moral values and good character in students and provide them with the necessary skills, abilities, and competencies, which individual students require to participate in the development of the nation. Social Studies Education with its robust aims, objectives and philosophy is recommended as a veritable tool to rebrand Nigerian and by implication for national development.

**Keywords:** *Branding, Rebranding, Cumulative failures, National Development.*

**Introduction**

Nigeria holds a strategic place in the African continent and the global community. This is not unconnected with the fact that Nigerians is a diplomatic force in West Africa and a major player in African politics. Nigeria is home to one-fifth of the population of sub-Saharan Africa and the most populous country in the world in which the majority of the population is Black. As at 2014, Nigeria surpassed South Africa as the confinement largest economy. Belying, tremendous resources with a

maximum crude oil production capacity of 2.5 million barrels per day, Nigeria ranks as Africa's largest producer of oil and the sixth-largest oil-producing country in the world. There is no doubt that Nigeria is very strategic politically diplomatically and economically. Nigeria is a country that cannot easily be ignored in Africa.

Nigeria, a notable country, not only in West Africa and the entire continent but in the whole world, faces unprecedented worrisome challenges in every facet of life. Since independence from Britain in 1960, the country has experienced deep-seated divisions, pervasive instability, and recurring conflicts. Lewis (2011) Nigeria presents the picture of a committee where divisionist tendencies abound and in which tensions and violence permeate state-society relations. The country presents an interesting but paradoxical case study in the comity of nations such that in few years back, it was almost classified as a failed state and doomed for a possible disintegration. The challenge has reached such a level that glaringly reveals the incapacitation and helplessness of the Nigerian government. The challenges in the country today interestingly have roots in the history, geopolitical structure, ethno-religious composition and slow- socio-economic development (Udaunwa, 2013). A country endowed with mineral and human resources capable of ensuring development remains ridden with the crisis of governance. Nigeria political system is deeply flawed and this has contributed to rising tension and violence (Olateju, 2013). As in many Africa countries, governance in Nigeria has for decades been characterized by predatory elites and incomplete institutional development. The general attitude is that government positions are avenues to enrich oneself and one's partronage network (Antiwi-Danso, 2012). As a result, ordinary Nigerians are not only disappointed with the on-going lack of service or infrastructure, but they are also disenchanting and furious with the government at all levels.

Nigeria is a country where transparent and good governance stands blunted. In assessing Nigeria's good governance architecture and record from the overall concept of human security, the emerging picture at best, dismal. The return to democracy in 1999 acted like the springboard for the release of pent-up feelings by the people who seized the opportunity to express themselves more freely and forcefully in some instances. Nigeria is currently entangled in the web of combustible lingering ethnic and religious conflict, and urgently in need of proactive public policies, agents of peace, and conflict manager.

All these happenings in Nigeria are known to Nigerians and the outside world. Nigeria today is branded with negative attributes which include, the headquarter of poverty, a place where darkness reigns supreme, a land forgotten by God when the antics of the devil reigns, such as drug and human trafficking, advance fee fraud, insecurity, epileptic power supply, fuel scarcity, poor health care system, bad roads, bad governance and perceived by foreigners as one of the most backward, and corrupt country in the world. Other names for the country include a land of corruption, infrastructural decay, insecurity from Boko Hara in the north to the militias in the coastal areas of the country. A country whose electoral and examination malpractices is highest in the West African Sub-region, where citizenship and patriotism is next to zero. There is the need for rebranding.

Hamilton (2008) opines that branding is a claim of distinction that starts from within. Because Nigeria have been branded and perceived both locally and internationally, with negative attributes as above, there is the need to rebrand the country and it must start with the Nigerian government at all levels and the

Nigerian people. The essence of which is to present Nigeria in a positive way to the world outside, and to enhance our image, exploit existing opportunities within and outside Nigeria and attract investors all over the world to this country. This will generate more wealth and in turn deliver economic growth to the citizens and to the country, employment generation will be positively affected, increased employment will reduce crime and positively affect the national security.

All these must begin with Nigerians. Jeff Kelton (2018) opined that attitude is everything. Successes begins with the mind and one's attitude is the window so the world. Therefore, rebranding which is geared towards making Nigerians appreciate themselves and their country, thereby positioning themselves to the outside world is what we require for now.

### **Philosophy and Objectives of Social Studies Education in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, Social Studies came as an answer to specific national problems. In the late 1960s, most educationists in Nigeria agreed that schools must be Nigerian in outlook rather than emphasizing foreign ideals. It was through Social studies education that a love of the world developed in Nigerian child in such a way that they would develop a strong attachment to their country and government as well as to expose them to the problems in the society and equip them with the necessary skills needed for their survival. Again, after the Nigerian Civil War, (1967-1970) it came to be felt that the study of the society and its proper understanding could be better done through an integrated subject that would enlist the aspects of separate Social Science subjects and look at the realities of life in their interconnectedness (Ekiugbo, 2015). Kukah (1993) also observed that the main philosophy behind the birth of Social studies in Nigeria during the 1960s is aimed at mobilization of youths, students and young learners for the purpose of helping them cultivate an awareness and understanding that would transform them into citizen with skills, attitude, competencies, moral values and reasoned arguments to effectively love, interact, interrelate and contribute positively to the economic, social, political and development of the Nigerian society.

Social studies objectives are derived from the National Education Objectives and are aimed at the realization of the aspirations of the national educational objectives. The two are similar because they aim at the achievement of similar goals such as national consciousness, national unity, development of positive attitude towards democratic values and citizenship, trained development of skills, and acquisition of knowledge. The general objectives of Social studies education as identified by Best (2000) can be seen as follows: Creation of awareness in the learners from the attitudes, values, and norms of the society, the promotion of effective and active citizenship, the promotion of an understanding of the social problems of locating and finding possible solutions to them, helping the learners to develop the right attitude towards the leaders of the government, the creation of an understanding of their role during elections especially on how to discharge their duties efficiently, and the demonstration of flexibility and willingness to accept necessary changes within a system for the good of all.

Best (bid) expressed his views on the following above as objectives of Social Studies which include Social studies emphasizes discovery, dialogue and experiences as learners discover things themselves). Social Studies enable learners to understand their environments in all ramifications. It affords the learners the opportunity of understanding society, identifying its problems and also finding satisfactory solutions

to them. It inculcates healthy social attitudes and values in the learners such as kindness, patriotism, resourcefulness, open-mindedness as well as the capacity to learn and acquire skills that are essential for forming a sound judgment. It is essential to build a strong and united nation by combating social vices plaguing the nation. Social Studies enable individuals to be alive to their social and civic responsibilities; Social studies promote the appreciation of our cultural heritage; Social studies promote international understanding and worldwide peaceful co-existence. It aids co-operation, unity, and clear understanding among nations; and Social Studies enables its learners to be well-informed citizens who are capable of contributing their quota to the healthy development of their country.

While all these look robust and laudable, a question on the lip of every concerned and patriotic Nigerian is that how and to what extent are these fulfilled in Nigeria? Are these philosophy and objectives merely on paper or they are used by Nigerians to make life meaningful for everyone. What is the true picture of Nigeria today, a nation who had independence in 1960 from the colonial masters?

### **Cumulative Failures as Experienced In All Sectors of the Nigerian Economy: An Appraisal**

Nigeria is a nation whose development and human rights regime were enveloped by over-ambitious military (MIS) adventures for over fifteen years in a pool of political instability and moral bankruptcy, communal conflicts, insatiable greed, executive recklessness, corruption, cupidity, and moral decadence, bastardized cultural values cannot but be a reflection of social failure rooted in a dysfunctional educational system. The vulnerability of Nigerian's educational system to meet the requirement of quality/excellence/standard and relevance is further compounded by several indicators of poverty.

Nigeria has been correctly ascribed the position of the giant of Africa and the giant posture is not only expressed in terms of size or potential economy but also in terms of population. Indeed, Nigeria has been rightly described as the most populated African nation. The effect of this on education especially in a country with social demand approach to education is quite obvious. The major problem facing every contemporary stake holder in education is how to satisfy this increase in population and the subsequent exhilarating demand for education without a drastic fall in quality. The unpleasant consequences are overcrowded classrooms, a poor and haphazard inspection of schools due to the inadequate number of school inspectors. Shoddy supervision of students; inadequate materials for teaching and practical purposes, practically empty libraries, inability of government at all level to pay the salaries of the teeming population of qualified teachers needed to add quality of the system, and poor and inadequate research which would enhance the creation of knowledge. The situation at present is such that in all schools at all levels, there is an acute shortage of everything except students. Indeed, these "forces" surrounding the schools are becoming more powerful and pervasive. They are creating strong societal demands that quantity in education be paralleled by excellence.

The Human Development Report (HDR, 1999) ranks Nigeria as one of the poorest among the poor countries of the world. Nigeria ranked "54" with respect to the human poverty index (HPI) and ranked 30<sup>th</sup> from the bottom in the gender-related development index (GDI). The country ranks 40<sup>th</sup> from the bottom in the human development index (HDI), The data from poverty assessment studies by the Federal office of statistics (FOS 1999) based on the analysis of a series of national consumer surveys over a 16-

year period (1980-1996) indicates that the incidence of poverty rose dramatically between 1980 and 1985 on one hand and between 1992 to 1996 on the other hand. The 25% of poverty incidence of 1980 translated to 17.7 million poor people in the country. By 1996, 67.1 million Nigerians were poor with a poverty incidence of 65.5%. The present reality of the Nigerian poverty situation is that about 55.65% Nigerians now romance with conditions of extreme poverty as at 2019.

Health indicators reveal the poverty situations in Nigeria infants, and under mortality were 2.7 and 147 per 100 live births respectively while maternal mortality was 9% per 1000 live birth in 1996.

Statistics for 2019 put Nigeria having

Population - 196.6m (projected to 304m in year 2035).

Birth per 1000 population - 51

Deaths per 100 24

Projected Population change (2001-2015) 170%

Infant mortality rate 75

Total fertility rate 5.8%

Percent population of age below 15 years 44% and of 65 years plus 3%

Life expectancy at birth, 52 years (Male) and 53 years (Female)

Percent of population with HIV/AIDS (1999) 5.10%

GNI (PPP) per capital (2019) 1000 dollars.

At present, there are an estimated 4,000 primary schools in Nigeria with a projected requirement of 916,000 NCE teachers as against 1,123,934 holders of the NCE.

Political considerations and tendencies have continued to play a role in determining the quality of education and schooling in all nations of the world. The sad experience in Nigeria, however, is that the roles played by politics and indeed governance in Nigeria have always taken its toll on the quality of education. At all levels, Federal State, and local governments education is often seen as a tool of getting acceptance. Therefore, successive governments design a type of policy, which, if only apparently, contains some of the reform to the extent that the Nigeria policy has been deprived of continuous or sustainable governance since independence. Policies of education have been inconsistent. The effect of this on education quality is so obvious.

The Nigerian economy is closely tied to the apron of its political system, to the extent that there has been inconsistent governance, and one would expect nothing superior to an inconsistent economic environment. The pollution of the Nigerian economic environment which started with the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) around 1986 has taken its toll on the economy. The pre-SAP economy of Nigeria enjoyed reliable large and notable increase in foreign exchange. The Nigerian currency enjoyed pride in the world market. Also, there was a wild, sudden and unexpected financial



windfall emanating from oil proceeds and the impression of Nigerians about the Nigerian economy was that money was not the problem of Nigerians, but how to spend it.

Unfortunately, however, an abrupt shortfall in foreign exchange came. Nigerians were caught unawares. The economy slowly crept into recession and before we knew it, the economy has nosedived into the abysmal pit. In a nation still grappling with technological development, importation was impressive. This as expected exposed the Naira to a serious blow which has reduced its value. Naira that used to go for 80 pence (UK) or 1.6 (US) dollar in the 70s slumped to the present position in which exchange for the dollar is now 350 naira and 470 for the pound.

All the above facilitates the relationship between many social indicators and poverty and education quality. Poverty deprives stakeholders in education from acquiring the means to meet the challenges of quality education. It has been established for example that inappropriate curriculum, inadequate pedagogy, and a defective and monopolized nation's social, political, economic, and cultural failure can thus be explained within the context above.

Today, Nigeria records the world's highest casualties from terrorist attacks per day with an average of 24 deaths higher than what obtains in Iraq and Somalia according to a recent survey by Mapple soft, a UK based risk analytical company. Bombing, abduction and earth policy of burning down the entire village and killing the inhabitants are some of the violent techniques used by the extremist gangs Olukoya (2014). The deadly bombings and brazen kidnapping are the hall marks of the insurgent groups which target the local population and regularly engage the Nigerian military in bloody combat. Apart from recording the heavy loss of lives, destruction of properties, and displacement of citizens, this is also a serious blow to the educational sector as witnessed a couple of years ago when school girls were abducted for a long time and later released in one of the states in the northern part of the country and abduction of over 300 students of kayam School in Niger state and Zamfara state in February 2021.

### **The Image of Nigeria as A Country As Perceived By Nigerians and Non-Nigerians**

As earlier posited, Nigeria a notable country not only in West Africa and the entire continent but in the whole world faces an unprecedented and very worrisome stigmatization not only by Nigerians but also those outside the shores of the country. This problem has brought to the limelight the issue of persisting state failure and institutional decay in the country. In recent years, the democratization process and the stability of the country are visibly jeopardized by these challenges that is experienced by all states in the country.

Today, Nigeria is perceived and branded with negative attributes which include the headquarter of poverty in the whole world. A place where drug and human trafficking thrives unabated. The environment noted for advance fee fraud with cyber crimes ruling the lives of the youths, insecurity challenges where the lives of no one is safe. Nationals from other countries working with multinational companies are abducted and sometimes killed. A place is known for epileptic power supply, fuel scarcity irrespective of the fact that Nigeria is one of the largest oil producers in the whole world. The land is dotted with poor health care systems, bad roads and is seen by foreigners as the one of the most corrupt and backward nations in the world.

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## **The Need for Re-branding Nigerian Using Social Studies Education for National Development**

### **Rebranding Nigeria and Social Studies Curriculum**

The need to rebrand Nigeria has become important because of the unfair way Nigerians have been perceived both locally and internationally. Professor Dora Akinyuli one time Nigerian Minister for Information opined that re-branding Nigeria is more critical than physical infrastructure because it addresses fundamental issues of how Nigeria is perceived as a country and how Nigerians are perceived as a people. This she said is fundamental to our national development. In 2007, the Nigerian government decided to repackage the country's image. The government of Olusegun Obasanjo introduced the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC). He also introduced a project called the heart of Africa. Though not successful, later scrapped, but it was an effort towards the direction of re-branding the nation. Dora Akinyuli introduced a rebranding Nigeria project tagged Nigeria, good people, good nation in 2009. It was an attempt to re-orientate Nigerians, believing in themselves once again, eschew evil tendencies, and thus change the perception of the country internationally.

Since rebranding is geared towards making Nigerian appreciate themselves and their country, thereby positioning themselves positively to the world, every government at all levels must address the issue of state failure and institutional decay experienced in the country.

The educational values embedded in the aims, objectives, and philosophy of Social Studies as enumerated by Best (2000) and Ekiugbo (2015) can be used to rebrand Nigeria.

- (i) Social Studies as an instrument to build a strong and united nation. The government of Nigeria can turn around the negative trend by strengthening its capacity to provide a public good, proactively responding to the needs of the citizens and strengthening democracy as well as free and fair elections to guarantee the rights, and security of citizens. The state must distribute national resources equitably and transparently and how to be accountable to the population, for how it uses these resources. The state must pursue a social and economic policy that will ensure the realization of right, equity, and justice for all Nigerians, regardless of their identity, religious, ethnic, regional or other affiliations.
- (2) Social Studies promote the social attitude and values in learners such as kindness, patriotism, resourcefulness, open mindedness, as well as capacity to acquire skills, essentials for forming a sound judgment. These are lacking in our youths today. The Nigerian youth has remained the victim of failed economic and structural political programme and the incipient bad government of most past leaders. The Nigerian youth try to change this victim status to that of the victor by engaging in conflict as a means of livelihood. Social Studies can transform the Nigerian youth to become the agent of peace and conflict resolution through good governance and genuine empowerment by the adults. Inculcating these objectives of Social Studies in the youth from the inception of their lives, will mean that values of kindness resourcefulness and open-minded nation will be part of them.
- (3) Social Studies promote international understanding and worldwide peaceful coexistence. The international community could assist Nigeria through the use of foreign aid earmarked to create

economic opportunities in the country especially in the Northern regions. But for such aids to come, the purpose for which it is given and intended must be strictly adhered to. Support for political and administration authorities and structures in Nigeria from the developed countries of the world fall under the purview of this objective, aim, and philosophy of Social Studies. Lasting and sustainable peace depends not only in the commitment of political leaders all over the world but also on social acceptance of peace by the population.

- (4) Social Studies enable their learners to build a strong united nation by combating social vices plaguing the nation. In Nigeria, the concept of citizenship and national identity is forgotten in our daily lives. The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity which Social Studies stand for is at variance with what happens today. Nigeria today is a society that is desperately menaced from within by all sorts of social ills ranging from corruption to the problem of child abuse, hooliganism, and the celebration of hypocrisy and mediocrity at all levels of government. An early inculcation of these aims and objectives in our youths will help to stern the tide of the prevalence of social vices.

In addition to the values above, values associated with the development of concentration, the art of economical living, power of expression, self-reliance, the attitude of discovery, understanding of popular literature, cooperatives, moral value, and reasoned judgment are inculcated in Social Studies. Social studies shapes culture and Social studies is an avenue to pass cultural heritage from one generation to another. With Social studies, rebranding project which is meant to repackage Nigeria and present her to the world in a more acceptable manner will be truly achieved. This is because Social Studies possesses the disciplinary and cultural values that train and discipline the mind.

### **Social Studies Implication for National Development**

Rebranding has to do with changing perception. It is all about de-stigmatization. Better called image substitution. Efforts to rebrand is not peculiar to Nigeria alone as countries all over the world spend millions of dollars doing this, to make their countries appear attractive and welcoming, not only to investors and tourists but also to people who may come in contact with their nationals. In today's world of global media, image and perception is everything.

Nigeria as a country should not pay lip service to re-branding and thus do it only by advertising campaigns alone. Real and enduring rebranding can only come by achievements, performances, and by deliberate efforts at building a port folio of assets and accomplishment that will force people to take a second look at a country and judge, the extent a country attributes contribute to the world politics politically, socially and economically.

For rebranding to be unique and acceptable by all:

- (1) The voices of people living in poverty and the most marginalized must be heard in decision making over allocation of development resources. The government must understand that development and poverty is understood as multi-dimensional phenomena that goes beyond economic or material well-being.



- (2) Government can turn around this negative trend by strengthening its capacity to provide a public good, proactively responding to the needs of its citizens and strengthening democracy as free and fair election.
- (3) States must distribute natural resources equitably and transparently and thus be accountable to the population for how it uses the resources;
- (4) The state must pursue a social and economic policy that will ensure the realization of rights, equity and justice for all Nigerians regardless of their identity, religious ethnic, regional or other affiliations.

A strong and effective anti-corruption policy should be the priority of the government. The expectation is the creation of a transparent and accountable Nigeria in which the incidence of corruption is low. Nigeria as a country should develop economically and be infused with strong moral and ethical values, without which it will be difficult, it not impossible to achieve the desired level of growth and development. Moreover, even if Nigeria were able to break out of the vicious cycle of poverty and underdevelopment, it would be a developed society without moral character.

Some other values that could help in the rebranding of Nigeria as a nation are:

- i. Integrity and good citizenship at the individual and cooperate level, discipline and a strong work ethic
- ii. Excellence, competences, creativity, and innovation in service delivery
- iii. Perseverance and longer-term thinking as opposed to short term expediency
- iv. Enterprise, thrift and saving and curbing of waste
- v. Thirst for knowledge, information, and know-how
- vi. Commitment to the welfare of vulnerable groups
- vii. Pride in the spirit of Nigeria and National identity

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The challenges highlighted above are all man-made (Nigerian made) and we can overcome. The following suggestions and recommendations will be of help.

- i. Poverty and socio-economic conditions of the people should be addressed by the government at all levels. Government should also identify those who are presently marginalized;
- ii. A total war must rise against corruption starting from the leaders to the followers. We need to collectively wage war against corruption of any kind;
- iii. Policies that will promote non-oil commodities should be formed to enhance our export trade;
- iv. Adequate attention should be given to health systems ensuring that there are adequate and functional hospital equipments;

- v. Formulation of programmes and campaign that will train and renew the minds of the people about citizenship and national identity, love for our nation should be put in place by the government at all levels;
- vi. Our leaders should put on the armour of selfless services. This is a brand of its own. The approach of all leaders should be developmental oriented, to identify, provide and integrate the needs of Nigerians;
- vii. Nigerians needs employment opportunities, good roads, good education, optimal power supply;
- viii. Policies that will promote the unity of Nigeria at all cost should be put in place by government;

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