

---

---

**THE IMPERATIVE OF NON-FORMAL SOCIAL STUDIES  
EDUCATION PACKAGES FOR SUSTAINABLE  
DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA**

---

---

Rotimi W. **OKUNLOYE**  
*Department of Social Sciences Education  
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria*

---

---

**Abstract**

*The core curriculum status the Social Studies Curriculum in the Nigerian educational system is not accessible to the significant proportion of the Nigerian population outside the school system despite its universally recognized potency as an instrument of citizenship education. The long period of dictatorial government and the anti-democratic practices of democratically elected regimes of government in Nigeria had further reinforced the need for Counter-Socialization of Nigerians, especially those illiterate Nigerians to a political culture that promotes sustainable democracy. This paper proposed four non-formal Social Studies education packages to tackle the prevailing subject and parochial political culture traits among the illiterate Nigerians. The paper examines between formal and non-formal Social Studies, the relationship between vanities of political culture and sustainable democratic governance, the proposed non-formal Social Studies education packages and modalities and media of transacting the draft non-formal Social Studies packages among illiterate Nigerians. The paper concluded that counter socialization of illiterate Nigerians*

*who predominantly manifest traits of subject and parochial political culture into participant democratic culture is possible through exposure to non-formal Social Studies Education Packages. Accordingly, it was recommended that the proposed non-formal Social Studies packages be translated to all Nigerian languages and that synergy be worked out among all mass mobilization and education agencies, Social Studies Educationists Association of Nigeria for effective implementation in non-formal settings outside the school system.*

**Keywords:** Social Studies, Non-formal Social Studies, Sustainability, Democratic governance, Nigeria.

## **Introduction**

Social Studies is an integrated curriculum that focuses on the study of human-environmental relations for the purposes of citizenship education. Social Studies as a citizenship education academic subject has been part of the core curriculum at the basic level of education in Nigeria. It is also part of the content of Civic Education at the senior secondary level and part of General Studies at the tertiary level of education in Nigeria. Nigeria students at all level of education have been exposed to Social Studies Curriculum for knowledge acquisition, value cultivation and skill development with specific focus on citizenship education for personal problem-solving, societal problem-solving, effective participation in society, societal development and human-environmental relations.

Democracy as the government of the people for the people by their accredited representatives is only sustainable when its attendant democratic culture has been imbibed, practiced and sustained over a fairly long period as obtainable in countries where it has been practiced and virtually become a culture and practice of governance. It is on account of its relative newness in governance in Nigeria and some other developing countries that the variant of democracy has been described as an experiment. The political culture on which democracy thrives according to Almond and Verba (1963)

is the civic culture. The civic culture is the ideal political culture postulated by Almond and Verba (1963) but the participant political culture is the near-ideal political culture that guarantees active participation of the citizens on the determination of who, on what, how and for what duration they are governed by any representatives or regime in government elected by the majority of the electorate.

Contrary to this requirement, most developing countries, such as Nigeria have been governed for a fairly long period by feudal – oligarchies, military oligarchies and other dictatorial regimes. Accordingly, the electorate or the generality of the citizens have been socialised into the subject and parochial political cultures which are associated with dictatorial forms of government (Anazodo, Ucheena, & Uche, 2012). There is therefore the need to counter socialise the greater majority of the citizens to imbibe the civic or participant political culture traits through exposure to the existing Social Studies Curriculum or at least some other elements of citizenship education in the former school system.

This has not been possible in Nigeria due to the prevalence of very high rate of illiterate population and extremely high rate of out of school children. According to Adamu 60 million Nigerians or 30% of the population are illiterates as at 2017 (<https://www.fawo.org/education>). According to the Federal Government of Nigeria (2021) 76 million Adults or 38% of the estimated 200 million population can neither read nor write, despite increasing efforts of government to improve the level of literacy in Nigeria. According to the United Nation Children Education Fund (UNICEF) there are 18.5 million out of School Children in Nigeria, 60% of whom (more than 10 million) are girls. These statistics are pointer to the need for non-formal education if they must be exposed to Social Studies for Citizenship Education. This cannot wait till they are enrolled in the basic schools because of the serious threat they constitute to Nigerian security and development. These significant proportion of Nigerian who are illiterate are the recruitment pool for boko haram terrorists, bandits, kidnappers, unknown gunmen political thugs and other anarchists and insurgents, who are presently threatening the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Nigeria. These group of Nigerians need exposure to non-formal Social

Studies education packages for the purpose of socialising them into effective citizenship and more specifically for meaningful political participation in the political system for Sustainable democratic governance. Hence the focus of this paper on the imperative of non-formal Social Studies Education Packages for sustainable democratic governance in Nigeria. The paper focuses on addressing the following questions:

- i. How different is the Formal Social Studies Curriculum from the Non-formal Social Studies Education Packages?
- ii. What are the relationship between political cultures on Sustainable democratic governance?
- iii. What are the non-formal Social Studies Education Packages that can be used for tackling non-democratic orientations among illiterate Nigerian?
- iv. What are the modalities and media for transacting the non-formal Social Studies Education packages among illiterate Nigerian?

### **Differences between the Formal and Non-formal Social Studies**

Although, the nomenclature or identity tag of Social Studies Curriculum and non-formal Social Studies Education packages are predominantly similar on account of its Social Studies or Citizenship Education Content, the formal Social Studies differ from the non-formal Social Studies in terms of the nature of content and context of implementation and the target end-user, the developer, and the language of implementation. The context of instruction or implementation is a major difference. The formal Social Studies curriculum is offered with the school system at all levels of education as a Curriculum that has gone through the entire phases of curriculum development processes to become a final product that is being implemented in the school system. On the other hand the non-formal Social Studies Education Packages are programmes of citizenship education that were developed as an intervention measure for the illiterate population outside the school system.

**The Nature of Content and Context of Implementation:**

The formal Social Studies Curriculum is amenable to curriculum filtration and implementable in a well-structured manner with different degrees of difficulty levels and different patterns of structures content in relation to differentiated levels of education as well as learners characteristics. Whereas, the non-formal Social Studies are packages without such schematized structure of content outside the formal educational system.

**The Targeted End-Users:** The targeted end-users of the Formal Social Studies Curriculum is the learners or students in the formal school system at different levels of education while the non-formal Social Studies is targeted at illiterate population outside the formal school system. This explains why the non-formal Social Studies Education Packages are translated into virtually all Nigerian Languages.

**The Curriculum or Package Developer:** The formal Social Studies curriculum was developed, packaged and facilitated for implementation by a centralised curriculum development agency at the appropriate levels of education. For instance, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) developed the Social Studies Curriculum centrally for implementation all over Nigeria at the Basic level of Education. This is very much unlike the non-formal Social Studies Education Packages that are developed by Social Studies experts and researchers as problem-solving intervention for Citizenship Education of illiterate Nigerians.

**The Language of Implementation:** The formal Social Studies Curriculum is implemented mainly through the medium of English, although at Lower Basic level, Mother tongue or Language of the environment may be code-switched with English Language when necessary in Classroom situations. The non-formal Social Studies Education Packages will be strictly implemented in mother tongue or Nigerian languages with the assistance of Federal and state Ministries of Education, National Orientation Agency and Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and other government media agencies.

### **Relationship between Political Cultures and Sustainable Democratic Governance**

Political culture refers to a particular set or pattern of values, beliefs, attitudes about the political system, political structures, regimes of government, system of governance and order of political succession (Okunloye, 1990). According to Almond and Verbal (1963) the three major generic political cultures are the Subject, Parochial and Civic. The Subject Political Culture and Parochial Political Culture minimise or restricts popular political participation and therefore associated with non-democratic political systems and government. The Civic culture in Almond and Verba's Classification is the ideal political culture that promotes popular political participation, popular sovereignty and accountability of the government to the governed. However, because this ideal is hardly obtainable in any Political system, even the most developed democracy, they postulated a variant of the Civic Culture known as the participant political culture.

In the light of these classified categories with reference to democratic governance, It is apparent that there exists a symbiotic and non-symbiotic relationship between political cultures and democratic governance. Whereas the Subject and Parochial Political Culture are antagonistic to democracy. The Civic and Participant Political Cultures are complementary and catalytic to democratic governance as postulated by Almond and Verba's analysis on political culture and democratically governed political system.

It is in the light of these relationships that the non-formal Social Studies Education packages are targeted at counter Socialising the illiterate Nigerian Citizens who have predominantly imbibed the parochial and Subject Political Cultures into participant orientations. (Anazodo, Uchenna & Uche; 2012). The exposure of illiterate Nigerians to anti-democratic behavioral traits through Political godfatherism, non-democratic practices in the First, Second, Third and Fourth Republics, the sight-tight attitudes of Nigerian politicians to political power holding, election malpractices (at intra-party and general elections) and increasing monetization of intra-party and general election Voters' behavior are part of the traits and causes of socialisation into parochial and subject political cultures (Okunloye, 2017).

Citizens who imbibe and exhibit traits of subject political culture see themselves as subjects of the government who are at the mercy of individuals and groups in government. Those who imbibe and exhibit the traits of parochial political culture see themselves as far removed from government, and governance, as elected or political office holders at the Local, as State or Regional levels. On the Contrary, they only have indistinctive awareness of the existence of the Central, National or Federal Government that they perceived to be far from them. These traits of significant level of withdrawal syndrome breed political apathy among Nigerians. Governments and governance to such illiterate citizens becomes “government of others” and not “their government”. Illiterates citizens with these perceptions of government and governance tend to become apoliticals and instead of becoming participants in voting, political campaign, party membership, party office-holding, political office-holding or aspiring to contest elective position in government. These probably accounted for the relatively low level of Voting Age Population Turnout (VAPT) in Nigerian Presidential Elections from 1979-2015 (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance IDEA, 2006, Mahmud, 2015). It is for these observed trend that the illiterate population of Nigerians who cannot access the formal Social Studies Curriculum to develop participant orientation will need the non-formal Social Studies Education Packages being proposed in this paper.

### **Non-formal Social Studies Education Packages**

Four packages are considered most appropriate for citizenship education of illiterate Citizens in this paper. These include: kingship of voters in a democracy; getting the elected to serve the electorate in a democracy; using the weapons of political accountability in the hands of the electorate on politicians in government; and voters and voting behaviour for enduring dividends of democracy to the society after general elections.

**Kingship of Voters in a Democracy:** The kingship of voters’ component of the non-formal Social Studies Education Packages in a democracy is focused on socializing the citizens to see themselves

as the ultimate custodian of the popular sovereignty which they only temporarily release to the elected representative in government during general elections. The Electorate in a democracy as the custodian of political sovereignty are supposed to be served by those they voted for in an elected tenure of office. Those elected are under contractual agreement to implement the programmes in their respective party's manifestoes and other electoral campaign promises. The voters have the right to demand performance by those elected items in their manifestoes with stipulated time frames. The voters, in the same vein have the right to use items in the manifestoes as indices of performance with which they determine continuity of those elected in office till the end of their elected tenure. In extreme case of abysmally low or non-performance, group of voters may mobilise for impeachment or recall.

**Getting the Elected to Serve the Electorate:** Getting the Elected to Serve the Electorate in a Democracy component of the packages is focused on enabling the voters to gain awareness and use public interest articulation and aggregation arrangements in specified constituency to make collective demand on the elected representatives or politicians in government. Legislations, policy making and implementation in the process of governance become the benchmark for accessing performance of the elected or appointed politicians in government. The Constituency Offices, Town Hall Meeting and related fora will, in these processes become continuously active for constant engagement/consultation between constituents and elected representatives.

**Electorates Channels and Instruments of Political Accountability:** This component of the packages involves the use of constitutionally recognized channels and instruments to ensure political accountability of the elected or appointed political office holders to the electorate or citizens in the constituency they represent. This involves Electorate-Representative Consultation, Active engagement of Delegates of the Electorate in Constituency offices, Public Opinion Sampling on draft legislations and legislative proposals, Constituency Project monitoring (grassroot Mobilization; Representatives), Assessment and mobilization for recall (as a last



resort for non-performing Representative).

**Voters and Voting Behaviour for enduring Societal Dividends of Democracy:** This package is targeted at correcting monetization of partisan politics and elections, vote buying and selling, and political mortgaging of electorates interests in elected regimes of government to ensure good governance and increase access to democratic dividends to the Constituents or society. This will involve elimination by substitution of political catch phrases or slogans; e.g. “sell your vote and perish” “sell your vote and waste your future” “Vote right” “vote in good Conscience” “Vote for candidate you can personally Vouch for” “vote for good governance”, instead of “Vote and Cook Soup”, “Vote and Collect Cash” It also involve short answer or explanation on why voters should vote right or rationally, such as “what you stand to gain when you vote right.” “What you stand to lose when you vote based on immediate gratification received”. “Have a look at the bleak future ahead of you when you vote for the candidate and/or political party that is buying your vote”.

### **Modalities and Media of Transaction of the Non-Formal Social Studies Education Packages**

The non-formal nature of the packages are most appropriately transacted through mass media, market places, Motor garages, mass mobilization or voter education campaigns, National Orientation Agency (NOA) using Radio Jingles, Television Adverts, Newspaper cartoons, Newspaper Adverts, Cartoons, Electronic Bill Board, Jingles in Public places, short Captioned video, Radio Playlets, and Documentaries on accessible dividends of democracy and good governance. All these will be communicated in local languages or the language of the environment wherever the packages are to be used.

### **Conclusion**

The exposure of Nigerians, especially the illiterate citizens to dictatorial government and anti-democratic practices and conduct of government by prima facie democratically elected regimes of

government and the significantly high level of illiteracy among Nigerian citizens demand deliberate counter socialisation packages for the development of participant democratic orientations. Non-formal Social Studies Education Packages are most appropriate for this purpose in as much as it accessible to everyone outside the formal school system. By so doing literate and illiterate Nigerians would have equal opportunity to acquire relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable them become active and effective participants in the democratic process of governance at all levels.

### **Suggestions**

In order to address the prevailing high level of illiteracy and anti-democratic orientation among Nigerian citizens of school age there is the need for Nigerian Government at all levels to translate the proposed Non-Formal Social Studies Education Packages to local languages for effective implementation. It is also necessary for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Presidency and Governors' Offices, the state and Federal Ministries of Information, National Orientation Agency (NOA), the Federal and State Mass Education agencies and allied bodies work in synergy with the Social Studies Educationist Association of Nigeria (SOSAN) for effective use of the developed Non-Formal Social Studies Education Packages among targeted groups of illiterates in public places all over Nigeria.

It is necessary for the Federal and State Governments to establish a National Inter-Agency Committee on Citizenship Education (NICCE) to permanently institutionalize the suggested synergy among the relevant agencies to tackled other citizenship education issues that are related to voter education and voting behavior for sustainable democratic governance. It is hoped that these measures when implemented will go a long way to guarantee Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria.

### **References**

- Adamu, A. (2017). Literacy in Nigeria (SDG Target 4.6). Retrieved March 4, 2023.

- Almond G. A. & Verba, S. (1963). *The civic culture*. Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Anazodo, R., Uchenna, A. T. & Uche, E. (2012). Parochial political culture: The bane of Nigerian development, *Review of Public Administration and Management* 1(2), 10-19. Retrieved November 4 2012 from [www.arabian.bmt.com/RPAMindex.php](http://www.arabian.bmt.com/RPAMindex.php)
- Federal Government of Nigeria (2021). Literacy in Nigeria. Retrieved March 4, 2023 from [tribuneonline.com](http://tribuneonline.com) > 76-millionNigerians-adultsareilliterates/ved
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) (2006). Retrieved March 4, 2023 from <http://www.idea.int/it/countryview-cfm?countrycode=NIG>
- Mahmed, S. S (2015). The 2015 General election: Voters' turnout, voting behaviour and democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Retrieved December 4, 2022 from [www.inecnigeria.org/wpcontent/uploads](http://www.inecnigeria.org/wpcontent/uploads)
- Okunloye, R. W. (1990). *Theory and practice of politics: An introduction*, Haytee Books.
- Okunloye, R. W. (2016). Monetisation of politics and elections in fourth republican Nigeria: implications for sustainable democratic governance. *Kampala International University Journal of Humanities*, 2(2A), 77-85. Retrieved December 4, 2017 from <http://www.iihumas.com/ois/index.php/killhums/article/view/187>
- United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF). *Illiteracy in Nigeria*. Retrieved December 4, 2022 from <https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/education>