



## Social Studies Education: A Tool to Curb Corruption in Nigeria

**Folorunso, Christianah Omowamide**

Department of Social Studies,  
College of Education,  
Ikere Ekiti.

**Bamgbade Femi Adegboyega**

Department of Social Studies Education,  
Faculty of Social Sciences,  
Ekiti State University,  
Ado Ekiti.

### **Abstract**

*This paper examines social studies education a tool to curb corruption in Nigeria. The concepts and objectives of social studies education, the Nigerian Philosophical Goals, and Objectives, corruption challenges, factors influencing corruption in Nigeria as well as ways in Curbing corruption via social studies education were discussed and it was recommended among others that Nigeria political class should be given general orientation on social studies education, they should acquire social skills that involve self-control in public offices and to be very familiar with the common values of our societies as enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Education, Social studies, Corruption

### **INTRODUCTION**

Social Studies as an integrated discipline in the educational system of Nigeria, is a study which emphasizes the process of identifying and solving

problems for the survival of man which also includes the ability to maintain peace, an orderly, decent and progressive life (NTI 2000). Thus, the importance of Social Studies as an instrument for curbing corruption cannot be overemphasized.

There is a high rate of unemployment, poverty, hunger and insecurity that have enveloped the whole strata of the economic and political terrain due to deliberate human greed, an inordinate ambition of leaders and winner takes all approach. Little wonder, Transparency International (2009) cited by Dania P.O and Emuebie, J. E. (2012) rated Nigeria as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Nigeria's ranking dropped from 121st position in 2008 index to 130th position with a corruption perception index of 2.5 from 2.7 and confidence range of 2.3 to 2.2 by implication, corruption is waxing stronger despite the involvement of several federal agencies in the war against corrupt such as economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC).

In the same year, America classified Nigeria as a security risk state and a terror-prone nation along with fourteen other countries namely Yemen, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Libya, Afghanistan, etc. when Umar Farouk Abdul Mutillaba, a 23 years old Nigerian based in London attempted to bomb a US bound aircraft to Detroit. Similarly, sectarian violence reared its ugly head in Jos recently where lives and property were lost in an ethnic-religious crisis. The reason for this paper is that the rate of corruption in society and politics is too high and in which is hindrance some social and political development in Nigeria and that social studies as a subject has a role to play in curbing corruption in order to secure better society.

### **Social Studies Education and the Nigerian Philosophical Goals and Objectives**

The Nigeria educational system has undergone many changes in the last few years, and no doubt there will be many more changes by the end of the century. Since a National Policy on Education is government's way of achieving that part of its National Objectives that can be achieved using education as a tool, no policy on education can be formulated without first identifying the overall philosophy and objectives of the Nation.

The Main National Objectives of Nigeria as stated in the National Policy on Education are:

1. A free and democratic society,
2. A just and egalitarian society,
3. A United, strong and self-reliant nation
4. A great and dynamic economy, and
5. A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

The National Educational objectives to which are linked to philosophy are:

- ✓ The inculcation of National Consciousness and national unity
- ✓ The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigeria society.
- ✓ The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around, and
- ✓ The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities, and competence both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society. (National Policy on Education, 2004)

### **Objectives of Social Studies Education**

- ❖ Create awareness of and sensitivity to man's environment.
- ❖ Influence man's attitudes positively to social, cultural political values and total environment.

- ❖ Enable men to acquire skills for solving societal and environmental problems.
- ❖ Equip men with the basic understanding of the knowledge of the total environment.
- ❖ Encourage voluntary participation in social and civic duties while developing a sense of responsibility.

### **Corruption challenges**

The greater part of the problem facing the nation is corruption, which contributes to poor governance, socio-political and economic problems. Corruption has, among other been defined as an act of requesting, offering, giving or accepting directly or indirectly a bribe or any other undue advantage or the prospect thereof, which distorts the proper performance of any duty or behaviour required of the recipient of the bribe, the undue advantage of the prospect thereof. Unfortunately, after years of independence, Nigeria still harbour the mentality that public money belongs to no one and that any person who has access to it should convert it into his or her personal use. The corrupt product of the leaders prevents the society from putting its abundant material and human resources into effective use. In an article Oil giant that runs on grease of politics,“ Nigeria was described as a rich nation floating on oil wealth but almost none of it flows to the people” (San Francisco Chronicle, 2007 and Dania, Peter O 2012.)

### **Factors Influencing Corruption in Nigeria**

There are many factors that influence corrupt practices in Nigeria. One of the factors as, identified by Osakwe (2010), is political insensibility. He reveals that a major pain discernible in Nigerian polity is the political insensibility of the politicians. He explains further that the emerging environment has thrown up

politicians who are not accountable to the electorate. Most of the politicians are not interested in their constituencies rather to line up their private purses and accounts with public funds in millions and billions of world denominational currencies.

There is widespread of sensibility that the political class neglect societal development. They have no iota of interest in the welfare of the electorate. The Nigerian populace experience severe pains from the political class. This has resulted in complaints about their corrupt practices. Sahara reports (2011) reveals a scam on the Asaba 40 billion Airport project in Delta State that took a test-run on the airport as a sign of completion. The test-run is a complete deceit for April 2010 polls.

The above report correlates with the observations of Osakwe (2010) and Aghedo (2006) that portray the effect of corruption experienced by the electorate in Nigeria political scenes. They maintain that corruption has grip Nigeria hostage. SNG (2010) reveals that corrupt practices in Nigeria have no boundary. It cuts across the political class from the Local Government, State, to the Federal echelon of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

### **Curbing corruption via social studies education**

In order to ensure a developed society devoid of social studies education must be a course of study at all levels of our educational system and emphasis should be placed on the following critical component areas.

- **Civic and political education:** In political Development, the emphasis is on the degree of political civilization that prevails, the equality of democratic principles, the freedom of the people in the governance of states, the freedom of the press. Indeed the quality of leadership and followership is of the great essence here among other. Therefore, students would be taught

civic rights and obligations, need for active participation in the democratization process, payment of taxes; others include awareness of the spirit of nationalism and patriot is not only one who can lay down his life for his country but also one who pays his taxes promptly, does not engage in bribery and corruption; one who is not a vandal and who shuns violence. In conclusion, social studies, through its civic education programmes can bring leadership, values and attitudes, Nigerian will easily imbibe the culture of discipline as the product of a pragmatic civic education will demonstrate patriotism and reject bad leadership.

- **Value Education:** Teach students social studies contents that are value-laden and would promote the inculcation of virtues such as honesty, integration, hard work, contentment, discipline, cooperation, participation, integrity, trustworthiness, open-minded as core values. Definitely, inculcation of such values will promote social, physical economic and spiritual state. Therefore, for them to understand the environment topics such as pollution and climatic chanced will be emphasized.
- **Environmental Education:** Social studies education would create an understanding of our evolving social and physical environment as a whole in its natural, man-made, cultural and spiritual state. Therefore, for them to understand the environment topics such as pollution and climatic change will be emphasized (Dania, P. O. 2012).

### **The Role of Social Studies in Nigerian Development**

Social studies help in preparing the learner for living effectively now and in the foreseeable future. It does this by drawing upon the long and varied experiences of

the human race for illumination into a complex societal problem. Taylor in Enem (2000) noted that social studies prepare our youths to understand the rapid changes and the development that is taking place in our country. The roles of social studies in Nigerian development according to N. T. I. (2000) are as follows;

- ✓ **Promotion of Democratic Living:** Nigeria is trying to be one of the democratic countries in the world, though many Nigerians are yet to imbibe the desired political culture needed for the survival of democracy. Through Social Studies, the child will become exposed to some of the political norms and values of the society. These can be done during elections periods e.g. refraining from electoral malpractice, voting for the right leader, and discouraging corrupt malpractice. If the child gets this training from the beginning, he is likely (o grow into adulthood with the desired political orientation, patriotic attitude and national consciousness.
- ✓ **Inculcating Sense of Responsibility to Others:** The old adage of being one's brother's keeper had been eroded by the greedy desire for material wealth. We do not seem to regard our responsibilities to others as fundamental. This is not good because we are trying to destroy the unique feature of our cultural lifestyle. There are numerous ways we can feel concerned for our fellowmen. These include showing sympathy, consoling during grief, aiding during need, directing confusion especially in the case of strangers, and protections in the case of threat and so on. These attributes are fast dying among the youths and for this to permeate the youth is dangerous. Hence, the child in the primary school must begin to learn how to develop this spirit of concern and responsibility to others, and this can be done

through Social Studies. The child, therefore, sees peace and security of others as his concern.

- ✓ **Respect for the Worth and Dignity of Others:** Nigeria is not only diverse in its ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic and social composition but respect for the worth and dignity of others. The nation now is facing crises in which some ethnic or religious groups try to dominate other because of self-assumed superiority. This brings rancor and prejudice, which cause disunity. The Nigerian child should learn from the beginning that all Nigerians are equal in spite of social and cultured differences between them. By its objective Social Studies helps to inculcate in the child the spirit of acceptance of the respect for the worth of every Nigerian.
- ✓ **Development of Tolerance:** Nigerians have different values and beliefs depending on their cultural background. Yet these differences are to be sunk in the interest of National Unity. Unfortunately, a number of Nigerians have failed to tolerate their fellow citizens with different religious, political and ideological views. A number of public disturbances in some parts of the country have been the result of political and religious intolerance. For a Peaceful and United Nigeria, citizens must be made to understand that each social, political and religious group has a right to exist and co-exist. If we respect and tolerate one another, no one would be hurt.
- ✓ **Increasing Awareness:** What should border you is why most Nigerians are interested in breaking the laws of the land than helping to uphold them, which of course is one of their civic responsibilities. Some of these acts are done out of ignorance of the consequence. There is a study which reports that most of those who rigged or allowed themselves to be used to rig during



the 1979 and 1983 general elections did so out of ignorance about the consequence their actions would have on the effective leadership of the nation. It is, therefore, necessary for the child to be exposed gradually to his rights and civic duties as a citizen. The creation of this awareness is one of the objectives of social studies in Nigeria Primary Schools.

- ✓ **Inculcation of National Consciousness and National Unity:** It is a pity that most Nigerians show more consciousness for their ethnic group's religious denominations and even clubs and societies than the nation. It is important to emphasize the need for us to be proud of our country Nigeria because we do not have any other one. Americans are proud to identify themselves as Americans. The British do the same. If we are proud of a thing, we have the need to do everything possible to protect and preserve it. Hence, every Nigerian needs to develop a sense of attachments, awareness and identity for the country. Primary School Social Studies helps the child to become acquainted with the National Symbols such as the Flag, the Anthem, the Pledge, and the pictures of leaders and so on. Are all Nigerians feel committed to the pride and preservation of the country? They would then have one thing in common, that is national consciousness which they would want to bequeath to their oncoming generations. This common interest and aspiration help to bind together for national unity.
- ✓ **Inculcation of Desirable Values and Social Attitude:** Social Studies as citizenship education has been seen as a means for the inculcation of desirable values and social attitudes in the child and as a means of social reform. It is in this light that while some people have seen Social Studies as a means of socialization others see it as a means of 'indoctrination.

Whichever applies, what is important is the inculcation of desirable norms and values of the society from one generation to another. Without doing this, the child will find it difficult to fit into society. Doing this seems to be a unique role of Social Studies because the subject is largely based on socio-cultural context of the society. Some of the societal values to be inculcated are honesty, fair play, hard work, patriotism, obedience, discipline, loyalty, respect, self-confidence, among others. Ololobou (1995), believes that Social Studies Education is capable of contributing substantially to the realization of the dreams of Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made;

1. Nigeria political class should be given general orientation on social studies education, they should acquire social skills that involve self-control in public offices and to be very familiar with the common values of our societies as enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
2. There is a need to adopt more people-oriented programmes in the country by our political leaders instead of selfish tendencies of our political leaders.
3. There is a need to evolve a new culture of politics which make for tolerance and political accommodation amongst the political class. The survival of democracy in Nigeria is hinged on this. This can be done through the teaching of social studies education in all our schools.
4. Using social studies Education teaching to bring about an improved quality of governance in the country. Through social studies education, the increasing irresponsibility of the political class and political leadership in Nigeria can be addressed. Topics like electoral law, political competition,

political tolerance and consensus building can be introduced in social studies education. This will solve the problem of political instability and insecurity in the country.

5. Social Studies as a course of study in the school curriculum should be made compulsory to all students in the junior and senior secondary schools in the country.
6. Workshops, seminars, and conferences should be organized for Social Studies teachers on regular basis to discuss issues and prospect that affect national development.
7. Social Studies should be used as a pilot in curbing corruption in order to achieve national goals and objectives.
8. Develop children with the psychological know-how to enable them to feel committed to their society.
9. Development of a multicultural perspective on the world people through an understanding of their differences and commonalities throughout time and place.

## References

- Aghedo, O. (2006). Academics caught in the web of corruption. *The Guardian Newspaper*, Saturday, July 19, p. 16
- Dania P.O and Emuebie, J. E. (2012) Social Studies Education in the 21st Century, a Tool for Fighting Corruption in Nigeria. *An International Multidisciplinary Journal, Ethiopia Vol. 6 (2), Serial No. 25, (Pp. 181-191)*
- Enem, F. O. (2000). *Fundamentals of Social Studies for Schools and Colleges*. Abuja: Tonem Publicity and Publications Ltd.



- Mastle G. (2000). *Social studies in Botswana*: Pyramid publishing.
- N. T. I. (2000). *Pivotal Teacher Training Programme for Universal Basic Education Course Book on Social Studies*. Kaduna: NTI.
- NPE, (2004). Federal Republic of Nigeria. National Policy on Education (3rd ed.)  
Lagos: NERDC Press
- Ololobou, Y.P.S. (1995). Social Studies: The Search for a Definition. *Nigeria Journal of Social Studies*. 1, 1-6.
- Osakwe, E. O. (2010). Social studies and politics in Nigeria: Some Developmental concerns. In Osakwe, E. O. (Ed). *Social studies and integrated national Development in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited.
- Sahara reporters (2011). Publication
- San Francisco Chronicle (2007). Stock watch associated with lead capital.
- Save Nigeria Group (2010). *A contract to save and transform Nigeria*. Lagos: SNG Publications