SOCIAL STUDIES AS A RECIPE FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION FOR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper examined the failure of institutions and bad governance in Nigeria. It also identified the failure of social inclusion would lead to social fragmentation and polarisation, widening disparities and inequalities and strains on individuals, families, communities, and institutions. The study adopted a quasi-experiment design to establish that Social Studies is a panacea for an inclusive society, where individuals will attain their full potential without discrimination of where the individual comes from or their social status. Three hypotheses were set forth. The population of the study was 9,000 respondents proportionate sampling technique was used in the selection of the states from the zones. (South-south, South-east, and South-west) Krejcie and Morgan's table for determining sample size was used to select the appropriate sample size based on the population figure. A research instrument tagged structured questionnaire was used to collect data. The data were analysed using chi-square statistics for hypothesis one and an independent samples t-test for hypotheses two and three. The findings revealed that Social Studies Education with its core

message when inculcated and imbibed by citizens, many of the challenges plaguing the nation will be a thing of the past as the concept of social inclusion is internalised by all. This will enhance harmonious living and development in all human endeavour. The study recommended among other things government should implement inclusive policies and harness the principles of mutual obligation and active participation of citizens in the affairs of the state where all forms of inequalities, deprivation, and marginalisation will be banished.

Keywords: Social Studies, Social inclusion, marginalisation, inequality.

Introduction

Nigeria is a country endowed with human, material, and natural resources in abundance. Its citizens ought to live in affluence, but the reverse is the case in present-day Nigeria. A leading exporter of oil in Africa and the 6th leading exporter of oil in the world. The country is plagued with what seems to be an incurable disposition. Not many people had thought that by now, Nigeria would yet be tottering with the dawn of democracy years after the exit of the military from active politics in 1999. It was hoped that the exit of the *"kaki boys"* from politics would mark the final farewell to hardship, poverty, hopelessness, and national disillusionment.

It was also hoped that the nation would experience a stable electricity supply and an improved educational system where students would not be recording mass failures in public examinations and cutting corners in obtaining their grades. It was also hoped that the taps would be flowing with clean water in both urban and rural areas. The roads will not be death traps and hospitals will be places where the sick can go and receive treatments and not mere consulting clinics. Life and properties will not be serial victims of stupid violent attacks. Food will be on the table at least thrice a day for the common man. Corruption and other social vices are given drastic combat by the state. But as it does appear now, we are worse than we were, and our hopes and expectations are like wishful

thinking and a mere imaginative illusion and a mirage.

The country is also faced with the crisis of brain drain locally known as "Japa" where young and educated, skilled, professionals emigrate to foreign lands to earn a living and to secure a better future for themselves and their upcoming generation. Nigerians are living in uncertain times, and this is leading to unsettled lives for many of the citizens. In 2022, Human Development Index (HDI), reported that Nigeria is among the world's Least Developed Countries (LCDs) scoring below 0.55 in the "low human development" category. Also ranked the 3rd worst country in a global good governance index (CGGI) and the 102 positions out of 104 countries surveys in terms of government capabilities and this is a result of bad governance. The report also reveals that acute and consistent poverty, systemic and pervasive corruption, economic mismanagement, insecurity of lives and property, hyperinflation, institutional failure, rising youth restiveness, and unemployment are common features in Nigeria.

All these social vices mitigating the smooth functioning and development of the Nigerian state are a result of dysfunctions of the social structure and the reckless abandonment, neglect, and relegation of Social Studies in the formulation, thinking process, and production of good and effective citizens for nation-building. Indeed, most Nigerians now function with the sense of "let me quickly grab my share" a strange value that has come to stay (Odivwri, 2019).

The clarion call for a change from the present quagmire confronting Nigeria's economic and political development calls for an urgent need to ameliorate these long-standing social ills and bring Nigeria to a stable and functioning society. This can be achieved through the well-articulated content of the Social Studies Curriculum in developing effective citizens, who will play a responsible role in nation-building. Social Study is an intellectual enterprise that painstakingly develops effective citizens for societal progress and development through its content (Edinyang, Meziobi & Ubi, 2013).

Social Studies is a vehicle that delivers social inclusion for sustainable economic and political development in society, its content

such as; skills, values, attitudes, and understanding of its environment will enhance sustainable economic and political development in society.

In 2021, Oganwu & Odivwri argued that   Social Studies is the interconnected study of the social sciences that draws its content, concept, methods, and generalisations from disciplines both in the natural and social sciences to promote communal capability. With the sole purpose of helping young people develop the ability to make informed, knowledgeable, critical, and reasoned decisions for the communal good of citizens in a multicultural society in an interdependent world. It impacts in learners' role and responsibility to play in the development project of a nation and help develop good citizens for humanity (Isaiah, 2016).

Objectives of Social Studies include but are not limited to: Helping young learners develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world, (NCSS). Help students understand the past and relate that understanding to the present and use it to make useful and meaningful choices that will influence life situations positively. Teach students how people and societies are organised, explore diverse cultures, and see how they interact. Students learn about political systems and how people govern themselves. It also focuses on the economic systems and issues related to resource management, production, and distribution in society. The combination of all these skills is important for students of Social Studies to move their society into an egalitarian state and themselves into adulthood as they can access information, make informed decisions, and prepare for the future.

In line with the objectives of Social Studies, i.e., inculcating the right type of values and attitude for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society, Odivwri (2022) defined Social Studies as a value-laden discipline that studies how man interacts and relates with different social institutions within his environment to create suitable sustenance for his well-being and the society. The above definition emphasizes that when the right type of values and attitudes are inculcated into the younger generation in their formative years,

they will be endowed with reason and conscience to act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood or comradeship, thereby making society good for all.

The conceptual framework adopted for this study is the social inclusion/exclusion divide, by David Pocock in 1957. It urges individuals, institutions, and society to see everyone regardless of their differences, beliefs, values, and diversity to have equal access to opportunities, resources, and power and support individuals to feel connected and valued within society. It advocates that all people, gain equal access and opportunity, and remove the barriers of intolerance, and discrimination that affects people in a society. It sheds light on how social classification, stratification, and integration can maintain and manage the ways people move about (social mobility) and through their social functioning in a society.

The theory examines social structures within society to determine the social positioning of people and as a narrative to explain and justify why one or more groups of people gain access to the center or margin, to the benefit or at the detriment of others in the same society. This theory is relevant to the study in that, it exposes the partiality of some state policies in the distribution of resources, and appointment of political officers to one political bloc or ethnic group. This promotes inter-group marginalisation, inequality, and exclusion from the mainstream of society and this has led to violence, and stagnated growth both in the economy and political sphere.

Social exclusion generates the conditions in which conflict can arise, civil unrest, armed conflict, banditry, and terrorism. Marginalisation provides a fertile ground for a crisis to exhume. When inequalities of opportunity are severe, they break the ground for or are sources of conflict, and stunted growth in the economy and political development especially when they are consistent in different spheres of the society. To ensure economic and political growth and development, the government needs inclusiveness to address the risk of violence, instability, and negative effects of social exclusion. An inclusive society, therefore, considers individual differences, needs, and perception as well as focus on creating structures, system, and processes that make people feel valued and

treated equally. An inclusive society will eliminate deprivation, inequalities, and the risks to well-being that deprivation could cause. Social inclusion harnesses the principles of mutual obligation and active participation of citizens in the affairs of their state, and banishes all forms of inequalities and marginalisation in the polity, thereby ensuring economic and political development in the country.

Globally, youth unemployment is a critical and pressing that needs urgent attention. When the youth of able-body men and women are deprived of employment at an early stage of their life, it decreases their future employability and this hurts the individual's personality, as they feel excluded from society. The number of out-of-school children is on the increase in Nigeria, according to the UNESCO Report 2022, approximately 20 million Nigerian individuals of its population are not enrolled in school. (The Guardian, 2023). Poverty remains the main obstacle to access to quality education in Nigeria. Education is a human right and is the basis for a more equitable, inclusive, and cohesive society.

In this ever-changing world of work leading to more and different transformations in technological development and digitalisation, where artificial intelligence, automation, and the use of robots to carry out jobs, many will perpetually remain unemployed due to a lack of education and training. Such people who cannot get access to education will feel excluded or alienated from society. Many people are also discriminated against on the grounds of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, and cultural beliefs, people with disabilities, migrants, and internally displaced persons. Above all, marginalisation, exclusion, and inequalities are the operations of unequal power relations in society, and it leads to massive poverty, suffering, and in most cases death of citizens.

In 2018, UNDP observed that women and young people are often victims of multiple and interlocking forms of marginalisation, and discrimination and this often leads to an imbalance of power structure that excludes them from participating in economic and political development and affairs that pertain to them mostly. The youth are often underrepresented in the legislature, political processes, and decision-making processes that affect their welfare.

This segment of the population accounts for over 55% of the entire population. They are the workforce yet; they are excluded politically and economically from the decision-making process in Nigeria.

The process of marginalisation, alienation, and exclusion starts from outright discrimination based on culture, religion, political affiliation, economic status, and social status. This discriminatory process generates an exclusionary process which can either be systematic or intentional as it emanates from government policies buried in the formal institution of the state. For instance, for a job seeker to secure a job, the applicant must have at least 10 years of experience, the ability to speak a particular language is an added advantage. Before you can access loan facilities for your small business, you must provide collateral, how? An aspirant aspiring to contest for an elective position in an election must raise a huge amount of money to buy a nomination form before the aspirant is eligible to contest the election. To get a quality education you must pay excessively high tuition fees out of reach of the common person and his children. Government hospitals are mere consulting clinics to get good health care you must pay high bills or fly abroad before you can access quality healthcare services. In the distribution of commonwealth, many are excluded on the grounds of political affiliation, religious beliefs, social status, and ethnic basis.

These are systematic and intentional exclusion processes embedded in institutions of the state to deliberately exclude citizens from attaining certain things in society. Any government that deliberately negates and exclude its labour force, the youth with 53.73% of the entire population from equality of opportunities for all, promulgate policies that make it difficult for certain individual or groups to achieve certain functioning in society, is bound to experience insecurity, unemployment, chaos, hyperinflation.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine how Social Studies Education would enhance the removal or elimination of the processes that lead to marginalisation, deprivation, inequality, and social exclusion in Nigeria state and encourage social inclusiveness.

Specifically, the study sought to:

i. examine the degree and extent of the marginalisation of our political and economic institutions across Nigeria;
ii. the structural framework that has made it difficult for individuals or groups to function to their full capability; and
iii. how the social inclusion concept can enhance economic and political development in Nigeria.

Hypothesis

There are 3 null hypotheses developed to guide the study:

$H_0 1$:   There is no significant difference between marginalised regions and regions not marginalised in terms of economic and political development.

$H_0 2$:   There is no significant relationship between social structure and functional capacity.

$H_0 3$:   There is no significant relationship between social inclusion and social stability.

Methods

The study adopted an Ex-post-facto design to establish how social inclusion can enhance economic and political development. This type of design was utilized to provide a platform for establishing cause-effect relationships between socio-political and socio-economic development in Nigeria. This approach is adopted because it provides an in-debt insight into the understanding of marginalisation, deprivation, and exclusion from the affairs that affect the population. Three geopolitical zones were purposefully selected as instrumental cases from other geopolitical zones in Nigeria. There are (368) participants that were randomly sampled using Krejcie & Morgan, (1970) sample size determination. The population of the study was 3000 for each geopolitical zone. South-South geopolitical 3000 participants, South-East geopolitical zone 3000; South-West geopolitical zone 3000 A total population of 9,000 participants. Out of these three hundred and sixty-eight (368), participants were

sampled using the simple random sampling technique at the three geopolitical zones.

Table 1: Distribution of three geopolitical zones in Nigeria: South-South, South-East, South-West

S/N	Geo-Political Zones	States	Local Govt. Area	Ethnic Group	Total number of participants investigated		
					Male	**Female**	**Total**
1.	South-South	Bayelsa State	Kolokuma/ Opokuma	Izon Nationality.	1300	1700	3000
2.	South-East	Ebonyi State	Afikpo South	Igbo Nationality	1200	1800	3000
3.	South-West	Ekiti State	Ise/Orun	Yoruba Nationality.	2500	1500	4000

The questionnaire was the main research instrument and was administered in the three geopolitical zones spread across the states selected in the geopolitical zones. The services of the various research assistants were engaged to assist in the recovery of the research instrument. The instrument contained 25-item questions. These questions were objective test questions structured using a four-point Likert Scale of SA, A, D, and SD. The instrument was administered to 368 participants in the three selected geopolitical zones and in the States and local governments to expose the populace to the concept of social inclusion/exclusion divides. The main effects on the independent variables were subjected to chi-square and t-test non-parametric inferential statistical methods. Hypotheses were tested using chi-square statistics and independent samples t-test. The analysis was performed under a 0.05 level of significance.

Results

$H_0 1$: This hypothesis states that the proportion of marginalised regions in terms of economic and political development is independent of inclusiveness. The test was done using the chi-square for the two-tailed test (Goodness-of-fit test) and it was found that the proportion of marginalised regions in terms of economic and

political development was associated with inclusiveness (p>0.05) as shown below.

Table 2: Analysis of marginalised and non-marginalised regions in terms of economic and political development

Respondents	Marginalised Regions	Non-mar-inalised Regions	Total
Social Inclusion	113(20.00)	51(16.60)	164
Exclusion	150 (13.36)	54 (16.06)	204
Total	263	105	368

Since the X^2 statistic (66.02) exceeded the critical value of (3.841) and 0.05 probability level, I, therefore, reject the null hypothesis; which says marginalised regions are independent of inclusiveness and accept the alternative hypothesis that states that, marginalised regions in terms of economic and political development was associated with lack of inclusiveness.

Ho_2: This hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between social structure and functional capacity. The test was done using the t-test independent sample statistics and it was found that there is a significant relationship between social structure and functional capacity at (p>0.05) as shown below:

Table 3: t-test Analysis of Relationship between social structure and functional capacity

Students	N	Mean	Std. deviation	t. value	Crt. value	Remark
Social structure	93	9.6	3.44	14.4	2.57	Accept
Functional capacity	275	13.9	2.05	14.4	2.57	Reject

Table 3 shows that t= 14.36 ≥ critical value of 2.57, therefore, the null hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship between social structure and functional capacity was rejected and

concluded that there is a significant relationship between social structure and functional capacity according to my data. Many of the respondents agreed that social structure increases and influences economic and political development.

Hypothesis (Ho$_3$): This hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between social inclusion and social stability.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of the difference between social inclusion and social stability

Students	N	Mean	Std. deviation	t. value	Crt. value	Remark
Social inclusion	93	9.6	3.44	14.4	2.57	Accept
Social stability	275	13.9	2.05	14.4	2.57	Reject

Table 4 shows that t=14.36 ≥ critical value of 2.57, therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between Social inclusion and social stability was rejected, and concluded that there is a significant relationship between Social inclusion and social stability according to my data. Many of the respondents attest that social inclusion will serve as an avenue to banish all forms of inequalities that often lead to crisis and other forms of anti-social behaviours that disrupt development.

Discussions

The findings revealed that challenges of economic and political development in Nigeria hold significantly to bad governance, wrong timing of economic policies, and exclusion of stakeholders from the mainstream of affairs that affects the citizens. The regions investigated all experienced lack of economic and political development due to marginalisation and exclusion of people from labour force on the basis of education, social status, religious believe, political affiliation, ethnic group or policy restrictions.And this is causing political and economic development and growth unsustainable in the regions. The states and their corresponding

local government areas investigated show that irrespective of the abundance of natural and human resources present in the region, government policies and the social structure have continued to contribute to their underdevelopment in several ways. Elaine (2017) in a study "How marginalisation of minorities affect economic growth" argued that, if a sizeable percentage of the population is not allowed to acquire a high-quality education, a good job, access to services, equal representation in decision-making institutions and protection from violence, human capital will be wasted, income inequalities will grow and social unrest will be inevitable. This finding agrees with the report of this study.

The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between social structure and the functional capability of individuals to achieve economic and political advancement. Many of the respondents agreed that a well social structure will increase and influence individuals' ability in the economic and political development of the individual and the society. Accordingly, Robert Merton. In his book, "Social Structure and Anomie", Merton suggests that the structure of a society can create conditions that lead to difficulty and isolation, which can impact people's ability to function. He discussed how economic inequality can lead to a lack of opportunity and a sense of frustration, and this can negatively impact people's functional capability. This is also in agreement with the report of this finding where it was revealed that government structures have affected the functional capabilities of people in the region. The structure determines the roles and responsibilities of individuals within the society the amount of power and controls an individual has over their lives and the resources and opportunities that are distributed among individuals.

The study also revealed that social inclusion promotes social stability reduces inequality and improves social cohesion. When people feel belong and are supported by their community, they are less likely to engage in harmful behaviors or conflict with others. However, the lack of social inclusion can lead to feelings of isolation and alienation, anger, resentment and frustration which can make people more likely to engage in harmful behaviors and this has often

led to social instability. A common indicator is where natural resources are found in abundance. This study is in agreement with a recent study by researchers at the London School of Economics found a strong relationship between social inclusion and social stability. The study found that countries with higher levels of social inclusion, as measured by factors such as income inequality, social mobility, and trust, tended to have lower levels of social instability, as measured by factors such as violent crime, terrorism, and civil conflict. The researchers concluded that promoting social inclusion is a key factor in achieving social stability and a peaceful society. This study adds to a growing body of evidence that supports the idea that social inclusion is a key determinant of social stability. Therefore, society needs to promote both social inclusion and social stability.

Conclusion

Despite the agrarian nature of some states investigated, rich in mineral resources; crude oil, lead, limestone, natural gas, granite, sand, columbite, laterite, etc., the states remain among the poorest as a result of bad governmental administration (partiality of state policies) in the distribution of resources and appointments. This often promotes inter-group marginalisation, and inequality and this has led to violence and a bad educational system.

Instead of the states blossoming, they (citizens) lament acute and consistent poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to public infrastructure. To ensure economic and political development in Nigeria, the government needs inclusiveness to address the risk of violence and instability in the polity.

Recommendations

Effective economic and political development requires effective government policy that is more inclusive in nature. Government policy should reflect all individuals having access to equal opportunities and resources. Indigenes be carried along in making a decision that affects them in the development of their society. People should not be marginalised based on education, political affiliation,

or religious belief. When the concept of social Inclusion is embedded in government policies, there will be greater innovation and creativity which will lead to the generating of new ideas and proffer solutions to man's many social problems.

It also recommended that government institutions and structures be accommodative such that it will influence positive interaction and cooperation in the regions. The amount of power and control by these structures will eliminate strains and conflicts in regions where natural resources are found. The distribution of resources and opportunities should be done equitably.

Restructuring of the country should be done to accommodate all citizens and regions in attaining their full potential both in the economic and political sectors to bring much-needed development in the regions. Institutional funding should be aggressively addressed so we don't continue in this trajectory where doctors destroy health, lawyers and judges destroy justice, universities destroy knowledge, the government destroys freedom, the press destroys information, religion destroys morals and banks destroy the economy.

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