

Social Studies Education: A Starting Point to Reflect on the Menace of Cumulative Social Failures and Poor Education in Nigerian Schools

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Abstract

Quality represents an acceptance norm or essential characteristics that give identity or credibility to something. With reference to education, quality refers to the highest or finest stands to be pursued, a sort of degree of excellence to be aimed at. Nigeria, a country that holds a strategic place on the Africa continent, a diplomatic force in West Africa, a major player in world politics with enormous potentials for economic and social development is faced with myriads of problems ranging from political gangsterism, ethnic militancy poaching of maritime resources, illegal drugs dealing, rapacious corruption, financial mismanagement are all manifestation of failure of national security. Nigeria is currently entangled in the web of combustible lingering ethnic and religious conflicts. This has brought to limelight the issue persisting state failure and enormous institutional decay in the country. This quickly festered in hydra-headed dimension as frequent attacks on schools, compounding the problems associated with education in Nigeria. The study is an attempt to x-ray the extent of such failures in the economy and the impact on the quality of education in the country, using the social studies classroom. Recommendations were made to the Nigerian government that has come under attack over the poor performances and how the situation can be improved.

Keywords: Social Studies, Menace, Social Failures, Education,

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Introduction

On the African continent and in the global community, Nigeria is in a prime position. The fact that Nigeria is a prominent participant in African politics and a diplomatic power in West Africa is likely related to this. Nigeria is the most populous nation in the world with a majority-black population and is home to one fifth of the population in sub-Saharan Africa. Nigeria's economy is larger than South Africa's as of 2014. In terms of oil production, Nigeria is both Africa's and the world's sixth-largest.

The economic and social potential of Nigeria's diverse population is vast. However, the state's history of war and violence dating back to its colonial era has prevented it from developing and progressing. High levels of violence stemming from political, ethnic, and religious disputes, as well as organised violent crimes, have affected almost every state in the Federation in recent years, posing a clear threat to the democratisation process and the stability of the nation. In recent years, Nigeria's state has been more deeply immersed than at any point since the country's civil war period in pervasive security concerns that threaten the country's basic basis.

Numerous challenges have been placed before Nigerian society. Failures of national security are manifested in things like political gangsterism, ethnic militancy, marine resource poaching, illicit drug trade, alms trafficking, voracious corruption, and financial mismanagement, as Okene (2010) puts it. Current tensions in Nigeria stem from the country's history of ethnic and religious strife. This has thrown into focus the problem of the country's continuing state failure and massive institutional deterioration.

The picture that Nigeria paints is one of a nation where separatist sentiments run rampant and state-society ties are permeated by tension and violence. In the absence of a thorough constitutional settlement of these issues, governments have adopted a policy of "keeping the lid" on the smouldering cauldron, frequently by repressing opposition via coercion. A vicious cycle of violence and disorder may develop when one act of violence leads to further violence (Mustapha, 2013).

A paradoxical case study in international politics, Nigeria was almost labelled a failed state and destined for possible disintegration just a few years ago, and has only managed to stay together thanks to "the ability and willingness of different parts of Nigeria elites" to agree to deals on the distribution of power and resources (House of commons and library, 2015).

Even though it has the natural and people resources to ensure progress, the country's leadership is in turmoil. The political system in Nigeria has several problems, one of which is the increase in violence. It was written by Olateju in 2013. Predatory elites and inadequate institutional development have plagued Nigeria's government for decades. Therefore, regular Nigerians are not only dissatisfied with the government's failure to provide enough services and infrastructure but are also disillusioned, if not downright angry at it (Forest, 2012).

Therefore, Eso (2009) believes that Nigeria is a country where transparency and good governance stand apart, which helps to put questions about governance in Nigeria back in their correct context and perspective. The image that emerges when looking at Nigeria's good governance architecture and record through the lens of human security is, at best, bleak. The quantity and quality of government and corruption in the nation are both products of the political economics of oil distribution. Since there is no clear link between large oil reserves and the people, as there would be with taxes, rent seeking and a lack of responsibility are encouraged.

Oke (2011) notes that a number of forces have come together to define the Nigerian state. However, the political, economic, social, and other laws or policies acceptable or adoptable by the Nigerian state at any one moment are determined by economic interest, political forces, capitalists, entities, and other bureaucratic organisations. However, governmental apparatuses or mechanisms designed to guarantee sustainable usage or equal distribution of benefits from natural resources are being overrun by the interplay of transnational forces and institutional decadence.

Indications of Cumulative Social Failures and Multi-Dimensional Impact on Quality of Education

There is a volatile combination of violent extremism and vibrant homegrown insurgencies in Nigeria's recent past. According to Babalola (2013), violent extremism has torn apart the very fabric of Nigerian unity. Once admired for her role in bringing peace to war-torn nations in west Africa, the country now needs help from the international community to ensure her own citizens' safety. Increasing violence in Nigeria is consistent with a failed state, and the inability of the government to stop the wave of bombings and random murders lends credence to this theory (Babalola, 2013). Despite government reassurances that it would win the battle against terror, Nigerians are losing trust in the abilities of security officials to prevent crimes and criminality.

There can be no question that Nigeria's security situation is dangerous. This is due to the fact that the nation is now facing a far higher number of terrorist cases than it did in previous years. Furthermore, armed robbers have stepped up their assaults on banks, sometimes using the use of explosives such as bombs and grenades to force their way into secure areas and take money. They've broken into police armouries in the past and taken weapons by force after deadly confrontations with cops. It is important to highlight at this juncture that complete safety is probably impossible to achieve, but that some level of safety is typically required to tell a secure society apart from one where its people are always at risk of disintegration and dehumanisation. Nigeria, however, seems to fall into the latter group, with its internal security system having almost collapsed. The country's established of internal peace and security reminiscent of the past has become almost unattainable due to its history of colonial dominance, prolonged military misrule, and corrupt civilian governments.

After the country's restoration to democracy in 1999, things quickly spiralled out of control, with previously suppressed interest groups emerging in more violent forms (Ajala, 2006). Compounding the issues already plaguing the education of young women in northern Nigeria, this swiftly spawned in hydra-headed dimensions including regular assaults on schools, culminating in the kidnapping of female learners. When a nation already has problems with its educational infrastructure and its availability of qualified teachers and administrators, the threat of violence just makes matters worse.

As in any country, education is the key to Nigeria's future success. No culture supports her academically to the same degree that ours does. Insecurity, in addition to the government's meagre spending, has hampered Nigeria's educational progress. As a result of the lack of safety, several schools in the Northern states have had to cancel classes and protect their children and buildings from assault. This has had a devastating effect on the glut of students applying to colleges and universities.

It has also been noted that many recent graduates refuse to fulfil their mandatory year-long National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in the North. Those who were mistakenly assigned to the North during the mandated camping period of three weeks request a transfer to the

South. This change thereby undermines the fundamental purpose of the 1973 law that established the NYSC. Again, the area is suffering from a lack of educators since so many have been killed in the ongoing conflict. Over 600 educators have been killed in terrorist strikes, according to the Nation newspaper on October 8, 2015. The Bornu state has 308, Adamawa has 75, Yobe has 18, Kaduna has 25, the Plateau has 120, Kano has 63, and Gombe has 2. Furthermore, 19,000 educators have been uprooted from their native lands.

Nigeria's slumbering security situation has spawned related hydra-headed problems, such as the country's abysmal public sector. As a consequence, citizens must use their own money to fill the void left by the government, lowering the nation's potential for investment. Threats of violence, much alone actual acts of violence, might discourage FDI from overseas investors. In cases when political ideology is directly behind the violence, this is especially true. The destruction of health facilities in the North Eastern section of the nation is mostly the result of insecurity and violence, which has prompted health professionals to escape or close clinics. This, in turn, has caused locals to go to other nations for medical care, further straining already-strapped local health services (Onuoha, 2014).

There is a larger component of cumulative societal failure, and it has to do with the army of the jobless youngsters, that goes beyond the insecurity caused by the threat and other types of violence. The magnitude of the unemployment crisis is such that it might influence the kind of growth Nigeria has over the next several years if something isn't done soon to remedy the problem. The incapacity of the government at all levels to do anything beyond the rhetoric of "we are on top of the situation" has resulted in a degree of brigandage and insecurity in Nigeria that has pushed it to the point where it may be likened to a failed or collapsing nation. Unfortunately, Nigeria might be compared to a familiar or other war-torn state in where the apparatuses of state have disintegrated. Onwabiko2011.

To realise a society where the concept of equality is upheld and no one is really left behind, human rights education must be acknowledged, respected, and safeguarded as a top priority. According to a study by the United Nations Development Programme, a culture of "executive lawlessness and human rights abuse" has developed in Nigeria as a result of the country's increasing militarization and the replacement of constitutional provisions by consecutive governing military juntas. The military in Nigeria grossly mismanaged and looted state resources, denying Nigerians not just their fundamental political rights but also their economic and social rights. One of the most egregious examples of the General Ibrahim Babangida regime's disregard for the basic democratic rights of the Nigerian people was its annulment of the presidential election from June 12, 1993. When the rule of law is ignored, human rights are not protected. The term "rule of law" refers to a system in which everyone, regardless of status, is subject to the law. The law is not only the highest authority, but it also has a responsibility to uphold human rights and dignity via the judicial system and other government institutions.

The Nigerians are the most numerous people in black Africa, with a population of about 200 million people and over 250 different ethnic groups. There is an abundance of rivers for commercial fishing, and the land is fertile enough to support agriculture throughout the year. It also has a substantial stock of natural resources, including petroleum, bitumen, gold, coal, columbine, and bauxite. As a result, several onlookers have contended that Nigeria, with its abundance of available people and natural resources, ought to be among the world's wealthiest nations. But this has not been the case. There are only 13 countries that are poorer than Nigeria. Per capita income is estimated to be little over US\$300 (UNICEF estimate) and

\$200 (World Bank estimate), while almost 70% of Nigerians live in poverty. Hyperinflation is minimal, but unemployment is high, and the country owes a lot of money to nations in Europe and the United States (Omolusi, 2015). Poor road networks, insufficient public health facilities, and underfunding of education are all examples of the continued underdevelopment of social infrastructure (Oyejide, 2018). For so long, the military has been in charge of the country's affairs, setting the stage for a constant state of social instability and violence that has taken the form of ethnic and religious wars, assassinations for political reasons, and violent youth protests, among other things (Babalola, 2019). Fansanmi (2018) notes that many metaphors have been deployed over the years to describe Nigeria, including "giant with the feet of clay," "the sleeping giant," and "a land of scarcity in the midst of plenty," all of which point to the country's unrealized potential for improving citizens' standard of living and fostering long-term economic growth.

To this day, corruption in Nigeria's public sector continues to be a major impediment to the country's efforts to achieve its stated aims and objectives. Negative developments and economic progress are severely inhibited by the fraudulent operations of corrupt public office holders, and the impact is much worse in endemically corrupt policies like Nigeria's. Poor governance, illegitimacy, social dislocations, and governmental failure are only some of the social evils that come from poverty and underdevelopment. In light of the above, it should come as no surprise that Transparency International (2010) ranks Nigeria as the world's 134th least corrupt country out of a total of 178.

Social Studies Educations a Starting Point to Reflect and Curb Social Failures and Poor Educational Quality in Nigeria

Aiding Nigeria in achieving its developmental goals outside of the confines of accumulated societal failures, institutional deterioration, and low educational quality is crucial. Questions like, "Does Nigeria want to develop to meet its human capacity need, infrastructure in the area of education, regular electricity, affordable health care service, economy, politics, and to reduce to a minimum cases of political gangsterism, ethnic militancy, poaching of maritime resources, illegal drug trafficking, human kidnapping, rapacious corruption, and kidnapping?" are important to ask if one wants to aid Nigeria in achieving its developmental goals. We Nigerians believe that the answers to the questions above are yes, so the government must work to improve security and implement reforms to stop or at least slow the decline of the country's deteriorating institutions, both of which have had a negative impact on the value and quality of Nigeria's educational system. Given the challenges of insecurity, policy instability, and absolute lawlessness, it seems to reason that no investor, no matter how altruistic, would want to put their money in a nation where a decent return cannot be secured.

It is recommended that the Nigerian government take steps to solve the issues mentioned above, which have impeded the successful implementation of economic, political, and social issues that would improve not only the overall development of the country, but also the quality of education and rebrand Nigeria and Nigerians. All stages of education in Nigeria include this, beginning with elementary school and continuing through college.

What is taught in the social studies classroom has far-reaching consequences for the Nigerian economy as a whole, including its security, infrastructure, architecture, and the quality of education. This is due to the fact that social studies as a field of study is predicated on societal difficulties, namely the challenges of man in his environment, and even goes so far as to provide solutions to these issues. The goal of teaching students about society's economic,

political, and cultural institutions and processes is to provide them with the knowledge and understanding they need to become responsible, engaged, and productive members of society. This may explain why the study of social studies, rather than social science as a distinct discipline, is prioritised in the key topics of the Nigeria National Policy on Education. From this vantage point, social studies may be a tool for addressing the complex issues confronting the Nigerian people by providing a deeper understanding of those issues and new ideas on how to address them. This is accomplished by helping young students develop an appreciation for the ways in which people may shape and be shaped by their surroundings. The study of society and human behaviour may inform efforts to address societal issues.

In an endeavour to shape caring, thoughtful, and empathetic adults, the aims of social studies education might be seen as synonymous with those of the school's overall curriculum. The National Council for the Social Studies in the United States of America (1990) posed the following question: "Can a society that assumes responsible citizen involvement in decision making survive if its members do not or cannot participate in such decision making?" Keep going if its members agree with this or are unable to weigh in. The Social Studies Advisory Committee (2001) proposed this solution by arguing that public schools' primary mission is to foster "informed, responsible citizens," and emphasising the unique role that social studies must play in this endeavour.

In social studies programmes, students are asked to consider the world's mysteries and thrills from the perspective of humankind. Students who get a well-rounded education that includes social studies will graduate as productive members of society with the information, intellectual abilities, civic awareness, and propensity towards democratic principles that are essential for success. Ultimately, the information gained through social studies education aids students in assuming their position as responsible citizens and active participants to a society that is more varied and interconnected with other countries across the globe, including Nigeria.

Students who major in social studies are more equipped to recognise issues, think critically about them, find viable solutions, and form sound opinions in their everyday lives. A proper understanding of the tensions inherent in society, such as the ongoing effort to strike a balance between protecting the rights of the individual and promoting a common good, is essential for students to be able to cast educated votes. That's why it's so important to teach topics like these in social studies so that future generations will be equipped to deal with problems like the ones discussed here. Humans, according to Johnson (2002), do not just think, learn, act, and develop cognitively, socially, physically, emotionally, personally, and mentally; they also construct, test, confirm, revive, and apply multiple concepts of and multiple identities regarding who they are, what they think, feel, believe, decide to do, why they are likely to do it, and so on.

Argote (2000) noted that it is important to remember that no contemporary civilization can function entirely independently. Therefore, it is important to comprehend the interconnections that exist between our culture and the global community. Lack, rather than excess, is what has historically contributed to societal issues, and experience bears this out. Good teaching of social studies has the potential to instill in students the kind of positive worldviews and work ethic necessary to realise the full benefits of the scientific and technological progress that underpin today's modern economy.

In order to change people's minds about what their country really needs, citizens must feel deeply invested in their country and have a strong feeling of national pride and duty. These

are crucial components of any social studies curriculum, and analysis, together with the right tools and approaches, may provide the necessary mechanism for teaching them. The difficulties facing society may be alleviated over time as a result of the character, right and suitable attitude that these may foster. In fact, the Nigerian policy on Education 2004, revised education has high hopes for the potential of social studies to accomplish a number of goals, including the inculcation of appropriate values like honesty, integrity, hard work, fairness, and justice at work and play as one's "contribution to the development of the nation," and the promotion of effective and active citizenship.

The next generation's social studies education must start with our youngest students. The founding fathers' watchword was "national unity," and it is imperative that the social studies instructor instill it in the students as soon as possible. However, the social studies classroom must be more than just a place of reflection of all these; it must also be a place where the child is transformed into agents of peace, good morals, equipped with appropriate values of honesty, integrity, and good citizenship, despite the fact that the average Nigerian values and attitude is that of greed and avariousness, corruption, hooliganism, celebrations of mediocrity. In the social studies lesson, students learn about their country, how to respect the government, how to help their community without expecting anything in return, and how to avoid participating in any kind of unrest. Children learn the attitudes, values, and skills necessary to create a stable, responsive, and self-reliant citizenry through the study of social studies in the classroom. This citizenry will be able to effectively mobilise and elicit human and locally based material resources to achieve their goals and meet their needs. Education in the social sciences represents education at its highest and greatest level. Its purpose is to motivate people to want and work towards better circumstances. As the person responsible for translating policy declarations into classroom practises, the social studies teacher is the key figure here.

Recommendations

The many strands of cumulative social failures among Nigerians coupled with the impact quality education can pull the country and the entire education architecture into a downward spiral. Because tackling only one of the factor may not be enough to lift out the education from where it is right now, the following are recommended to enhance the required quality in the system

1. The Nigerian government must ensure the improvement in the lives of Nigerian people by creating jobs, creating affordable housing, improving health care services, strengthening the skill base, protecting the vulnerable and promoting peace and security
2. The government must work hard not only to improve incomes but also to tackle the many social and political factors that promotes reduction in the quality of education as it is in Nigeria today.

Other recommendations are

- a) Promoting private enterprise as this is the Nigeria engine for growth. The government must create certain fundamental changes in the security architecture, so that businesses can thrive
- b) It has been established that cumulative social failures are the bane of qualities and standardized educational system which translates to inappropriate curriculum, inadequate pedagogy, a defective and monopolized examination and abnormal poor performances in placements and final examinations.

Government must do everything to stamp out of the system political instability, moral bankruptcy, commercial conflict, in satiable greed, executive recklessness, corruption, cupidity and moral decadence

- c) Social studies education should be given its rightful position in the curricula of schools subjects in Nigeria. Through the right methodology, pupils should be encouraged by social studies teachers to cultivate the right knowledge, skills and value what will benefit them in the future and also the country as a whole.
- d) Social studies teachers should be encouraged to update their professional skills through in service training so as to be able to meet up with the current challenges required of them in teaching the subject.

Conclusion

This article looked at how Nigerians' widespread societal problems affect the country's educational system as a whole. The report examined how the tangled mess of persistent failures across the board in the Nigerian economy has impacted the country's educational system. We also looked at how these issues have impacted education in Nigeria and the country as a whole. The report also highlights the interconnected nature of poverty, inequality, democratisation, governance, and subpar educational outcomes throughout the nation. Nigeria's government and education stakeholders have been criticised heavily for the country's widespread shortcomings, hence several suggestions were made to improve things

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