

# **RE-ENGINEERING SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION FOR SELF-PRODUCTIVITY IN NIGERIA**

**By**

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## **Abstract**

*The study on re-engineering Social Studies Education for self productivity in Nigeria is centered on re-defining and re-focusing Social Studies Education to meet the challenge of productivity in Nigeria. The concept of education in this study is defined in the context of human learning in which knowledge is impacted, faculties trained and skills acquired. It went further to define self-productivity as the ability of a man to utilize the knowledge, skills and attitude acquired through Social Studies Education in enhancing production process. The paper concluded by asserting that re-engineering Social Studies Education is a task that must urgently be done, if Social Studies Education must gain appreciation as a partner in progress most importantly in this era of several efforts by individuals, co-operate bodies and government to rebuild and transform Nigeria. Recommendations were made on how this can best be done.*

Man at birth, according to ancient History is a “*Tabula rasa*”. He is born without built-in mental content with knowledge coming from experience and perception of the world around him. According to Lock & John (1996) in Google, *tabula rasa* thesis favour the nurture” side of the nature versus nurture debate, when it comes to the aspect of one’s personality, social and emotional behaviour, and intelligence.

This intelligence aspect of man who originally by nature is best described as “*Tabula rasa*” grew out of a learning process from his immediate environment. He learns how to cry, suck, crawl, stand, take the first step in life, walk, speak, feed himself,

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use the toilet etc from perception and experience developing skills and knowledge of these characteristics learnt with time which is today referred to as Education. Education, according to Hornby (2001), is a process of teaching, training and learning, especially in schools or colleges to improve knowledge and develop skills. Many more especially students and parents see education as going to school but in the real sense of it, education means more than just going to school. The school is only one agency in which education is provided. We have other agencies through which education is acquired, these include, the family, the peer group, the mass media, religious bodies etc. Owo (1994) in Iwegbu & Okobia (2009) asserted that education is the total process of human learning by which knowledge is impacted, faculties trained and skills developed. Education according to Owo(1994) is categorized into:

- i. Formal education
- ii. Informal education (traditional education)
- iii. Non-formal education

Therefore, education whether, formal, informal or non-formal has its primary objective as to develop in man, the skills, knowledge, abilities, attitude and the behaviour needed for his personal and national development. There is no gain saying that it is only when a man is personally developed that he can be self reliant and contribute to national development and self-reliance.

### **The Concept of Social Studies Education**

Social Studies Education is a concept coined from two different words “social” and “studies”. Social according to Hornby (2001), is connected with the society and the way it is organized. He went further to describe studies as a particular person’s learning activities either from college or university. Social Studies therefore, can simply be seen as an academic subject which deals the acquisition of knowledge and skills needed for the development of human mind and the organization of human society.

The concepts of Social Studies Education have attracted series of definitions from different scholars based on their individual background and orientation. Ukadike (2003) in Iwegbu & Ossai (2011) defined social studies as an interdisciplinary field of study which cuts across all the subjects in the field of social sciences and humanities. Udeniya (1999) in Odor & Nwaham (2005) stated that Social Studies Education is an integrated study of man and the outcome of his interactions with his various environments.

Iwegbu, & Ossai (2011) asserted that although Social Studies is aimed at impacting knowledge and providing valuable information necessary for life, its basic function is to help pupils to inculcate desirable social habits, attitudes and values as well as useful skills needed for personal and national development. The creation of necessary attitude for self-reliance which is one of the basic demands of the society today for national growth is almost eluding the discipline because of the original misconception of the field as an informative and corrective discipline. It therefore becomes imperative to

re-engineer Social Studies Education to recapture the main objective of the subject which is to develop skills and knowledge towards self-reliance and self-productivity.

In re-engineering Social Studies Education for self-reliance and self productivity, there is the need to urgently re-examine and broaden the course content and re-access the instructional process and methodology.

### **The Concept of Self-Productivity**

Productivity, according to Freeman (2008) is a measure of the efficiency of production. He further asserted that productivity is a ratio of production output to what is required to produce it (inputs). The measure of productivity is defined as a total output per one unit of a total input. At the national level, productivity growth raises living standards because more real income improves people's ability to purchase goods and services, enjoy leisure, improve housing and education and contribute to social and environmental programs. Hornby (2001) defined productivity as the rate at which a worker, a company or a country produces goods, and the amount produced compared with how much time, work and money is needed to produce them. In productivity, the energy, time and money put into the production process by an individual, company or nation is an essential ingredient to measure production efficiency and effectiveness. The shorter the time it takes to complete a production process, the better it is and the less the energy dispensed and the fewer the money spent, the more reasonable production becomes.

Production of goods and services in a country is the ultimate aim of productivity. Production according to Business Dictionary (2012) in Google is only complete when the goods produced and the services rendered gets to the final consumers. The entire process of production of goods and services needed to make man comfortable in society is largely dependent on the knowledge, skills and the ability man (workers and managers) whether skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled have acquired in the process of learning either from school (formally), informally or semi-formally. Therefore, individuals (workers/self) are essential ingredients for productivity to succeed. Achieving high level self productivity in the society is a panacea towards achieving national productivity and growth.

Self productivity as a concept therefore, is the ability of an individual to utilize the knowledge and skills acquired in the process of education to enhance his personal contribution and input in the production of goods and services. It encourages the enhancement of management skills and entrepreneurial abilities needed for national growth. Self productivity skills and abilities enhance self-employment and efficiency in the production process of any nation. In the overall analysis of self productivity skills and abilities and its impact on the economic life of any nation be it developed, developing or underdeveloped, it is a fact that self productivity is an essential ingredient if national economy must grow maximally.

## **The Role of Social Studies Education in Achieving Self-Productivity in Nigeria**

Re-engineering Social Studies Education in this premise connotes re-focusing, re-energizing and redefining social studies education to meet today's challenge of productivity and socio-economic growth of any nation.

Social studies Education at all levels of schooling in Nigeria according Iwegbu et al (2011) is an effective machinery towards achieving the desired goal of sustainable National Development in Nigeria. Self productivity is a pivot towards achieving sustained developmental strides in all human environments. In line with this understanding, Agbure (2005) asserted that Social Studies Education can be used to develop in the individual skills and knowledge for both economic growth and development in Nigeria. It is only when individuals are developed by acquiring skills, knowledge and attitude needed for their personal enhancement that they can, with the skills, knowledge and experience acquired contribute to national development and sustainable growth.

Social Studies Education has as one of its objectives according to Obemeata, Ogugua, Agu & Laosebikan (1981) in Nwaham and Odor (2005):-

*“develop a capacity to learn and to acquire certain basic skills, influencing not only those of listening, speaking, reading and writing and of calculation but also those skills of hand and head together with those of observation, analysis and inference which are essential to the forming of sound socio-economic and political judgement”.*

Social Studies Education as incorporated into school curriculum, aims at the training of the mind for personal and national development, development of skills, attitude, knowledge and methodologies on how these developmental efforts can be transformed into self-productivity. This is a clear testimony to the view of Obemeata, Ogugua, Agu & Laosebikan (1981)

Achieving self-productivity in all human environments is a challenge that solutions must be proffered and Social Studies Education being a problem solving discipline is according to Ndeinya (1999), considered as the only answer to national problems. The inculcation of these needed skills, knowledge, attitude and experience for self-productivity can be achieved by firstly, calling on the government to initiate action in its educational institutions at all levels of education to infuse into social studies curriculum the new roles needed to meet the present day challenge of enhancing productivity and sustainable national development and growth. Secondly, develop content in Social Studies curriculum on the inculcation of knowledge, skills and attitude on how to effectively use man as a resource/ capital in the production process.

Thirdly, by re-orienting Social Studies teachers from their initial conception of Social Studies as an informative and corrective discipline to the training of faculties needed for self productivity to enhance national growth.

If self-productivity must be achieved, Social Studies Education must be used as a tool. According to Atteh (2006) Social Studies is an instrument that can be used to

solve problems in human societies today and the challenge of achieving self-productivity to enhance sustainable national development in all human society is not divorced from these problems that Social Studies must tackle. The teaching of the re-engineered Social Studies Education can be effectively done during classroom teaching and learning process and in workshops, conferences, seminars and symposia, where participants will learn further attitude, skills, knowledge, experience, behaviour and character needed for achieving self productivity and sustainable national development in Nigeria.

## **Conclusion**

Re-engineering Social Studies Education is a task that must urgently be done, if Social Studies Education must gain appreciation as a partner in progress in the current developmental strides of developing and underdeveloped economies of the world.

As a discipline meant to enhance the reconnection of the bond between man and his physical environment in the area of productivity that will invariably enhance the achievement of sustainable development and growth, Social Studies Education must be re-engineered to teach skills, attitudes, knowledge and character needed to improve sustained productivity in the society if this present resolve of president Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's government transformation agenda and vision 20:20:20 must see the light of the day.

## **Recommendation**

If the dream of re-engineering Social Studies Education to enhance self productivity and sustainable national development and growth must be achieved and sustained, there is the urgent need to:-

- i. Re-focus Social Studies curriculum from the present day theoretical nature to a more practical discipline, where faculties on self productive skills and knowledge will be inculcated into students.
- ii. Re-train Social Studies teachers to appreciate the need for acquiring practical skills needed for the enhancement of self-productivity.
- iii. Develop functional instructional resources needed to teach and inculcate these needed skills into students at all levels of education.
- iv. Encourage government to step up finance on education generally.
- v. Fully computerize education and instructional process at all levels of education.

The dream to re-engineer Social Studies Education will be achievable if these recommendations are religiously followed.

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