

**RESOLVING NIGERIA'S NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
CHALLENGES: THE MANDATE FOR SOCIAL STUDIES**

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Abstract

Exploring Social Studies as a recipe for national development in Nigeria is the thrust of this paper. However, to achieve this, Social Studies must be restructured to accommodate concepts like good governance, value and security education, media education, and so on. The major challenges bedeviling national development in Nigeria are discussed, especially: corruption, insecurity, poverty, insurgency, a monocultural economy, and inadequate educational opportunities and resources. The paper further focused on the role of Social Studies in promoting and attaining national development in Nigeria. Recommendations proffered in this paper include adequate funding of the education sector, enriching Social Studies curricula, job creation, and so on.

Keywords: Development, National development, Education, Social Studies.

Introduction

In general, the education sector continues to be crucial for achieving national development. It is impossible to overstate the importance of Social Studies education in general to the overall development of a country. Nigeria is proud to be the sixth-largest oil exporter in the world, but she also imports more refined petroleum products than any other African nation and is listed as the 26th poorest nation in the world (UNDP, 2002). This is unreasonable and perplexing. According to Evbie (2014), the poor performance of the country's four current refineries, poor management, sabotage, and a high level of corruption are mostly to blame for this deplorable state of affairs.

According to FRN (2004), education in Nigeria is a “for excellence” tool for achieving national development. Particularly Social Studies education will successfully alter a person's mindset and character, transforming him or her into a productive member of society and the human race as a whole. According to Egbule (2021), social issues have hampered Nigeria's efforts to progress, hence the country urgently needs Social Studies education to solve these issues and promote nation-building and national development.

The potential for development in Nigeria since its independence in 1960 have, according to Okonkwo and Efeurhobo (2015), been hindered or complicated by a variety of issues. Recent security issues have had a significant impact on it. This indirectly has negatively slowed socioeconomic progress. This implies that the nation's socioeconomic advancement has been negatively slowed. To use Thomas Hobbes' phrase, life today is short, ugly, solitary, poor, and brutish because of the insecurity of lives and possessions. This is why modern society has suffered from this setback. In a society that is so mired in crises of varying severity, how can individuals grow? It is important to recognize that the purpose of the article is to critically examine the problems with Nigeria's development and suggest solutions based on Social Studies instruction. Hence, there is confidence that Social Studies education may be used to address the issues that have the potential to skew developmental objectives, efforts, and processes.

Conceptual Clarifications

The concept of education has attracted diverse definitions over the years. Education, simply put, is the total process of learning through which knowledge, values, skills, and characters are acquired. Oniyama (2021) sees education as the contribution of a community to the growth process of its young ones, to equip them with skills to cope with future changes. Social Studies is social science because it includes a variety of disciplines (including the arts, humanities, and social sciences), education is viewed by social scientists as an interdisciplinary field. The study of man and his surroundings can be summed up as Social Studies. In social sciences, it is acknowledged that man does not live alone, according to Ukadike (2022). He must coexist in society with other men if his needs are to be addressed. Man will always run into obstacles when dealing with his physical and social environment, and in order to make life more comfortable and meaningful, he must always discover answers to these questions.

Like many other concepts in the social sciences, “development” is open to various definitions or descriptions from various persons at various times. Adedeyi (1989), cited in Atang and Ugo (2021), provided a more succinct and understandable definition of development as a process of socio-economic and political transformation of social structures in a society that results in an improvement in the standard of living of the population, including education, housing, health and nutrition, and other related social services; a reduction in income inequality; an imbalance between the urban and rural areas; and political stability.

National development, according to Osakwe (2010), is the capacity of a nation to enhance the social welfare of its citizens by growing its human capital through infrastructural, industrial, and technical improvements. Therefore, national development can be defined as the general advancement of a country or nation in its socio-economic, political, and religious spheres. Development planning, which may be characterized as the nation’s collection of plans laid out by the government, is used to accomplish this (Lawal & Oluwatoyin, 2011).

The Main Dangers to Nigeria's National Growth

Single-Culture Economy

Before the discovery of oil in Nigeria in 1956, she was famous for her agrarian economy through which cash crops like palm produce, cocoa, rubber, timber, and groundnuts were exported, thus making Nigeria a major exporter in that respect. Today, the above fact is history. For a one-dimensional economy like Nigeria, the implications are quite far-reaching. Nigeria is a good case study because 80% of her foreign exchange earnings come from the sale of crude oil. Its annual federal budget is created based on projections made on oil prices and the quantity of oil sold. Unfortunately, due to the rising prices of oil resources globally, Nigeria is in a very pitiable state politically, economically, socially, and otherwise.

Insurgency

Insurgency like the blood of Boko Haram is growing into a monster that is gradually threatening the cohesion of Nigeria. This scourge can be permanently laid to rest through the effective implementation of the Social Studies curriculum. The activities of the Boko Haram in northern Nigeria have posed a security challenge that is virtually affecting all sectors of the economy; this has severely crippled development in Nigeria. Yet, no serious attempt has been made to arrest this terrible and unpalatable situation. There appears to be no light in the tunnel. According to Okonkwo and Efeurhobo (2015), the activities of insurgents in Nigeria have adversely reduced the life span of the people and brought untold hardship to the country with the displacement of some people, particularly in the north-eastern region of the country. Women, children, and the elderly are mostly vulnerable. Proactive measures rather than palliative measures are needed to thwart this menace.

Poverty

Nigeria is rich, yet Nigerians are poor-what an indisputable irony! Every morning our newspapers headlines are awash with reports of various magnitudes: 8 people perished yesterday of hunger, a

pregnant woman collapsed for lack of doctors, died of malaria, commercial activities paralyzed in Agbor for fear of arm robbers, a family of 5 died of tuberculosis, young adults died of AIDS, many children died of diarrhea, and so on. Nigeria, the ‘giant of Africa,’ is blessed with abundant human and material resources. She is the 6th-highest oil-producing country in the world. Yet, she has been ranked by the UNDP in 2002 as the 26th poorest nation in the world. The contradicting, confusing, and illogical issues in Nigeria are so many. Yet, no serious attempt has been made to address these terrible and unpalatable situations. In fact, there is widespread poverty, despite Nigeria’s status as a major producer of crude oil.

Corruption

The dire implication of corruption by way of exacerbating contradictions of underdevelopment was captured as follows not too long ago, namely: Governmental corruption exacerbates poverty in a variety of ways. Most obviously, it takes money away from the poor, who cannot pay bribes, and gives it to the wealthy, who can. However, it also skews choices away from labor-intensive pursuits more likely to assist the underprivileged and in favor of capital-intensive businesses (where the pickings are better). Additionally, corruption weakens governments and restricts their capacity to combat poverty. As a result, there are fewer tax revenues and resources for public services. More generally, corruption weakens the foundation of society, increasing crime and jeopardizing social and political stability. Ninalowo (2007) quoted (UNDP, 1997).

Inadequate Educational Opportunities and Resources

Quality and functional education have a direct bearing on national prestige, greatness, and concision. The skills and knowledge that young people acquire will help determine their degree of patriotism and contribution to national development and growth. The low budgetary allocation to the education sector by both the federal and state governments has contributed immensely to the decadence of education in Nigeria. In fact, less than 26% (as UNESCO recommended) of the annual national budget allocated to the education sector is grossly inadequate.

Insecurity

It becomes imperative to argue that development is guaranteed in a society that is security-conscious, a society that is devoid of threats to peaceful coexistence. Our Chibok girls have been in captivity since April 14, 2014, that is, 420 days ago. What a pity! Agreeing that the desire for development is universal, Okonkwo and Efeurhobo (2015) lamented the rate at which security challenges actually plagued development in Nigeria. An issue that gives cause for worry. Corroborating this position, Saliu and Dokubo (2015) in Okonkwo and Efeurhobo (2015) say insecurity arising from the proliferation of arms can disrupt legislative and executive possesses of democratic ideals, subverting popular will, eroding the legitimacy of the democratic political system, undermines citizens opinion and rights, enthrones the culture of violence, damages the legitimacy of the electoral process, disrupts community bonds, and produces nostalgia for military regimes.

The Place of Social Studies Education for Achieving National Development in Nigeria

The goal of Social Studies is to help students become more aware of their place in the world, more informed, and useful citizens. To foster national harmony and growth, cultural values, competencies, attitudes, and talents can be ingrained as well as national consciousness and unity. In contrast to such socio-physiologically flawed conduct as self-centeredness, which is detrimental to both national security and growth, Social Studies curriculum content places an emphasis on good attitudes and values like hard work, diligence, cooperation, participation, honesty, self-help, etc.

If Social Studies education and its teachers are suitably given their true role in the pursuit of national development, the discipline and its teachers have the ability to effectively contribute to Nigeria's development by making it a wealthier, safer, and more secure country. One strategy to build human capital and promote national development is through Social Studies education. The enhancement of civic competency and the fusion of knowledge, abilities, and attitudes in addressing society issues and difficulties serve as its primary goals

(Osakwe, 2010). The goal of the problem-solving discipline of Social Studies is to not only expose developmental issues but also to provide answers.

Education in Social Studies is crucial in instilling in students the values of patriotism, intergroup relations, and unity in diversity as well as fostering a feeling of tolerance, national pride, and understanding of Nigeria's varied communities (Enem, 1999). Esu and Enu (2010) assert that because crucial concerns for national development are multidisciplinary in nature, multidisciplinary subjects are necessary for comprehending them and coming up with answers. Having responsible citizens who are prepared to contribute to the growth and development of society should be the starting point for the pursuit of national development. The teaching of ethics, morality, values, norms, citizenship education, religious tolerance, and other concepts is a hallmark of Social Studies.

As a topic rich in values, Social Studies has the power to instill good ethics and integrity in all spheres of society. It helps to change the people's values and to reevaluate the excessive concern with materialism and primitive wealth acquisition, which is the madness that in some way underlies the corrupt social norms that constantly obstruct attempts at national development. Osakwe (2009) asserts that Social Studies investigate themes and problems from a comprehensive angle. He went on to say that Social Studies education is a means of giving young people a sense of hope for the future and self-assurance in their capacity to address the social, political, and environmental issues that affect them as individuals, members of their community, state, or country.

Conclusion

Nigeria's development is moving at a really sad and pitiful pace. The main argument of this essay is that Social Studies instruction is crucial for Nigeria to experience national progress. In fact, it is a discipline of study that teaches pupils the knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and behaviors that are seen to be crucial in man's connection and relationship with others. The study made the case that Nigeria's issues with national development can be overcome

by excellent Social Studies teaching and learning. The intellectual research in this paper convincingly demonstrated that Social Studies and national development in Nigeria are positively correlated. We express optimism that, if strict adherence is taken to implement the recommendations made below, Social Studies education will impart in the learners critical reasoning that would help them as better planners and decision-makers in management and administration.

Suggestions

The government urgently needs to put the right motivation, incentives, and consideration in place to support teachers as nation-builders. The current administration's first objective should be to create jobs. Enough money should be allocated for education to improve the learning environment. Its annual budgetary allotment needs to be examined and enhanced as much as possible. There must be some element of patriotism and statesmanship among our leaders. The Social Studies curriculum needs to be reorganized to incorporate lessons on media literacy, entrepreneurship education, security education, and good governance. Equipment for information and communication technology (ICT) should be made available for the Social Studies education teaching at all levels. The government at all levels should be willing to allocate huge sums of money to finance the law enforcement and anti-corruption agencies for optimal performance. Teachers' professional development must not be compromised. Special courts should be established to try corruption cases. Good governance should be enthroned in Nigeria.

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