

## REBRANDING THE NIGERIAN CITIZENRY THROUGH SOCIAL STUDIES: A RECIPE FOR POSITIVE GLOBAL IMAGE FOR NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

Nigeria is plagued with so many social vices, thereby making her to have battered image in the international scene. In the international scene, Nigeria is ranked the 2<sup>nd</sup> most corrupt nation in the world, she is also listed as a terror prone state as well as a failing and failed state; Nigeria can best be described to be in the state of comatose. The best way to erase this negative image is to rebrand the citizenry positively through the teaching and learning of Social, Studies. The paper x-rayed the corrupt practices in Nigeria, her battered image in the international scene, as well as using Social Studies as a recipe to rebrand the Nigerian citizenry through effective teaching and learning of Social Studies in schools. If this is well carried out, Nigeria and Nigerians will be branded as good people, great nation

Nigeria as a nation is abundantly blessed with both rich human and material resources, which if well utilized could earn her one of the best economies among the comity of nations. Nigeria had produced the best brains in diverse fields of human endeavour. These include Professor Wole Soyinka, the Nobel prize Winner in Literature, the well acclaimed professor Chinua Achebe, Chike Obi, a Mathematics guru, Nigeria is the first nation in the world to produce a drug that cures sickle cell, a Nigerian came first recently in the whole of the medical schools in Cuba, we must also recall Philip Emeagwali and professor Barthelomew Nnaji, the robotic

engineer, also making the list is the Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria Mallam Sanusi. Lamido Sanusi who recently bagged an award as one of the most 11<sup>th</sup> influential people in the world. In spite of these accolades, Nigeria is labeled in the international scene as a normless state, a failed state or a failing state, and the second most corrupt nation in the world. Akunyili (2009) averred that outside this country, in particular, the perception of Nigeria and Nigerians is so bad that even on the internet, you keep receiving information that people should not travel to Nigeria and all that. She states further that every Nigerian is regarded as a fraudster and criminal. We are never given the benefit of the doubt. So...the best way of addressing this problem is to do it in a systematic way through re-branding (Akunyili, 2009).

We are a brand, but unfortunately a corrupt brand. A brand where nothing works, a brand where there is a lot of confusion, a brand with crime glut, a brand with all shades of social melt down etc. Nigeria can best be described as a pathetic paradox:

so endowed with intelligentsia and yet with battered image abroad; so religious and yet untrusted and unreliable; so rich and yet very corrupt. "We can't grow in an atmosphere of corruption" (Akunyili, 2009). That is where Social Studies has to come in as a recipe to redeem our battered global image. Social studies has been used to solve problems of the society, especially in the United States where it originated in the 1950s. Social Studies

as a discipline is governed by the belief that it can positively influence, modify and change people's behaviours in the direction of accepted norms, values, beliefs, attitudes and practices of the society (Zaira, 2003). Positive global image is the hallmark of every promising society. This is what informed Obama (2009), to assert thus: "We will need the insight and critical thinking skills you gain in History and Social Studies to fight...crime and discrimination and make our nation more free and fair.

Drawing from the premise that a disturbing factor in Nigeria's global image is in Nigerians themselves who are largely bankrupt in morals, positive values and attitudes germane to effective positive global image, this paper stresses that Social Studies can act as a recipe to produce the right caliber of Nigerians laced with the right type of values, attitudes and skills necessary for positive global image, so that Nigeria will be great again.

### **The Concepts: "Rebranding" and "Social Studies"**

Njoku (2008), sees brand as the product that has a place in the inner minds of consumers. Branding is about value, creating a unique identity for a product or service in order to stimulate consumers' emotional attachment. Agbese (2001) sees Akunyili's rebranding of Nigeria as beginning with making Nigerians change the way they see or think of their country. Rebranding is needed when a brand has lost the relevance, value, competitiveness or has gone into extinction. Akunyili (2009), adumbrate that rebranding is change for the better. Change to the more acceptable. She opined that we need reorientation, and attitudinal change and reviving our cultural values and instilling in ourselves pride and the spirit of patriotism. Ekwujuru (2009), observed that "Rebranding

is operationally defined by Nigeria's president, Goodluck Jonathan as genuine attempt to re-orientate Nigerians towards believing in themselves once and quoted Professor Akunyili that ...rebranding is about our collective interest, our image as a country, as a people in the present and the future. It is to make Nigerians and Nigeria good people, great nation.

Social Studies on the other hand has been defined severally by many authorities based on their perception or beliefs about life and what Social Studies should be. Okobiah (1984), Ogundare(1987) and Ogundele(1987) saw Social Studies as an interdisciplinary approach to the study of man in group interrelationship aimed at producing good citizens with the needed skills, competencies and values to effectively live, interact and contribute positively to our ever changing world. Asiwaju (1990:1), aptly indicates that Social Studies has some very close relationship with the Social Science. Mezieobi(1992), sees it as a formalized correlated or integrated study of man and his environment which imbues the learner with the cognitive skills, values, attitudes and competences that will enable him become an informed, rational.

Analytical, participative and functional citizen in his environments and beyond. Iyamu and Edozie(2006), emphasized that Social Studies is a dynamic, systematic and integrated discipline for generating knowledge, attitude and skills necessary for dealing with contemporary life issues. Social Studies is a response towards a goal-oriented education that is geared towards sensitizing young people to solving personal and community related problems (Ukadike, 2010). It is an integrated field of study that attempts to study man in-depth within the ramification of his dynamic environment, as well as equipping him with positive knowledge, attitudes, values and adaptive interactive skills for the purpose of

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producing a socio-civically competent, humane and effective citizenry who can contribute positively to the good of the society (Odogbor, 2010). Drawing from these definitions. Social Studies as a discipline explores how man interacts with his dynamic environments and the relationship between man and his fellow man.

**Nigeria Today**

The Report of Transparency International (2002) titled Corruption Perspective Index and African "Competitiveness" has indicated Nigeria as the second most corrupt country in the world. Today, Nigeria has traded her dignifying values of diligence, patriotism, high ethical standards, her abundant natural resources of yesterdays for inglorious habits colloquially referred to as the "Nigerian factor": the pursuit of injustice, upturned values, endemic corruption and gross misrule (Osakwe, 2009). To add credence to this, the Nigerian compass (2011) reported that the World Bank Links 149.13t loot to Nigerian leaders. Today, politics in Nigeria is the most lucrative business, because of corruption. Corruption in Nigeria is associated with certain concepts. Some of these concepts include improbity, dishonesty, lack of conscience, selfishness, unreliability, unfairness, injustice, election rigging, examination malpractice etc. (Otoja, 2005). The pervasiveness of corruption has done incalculable harm to the image of Nigeria abroad. This menace has battered the credibility of Nigeria citizenry especially the business community. Consequently, socio-economic, political and technological developments are adversely affected. Nigeria is a fertile ground for breeding corruption and thus, falsehood, impropriety, illegitimacy, fraud, injustice, illegality are now the norms of the land. Lewis (2008) opined that a corrupt society produces corrupt leaders and

followers, corrupt institutions and corrupt institutions create a multiple of corrupt systems. Corruption has become Nigeria's worst enemy and the political actors have by their looting and plundering of the nations resources, brought us to this level of pain (Osakwe, 2010). The Save Nigeria Group (2010), opined that about \$89billion of Nigeria's fund has been stolen by the country's political managers and carted out of the country for safe keeping. The consequences of such monumental looting as a result of corruption does serious damage to a nation's image before the international community. It also promotes and sustains unequal distribution of asset ownership and unequal access to education (Odejide, 2008).

In spite of the establishment of anti-corruption agencies like Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), corruption continues to manifest in all facets of human life in Nigeria, including internet fraud and the notorious Advance Fee Fraud. A good number of Nigerians and foreigners have been victims of both internet and Advance Fee Fraud.

Nigeria is the only country in the World where persons convicted of corruption are celebrated after serving jail terms. People no longer express bitterness and shock each time they hear of billions of Naira being stolen from public coffers, since it has now become a daily occurrence (Osakwe, 2009). An inspector General of Police, Minister, governors, parliamentarians, local government chairmen, board members, civil servants and many others have been charged for one corrupt case or the other in the past twelve years of democratic rule in Nigeria. Criminality manifesting in 419 fraud, embezzlement, cyber crimes, kidnapping, political assassination, armed robbery, rape, examination malpractice are the order of the day

in Nigeria (Akpochofo, 2010). This has forced some people to brand Nigeria "a normless society" and "a predatory contraption" (Igun, 2008). The image of Nigeria has been dented seriously across the globe as a result of corrupt practices. Several Nigerians are languishing in jails in a number of countries, many that are not lucky have been deported, and some others executed by the authorities of those countries where they committed the crimes or atrocities. The damages corruption has done to the polity, our national image and the generality of our people are catastrophic and incalculable. The malaise pervades all segments of the society as well as public institutions.

Nanaghan (2010) in an article in the Vanguard Newspaper stated that as far back as 2007, Nigeria had been labeled a "failed State" by the international organization known as the "Fund for Peace". Some of the characteristics of failed states are:

- a) Erosion of legitimate authority to make collective decisions;
- b) Inability to provide reasonable public services;
- c) Widespread corruption and criminality;
- d) An absence or a sustained limitation of the growth of democratic institutions (Nanaghan, 2010).

The Newswatch Magazine had a special independent edition titled, A nation in Crises and was published on October, 05, 2009. The edition x-rayed every strata of our national life, such as politics, power, education, roads, hospitals, industries, banks, and security and summed it up by saying "the country has stopped moving" as what we have is a tale of dashed hopes. Nigeria is languishing in the abyss of underdevelopment as basic infrastructures are either inadequate or, in some cases nonexistent. According to This Day opinion of November 5, 2008, nothing works well in Nigeria because of corruption. Many

roads are death traps even when attempts are made to fix the roads, corruption will not allow for a thorough job, "We can't grow in an atmosphere of corruption" (Akunyili, 2009).

The democratic institutions in Nigeria can best be described as rubber stamp or at best just there. The legislature rather than legislate on issues of national significance are more interested in how to garner more allowances for themselves and family members or go for political retreats where they launder and squander our money. The Nation (27th June, 2010) noted with great concern that "...Nigeria's House of Representatives is becoming more of a dynasty of profligacy, and an outright treasury looting. They fight over money more than over passage of bills, while critical legislations which are crucial to the democratic transformation of the country (the larger Nigerian society) remain unattended to (Osakwe, 2010). Recently, there was a show of shame in the Nigerian House of Representatives (Green Chambers), where members had a free for all fight where they used dangerous weapons to light and tear their dresses over the watchful eyes of the media. The genesis of the crisis was the clamour for a one hundred percent increase in the quarterly allowance from 1421 million to N42 million in a country where millions are either jobless or earning mere pittance (Osakwe, 2010). This includes constituency votes/allowances, which amount to millions of Naira, and which are never accounted for. This then confirmed the verdict by Igun (2008) that the social contract between the Nigerian state and the citizens has been breached. The hopes, expectations and aspirations of Nigerians have constantly been dashed by the political elite who are unable to provide the essential needs of the people inspite of abundant resources Nigerian is blessed with (Akpochofo, 2010).

In Nigeria, politics is the most lucrative business because it is enveloped with corruption due to systemic failure. In fact, Nigeria is

experiencing systemic failure in political, social, economic and technological aspects of the nation's life, no doubt then that the nation is plagued by political instability, porous border, flagrant disregard for the rule of law, sectarian violence, advance fee-fraud (419), militancy, terrorism, endemic corruption, electoral violence and thuggery (Oganwu, 2010). Unlike what obtains in Western democracies and other stable polity where election results are declared less than 24 hours at the close of polls, in Nigeria, it could take three days (Osakwe, 2009). In some situations, results to an election are informally known before the end of voting, and when the results will be formally announced by the electoral body, the results are usually the same with the ones informally announced. In some cases, multiple voting is not uncommon as well as ballot paper and ballot box snatching and stuffing.

In 2009, America classified Nigeria as a "Security risk State" and a terror prone nation along side with fourteen other nations of the world namely. Yemen, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somali, Libya, Afghanistan etc. when a 23 year old Nigerian Umar Farouk, 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 properties were lost in an ethno-religious crisis (Oganwu, 2010). Related to that are series of bomb blasts in many parts of the country, especially the one that occurred when Nigeria was celebrating her 50<sup>n</sup> independence anniversary. Also worthy of mention was the post election violence that erupted in the northern part of the country where so many people were rendered homeless, many properties and lives were lost, especially youth Corpers serving their father land.

### **Social Studies as a Recipe for Rebranding Nigeria**

Nigerians at home and in the Diaspora are concerned about Nigeria's battered image in the comity of nations. What can be done to ensure that Nigeria's dented image is erased? The recipe is to inject the spirit of doing the right thing willingly through effective teaching and learning of Social Studies. This is against the background that Social Studies is highly laced with rich curricula and co-curricular content that will equip the students to shun all shades of Social vices.

The teaching of Social Studies education can also solve the problems of disunity, ethnicity, bribery and corruption, religious intolerance, laziness, lack of patriotism, political instability, election rigging, Planlessness etc. The inculcation of the right attitudes and values in individuals through Social Studies can be of great value to Nigeria as a State (Agbatse, 2005).

The prime concern of Social Studies education is the production of effective citizens. Effective citizenship connotes, among other things:

- (a) Sensitivity to one's environment
- (b) Active participation in the polity.
- (c) Democratic-oriented mind and practices.
- (d) Willingness to assume and perform civic responsibility.
- (e) Obedience to the laws of the land.
- (f) Equipment with intellectual skill essential for national decision-making and social judgment.
- (g) Dogged defence of one's right.
- (h) Ability to understand, respect and accommodate other individuals,
- (i) Habits essential for effective Social Living.
- (j) Harmonious coexistence with other members and groups in one's polity, and
- (k) possession of nationalist and

patriotic spirit geared towards societal improvement (Mezieobi, 2010)

Good citizenship which is an essential ingredient for positive image are inculcated through Social Studies teaching and learning. Madubuike (1985) has confirmed this. It is only effective and productive citizens, who are products of Social Studies education, who would in the predominant climate of selfish and in the midst of Nigerians mad hunt for materialism, contemplate to contribute to national development (Mezieobi, 2010).

Many aspects of Social Studies curriculum content equip learners with the duties of positive image building. The content embedded in Social Studies curriculum content condemn and discourage all forms of socio-psychological defective behaviour such as bribery, corruption, indiscipline which are inimical to good citizenship, good values or positive image.

Social Studies education more than any school subject is value laden, Okobiah (1984:96) lends import to this when he quipped that: "...as far as Social Studies ...(is) concerned, the other skills become important as far as they hope in facilitating the development of ... values..." These values are co-operation, patriotism, loyalty, good governance, unity of purpose, commitment etc.

In view of "the Socializing function of Social Studies education" (Oloobou, 1992:232), Social Studies may give impetus to positive character development to Nigerians or re-socialize people to imbibe the global culture of mobilizing material resources towards the production of people with good character devoid of all shades of Social vices.

In view of the fact that Social Studies in the Nigerian context "deals with ...

interplay of various factors- Political, economic, cultural, physical, technological and psychological impinging on the life of man" (Mezieobi, 1991:117) in an integrated view of reality that would enable him make well-thought out and rational suggestions geared towards positive image. This is one of the major emphases of Social Studies education (Mezieobi, 2010).

Drawing from the above discourse, no doubt. Social Studies can act as a recipe for rebranding Nigeria through effective teaching and learning of the subject in our institutions of learning.

### **Conclusion**

Social Studies education is a very good recipe for rebranding Nigeria positively. A learner exposed to the rich curricula and co-curricula contents of Social Studies will turn out to become an effective, humane, functional and disciplined member of the society.

### **Recommendation**

Given the position of Social Studies as a recipe for rebranding Nigerians positively, there is the urgent need to emphasize positive attitudes and values in the teaching and learning of Social Studies such as cooperation, hardwork, open mindedness, honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, patriotism, justice, rule of law, fairness, tolerance, transparency, political participation, value education, civic and political education. Also, the culture of good people great nation should be inculcated in the learners right from the primary school level, which is the foundation of our educational system.

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