

**REGENERATING SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION FOR POVERTY  
ALLEVIATION, SELF-RELIANCE AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

*Ubong James Akpan*  
*Department of Social Studies,*  
*College of Education,*  
*Afaha Nsit.*

And

*Imoh-Obong Inyang Inyang*  
*Department of Social Studies,*  
*College of Education,*  
*Afaha Nsit.*

**Abstract**

Poverty is one of the most serious problems facing Nigerians in recent times. The Global economic recession has compelled every nation to look inward and design strategies for survival. Nigeria in order to survive must follow this trend by exploiting and making proper use of Social Studies education for both national and economic emancipation of its populace. This paper examines the role played by Social Studies in promoting poverty alleviation/eradication in our society. It also highlights the concepts, nature and scope of Social Studies as well as discussing some of the objectives of Social Studies vis-à-vis poverty alleviation. The paper goes on to identify some of the objectives of poverty alleviation and job generation programmes. It also examines how Social Studies education fosters poverty alleviation and some recommendations are made.

Social Studies has come to stay in the Nigerian education system as one of the core subjects, but many are yet to give it its rightful place and are still giving it names which are derogatory. It is important to correct this impression as it can create fears in the minds of upcoming children and pose a negative effect on education in Nigeria.

Eboh, S. and Ukpong, B. (1984) state that Social Studies as a subject is concerned with man's total way

of life, whereas for CESAC (1979) social studies deals with man in society as a whole. Generally speaking, Social Studies is a subject that deals with man in his environments. Ukpong (2004) opined that Social Studies is the study of man in society, while Dubey and Barth (1980) consider social studies as a subject that aims at inculcating values, loyalty and spirit of service to the community on the learners.

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Secondly, man lives in a territory and uses what he can get from that territory. This implies that man lives and interacts with the physical environment. Man also uses science and technology as a means of solving the problems of his environments. We can therefore see that Social Studies is a subject which is concerned with the way man lives and interacts with his social and physical environments and how science and technology help man to live well in his environments. Social studies is the means by which people know and do what they ought to do as members of the society.

Social studies in the Nigerian system has been that of a tool for fostering national unity and development, self-reliance which helps to alleviate poverty. It also makes education more relevant to the society, through teaching students to develop positive attitudes and acquire relevant skills and knowledge that can promote self-reliance thereby helping in the alleviation of poverty.

Much emphasis on social studies education came after the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970. It should be noted that the introduction of social studies into schools and colleges in Nigeria and different states of the federation came at various times and employed different strategies, hence its incorporation into the syllabus of the Junior Secondary Schools to reflect the ideal of new National Policy on Education.

According to Cassel's English Dictionary, "poverty" is defined as "the state of being poor, want, destitution, indigent, scarcity, meagerness, dearth (of), deficiency (in), inferiority". By the above description, an individual afflicted by poverty is nothing but sub-human.

Aluyor (2000) it was stated that poverty is the absence of fundamental human needs and expectations. Among the later are sufficient food and water, adequate shelter, long life, knowledge and the capacity to provide materially for oneself and family, through productive endeavours". Poverty is thus, more than lack of income, although that is how it is typically considered. (NP) poverty may be

defined in relative and absolute terms. Relative poverty refers to the condition of a group, house hold or individual in comparison with the average living condition in the country or across countries. Absolute poverty refers to the condition of a group, household or individual in relation to a poverty line whose real value is fixed over time. According to World Development Report (WDR) (1990) people whose annual consumption levels fall below the value of US \$ 275 are considered very poor. It is documented that in Africa, the number of poor persons increased by about two-thirds between 1970 and 1985 and grew from 180 million (47 percent of the population) in 1985 to 265 million by the year 2000 (ADB, 1992). Different groups of the poor in Africa are affected differently because they are faced with different constraints, needs and sometimes because of the different roles they play in the society.

For two decades after independence, (1960s-1970s), unemployment and poverty were not a national concern in Nigeria, as it is today. The nation's agricultural, industrial and the then budding public service sectors were able to effectively absorb most of the labour force. The agricultural sector, for instance, generated for about 80% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). With the advent of petroleum in the mid-70s, the economy was further strengthened as it grew at an average of over 11% (Guidelines for the implementation of the poverty alleviation programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria, during these periods were able to

achieve much through oil revenue. The ensuing political instability and inconsistencies in socio-economic policies of successive governments emerged as major factor that led to the manifestation of high level of joblessness in Nigeria.

The "Guidelines" also stated that poverty in Nigeria is pervasive. About 60% of Nigerians live below the poverty line. Data on poverty are staggering and reveals that only 50% of the population do have access to safe water. About 38% of the population do not have access to primary health care while most Nigerians consume less than 1/3 of the minimum required protein and vitamins intake due to low purchasing power. Over past two decades of political instability, macro-economic policy inconsistencies, low capacity utilization in industries and massive turn out of school leavers and graduates by our educational sectors without jobs, brought about an increase in the level of unemployment and poverty.

The overall situation now is that most Nigerians go hungry because they cannot afford to buy food.

In brief, the employment and poverty trends in Nigeria indicate that, without a concerted effort to tackle the problems of unemployment and under-employment, the situation could get worse.

The low growth experienced in most sectors and particularly the manufacturing and agricultural sectors, has undermined unemployment growth.

On redressing the twin problem of poverty and employment generation in

Nigeria, the Federal Government of Nigeria had earmark the sum of N10 billion for the creation of 200,000 jobs in the year 2000. Government's desire to eradicate poverty was borne out of the conviction that the incidence of poverty and unemployment have assumed a dimension that is socially, economically and politically unacceptable.

### **Concept, Nature and Scope of Social Studies**

In the modern setting, things are not static, everything is dynamic and is undergoing series of changes. One of the areas of change is education, which has much relevance when we talk about the nature of social studies. Social studies according to Baleyejusa (1981) was a new child of the past two or three decades in the annals of Africa experience. People see social studies as a natural development that comes as a result of cultural flow and transfer of ideas. The subject has been an acceptable innovation in America and Britain since and before the beginning of this century. Its introduction into Africa followed a logical consequence of cultural and political relationship that has existed between these three continents.

The most important character of social studies is that it is a corrective study in the sense that it examined the present educational system with a view to correcting the ills of the colonial system that sought to prevent national unity and development.

The nature of social studies is that it is the study that emphasizes the importance of man. Man is put in the

central position and his activities are studied in relation to his various environments, which could be physical, social psychological etc.

The scope of social studies refers to what it covers or what it entails. The scope of social studies will remain an ever-changing area given the factors of space, time and human development. Social studies tries to gather relevant knowledge, values and skills centred around the subject that form part of these broad spheres of man. It is a subject that centres around man, examining how man manipulates and is manipulated by the various environments in which he finds himself.

Thus the subject includes knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes and values drawn from history, geography, economics, political science, physical science, psychology, sociology etc.

Social studies is an interdisciplinary study aimed at studying man comprehensively. Unlike other disciplines, social studies does not aim at building up theories, rather it inter-relates or integrates the already formulated theories to gain an understanding in a wider perspective in the study of man and how he goes about solving his numerous problems.

### **Objectives of Social Studies Vis-à-vis Poverty Alleviation**

By studying man in relation to his environments and to science and technology, certain things are seen to be important in social studies. The first is that

people living in groups, families, villages, towns, states must learn to live together as one people. They must learn to understand themselves and the environments within which they must be able to tolerate one another, settle differences among themselves and work together for the progress of their community, state and nation.

Secondly, without this co-operation and understanding, Nigeria will cease to be a united, happy and self-reliant country. In order to survive and be prosperous, every member of the society has a responsibility not only to obey the laws and help the leaders but also to do their duties well.

The following therefore are some of the objectives of social studies programme that leads to poverty alleviation according to Eboh S. & Ukpong D. E. (1993).

1. Social studies education is to train students to be good citizens and nation builders by helping them to develop good skills, habits and positive attitudes towards one another and towards the nation for the attainment of self-reliance thereby helping to alleviate poverty in the nation.
2. Social studies enables Nigerians to know and use the resources of their physical environment effectively so as to improve on their quality of life.
3. Social studies education helps people to develop a good sense of judgement and sense of moral and social responsibility so that they can become
4. Social studies makes people understand their own culture and the culture of other Nigerians so as to appreciate their differences and the need to live together in one great nation.
5. It helps people to acquire different kinds of skills and competencies like reading, listening, observation and analysis.
6. It helps develop in students positive attitudes of togetherness, comradeship and co-operation towards a healthy and prosperous nation.
7. Social studies education also inculcates appropriate values of honesty, integrity, hard work, fairness and justice at work and fair play as one's contribution for the attainment of self-reliance and eradication of poverty.
8. The teaching and learning of social studies create an awareness and understanding of our evolving social and physical environments as a whole in its natural, man-made, cultural and spiritual resources together with the rational use and conservations of these resources for self-reliance that leads to poverty alleviation.

The overall aim of social studies education is to produce good citizens and to be good citizens, students must learn and acquire certain qualities such as co-operation, loyalty, discipline, dedication, faithfulness, honesty, moral and social responsibility, spontaneity, conviviality, empathy, sympathy and positive regards to human beings as well as to the rules and regulations of the society.

### **Conceptual Clarifications** **Poverty Eradication/Alleviation**

Poverty Alleviation is a governmental programme designed to either ease or completely eradicate the pains and resultant effects of poverty on Nigerians by making available adequate income generating projects.

This definition agrees with Udofot's (2003) definition of poverty alleviation as a drastic approach towards improving our capacity building for sustainable human development aimed at reducing, alleviating or banishing poverty and unemployment in our society.

### **Self-Reliance**

According to Ikoku (1980), self-reliance is the right and ability to set one's own goal and realize them as much as possible through one's own effort using one's own factor. He said further that, it is highly organized and is set out to assist nations to realize their potentialities and the true meaning of independence. Longman dictionary of contemporary English (1978), described self-reliance as the use of one's own powers of action and

judgement without depending on others. Self-reliance according to Olabosu (1990) is an act of making use of one's own resources to bring about improved and accelerated socio-political and economic development. Gundu (2003:77), opined that self-reliance is:

A development strategy aimed at looking inward creatively and providing solutions to nations socio-economic and technological problems through its own efforts and at its own pace and its own valuation consistent with its own long term interest.

Self-reliance is also seen in terms of using one's own resources to bring about improved and accelerated socio-political and economic development which manifests in creating jobs for oneself instead of waiting for government or others to offer employment (Das 2003, Idamoyibo 2003). It presupposes the attainment of self-sufficiency, independence and autonomy without resorting to begging. (Eboh and Ukpong cited in Agu, Stella 2009). Self-reliance could also be used as an economic and socio-political term loaded with emotive values. It implies the ability to take decisions, set goals for oneself and be able to achieve them without recourse to external assistance. It has the element of self-respect, self-esteem, industry perseverance and decisiveness embedded in it. These are the ingredients that make somebody stand firm to push through an action that is stated no matter the obstacles. It also involves the element of risk-taking.

### **National Development**

The term “National Development” means growth or advancement in all areas of our national life. This includes our social, economic and political life. For a developing nation, development should be considered to be what Enahoro (1974) referred to as the transformation of the community into a fully participatory and modern society, whose citizens enjoy as much economic and social well-being as they generate.

National development is concerned with what the government and the people want to achieve for the nation and the people within a stated time frame, say, ten or twenty years.

A common approach in most literature was to tie the definition of national development to sustained increase in gross national product (GNP). Thus, Todaro (1977) saw development as the capacity of a national economy that had been dormant to generate and sustain an annual increase in its gross national product at rates of perhaps 5 to 7 percent. Salvatore and Dowling (1977) also saw national development as a process whereby a country’s real per capita gross national product (GNP) or income increases over a sustained period of time through continuing increase in per capita productivity. National development objectives may include the provision of electricity to all local government headquarters nationwide, the construction of an overhead bridge across a river and building of flyover to provide

communication link for communities, industrializing backward states establishing universities or polytechnics in all or some of the states of the federation within a stated period of years or there about; improving the standard living of people through better social services and better means of communication and transport facilities etc.

### **Some of the Objectives of Poverty Alleviation and Job Generation Programme**

The overall objectives of this programme in Nigeria was to provide direct jobs for 200,000 (two hundred thousand) unemployed persons and stimulate production within the period of one year. The immediate objectives of the programme are:

1. Stimulate economic growth through engagement of semi skilled and unskilled labour in productive activities.
2. Immediate reduction of social vices and tension in the society by removing idle hands from the streets.
3. Engage the unemployed in direct activities as veritable means of reflating the economy.
4. Improve the environment/arrest environmental degradation
5. Minimise rural urban drift through the improvement of rural communities
6. Committing the fund to direct benefit of the participants rather than services or overheads. ie making the fund available to the participants rather than to the people incharge of the job generation.

7. Eradication of absolute poverty and reduction of general poverty
8. Integration of goals and targets for combating poverty into overall economic and social policies and plans at the local and national levels.
9. Fighting of urban and rural poverty
10. Enhancement of opportunities for income generation, diversification of activities and increase of productivity in low income and poor communities.
11. Seeking of international assistance to meet the commitments.

To achieve the objectives of the poverty alleviation programme in Nigeria, direct jobs were created through some key labour – intensive activities, which can readily mop up some of the unemployed in different parts of the country. These areas were:

- (a) Patching of potholes on highways
- (b) Environmental sanitation
- (c) Afforestation
- (d) Control of vegetation along the high way
- (e) Cleaning of hospitals and cutting of grasses therein
- (f) Renovation of schools and public places which include the removal of posters displayed indiscriminately on public buildings.
- (g) Rehabilitation of public utilities and facilities for communities
- (h) Construction of bio-cost building and assistance in food production.

### **Social Studies Education as a Tool for Fostering Poverty Alleviation**

Man is the pivot of social studies education. In so far as social studies has some utility for man, it is only through his ingenuity that the aims and objectives of social studies can be attained. The primary aim of social studies education is to help individuals, groups and organizations to become aware of the social, political, economic and cultural realities of man's social and physical environments and to prepare man by shaping and grooming individuals to fit into the society.

Allen (1971) saw Social Studies as a subject that teaches self-awareness, self-discipline leading to the development of a sound mind in an individual. The teaching and learning of social studies helps to inculcate the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual thereby reducing poverty in the society.

Social studies education also helps an individual to acquire appropriate skills, competencies and abilities both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society, which can therefore lead to self-reliance and poverty eradication.

In this period of new political order, the teaching and learning of social studies helps students to develop their social and civic consciousness, instill discipline and orderliness in them as well as make them become effective citizens.

The Federal Government of Nigeria is highly concerned about the alarming rate of crime and vices such as



bribery, dishonesty, corruption and lack of patriotism among its citizens. This may explain why it had set up such bodies as Poverty Alleviation Programme, War Against Indiscipline (WAI), Mass Mobilization for Social Justice, Economic Recovery and Self-reliance (MAMSER), Environmental Sanitation and Code of Conduct Bureau among others. It is expected that a social studies programme that is well planned and effectively taught will complement the government's efforts in solving these problems.

Social studies education leads to self-reliance thereby promoting poverty eradication in the sense that through the teaching and learning of social studies, students are taught about the different mineral resources found in their physical environments and how to utilize, conserve and control the tapping of these resources so that the nation does not resort to importation.

Social studies education helps the students to know more about science and technology in the society. The knowledge about science and technology can generate full and gainful employment for majority of the citizens in a given community, hence poverty is being reduced. And this can also lead to the protection of a community's domestic industry from aggressive external competition. Indigenous scientists and technologists are being mobilized for research and development. New ideas are invented, facilities for food storage are manufactured, hence the attainment of self-

sufficiency and independence in some manufactured products.

Social studies education enables a citizen to know more about his civil duties and obligations. In the teaching and learning of social studies, an individual is well informed to understand and see the need for some civic duties and obligations in the society. For instance the need for payment of taxes as at when due. Tax payment indicates "citizens" loyalty and support to the government of the day. Above all, tax payment is a way of improving the revenue capacity and as a strategy for economic development, which leads to the attainment of self-reliance and poverty alleviation.

### **Some Measures of Alleviating Poverty in the Society**

These among others are some of the measures of alleviating poverty in the society.

- (a) **Provision of a Community Based Project:** An article written by Funmi Parel Mallan in "This Day" March 16, 2000 stated that "A comprehensive strategy of poverty alleviation should incorporate community – based projects aimed at progressive transformation of existing norms. Project initiation and implementation should be presided over by rural councils with equal gender representation at membership levels and so stimulate bottom-up socio-economic development through popular participation and women empowerment.

**(b) Loan Facilities to Private Investors and Entrepreneurs:**

To alleviate poverty, there should be improvement in incomes of micro-entrepreneurs, so as to create avenues where they can obtain loans to establish on their own, thereby creating jobs for others through enhancement and expansion of their businesses.

**(c) Empowerment of Citizens in Both Rural and Urban Areas:**

The empowerment will come by way of provision of “necessary socio-infrastructure tools” based on the identification of priority projects in the areas of rural electrification, water supply, women and youth development, primary health care, agriculture, food, security and education. With this, employment opportunities will be created nation wide in both rural and urban areas.

**Recommendations**

1. The task of alleviation of poverty effectively should be that of economic rather than a political matter
2. There is a great need for change in the social attitude and government policy towards agriculture.
3. The government poverty alleviation programmes should be taken to the grass roots, which means that most of the projects to alleviate poverty should be undertaken in the rural

areas so that the down-trodden masses will be fully benefited.

4. Government should create job opportunities for young school leavers in the community
5. Government should pay more attention to the peasant farmers by giving them loans, fertilizers, and making provisions for improved farming implements that will lead to mechanized farming. With these, the total food production will not show substantial decline with a corresponding increase in population in excess of the rate of planned food increase
6. The government should make provision for mass education with emphasis on the economically profitable aspects such as family planning, birth control and better management of resources.
7. Adequate social studies teachers who would transmit the desirable objectives of social studies to the learners must be trained and the necessary instructional materials procured.
8. The government should give loans to small-scale industrialists and manufacturers to enable them function well and uplift their progress.

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The scope of social studies refers to what it covers or what it entails. The scope of social studies will remain an ever-changing area given the factors of space, time and human development. Social studies tries to gather relevant knowledge, values and skills centred around the subject that form part of these broad spheres of man. It is a subject that centres around man, examining how man manipulates and is manipulated by the various environments in which he finds himself.

Thus the subject includes knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes and values drawn from history, geography, economics, political science, physical science, psychology, sociology etc.

Social studies is an interdisciplinary study aimed at studying man comprehensively. Unlike other disciplines, social studies does not aim at building up theories, rather it inter-relates or integrates the already formulated theories to gain an understanding in a wider perspective in the study of man and how he goes about solving his numerous problems.

### **Objectives of Social Studies Vis-à-vis Poverty Alleviation**

By studying man in relation to his environments and to science and technology, certain things are seen to be important in social studies. The first is that



people living in groups, families, villages, towns, states must learn to live together as one people. They must learn to understand themselves and the environments within which they must be able to tolerate one another, settle differences among themselves and work together for the progress of their community, state and nation.

Secondly, without this co-operation and understanding, Nigeria will cease to be a united, happy and self-reliant country. In order to survive and be prosperous, every member of the society has a responsibility not only to obey the laws and help the leaders but also to do their duties well.

The following therefore are some of the objectives of social studies programme that leads to poverty alleviation according to Eboh S. & Ukpong D. E. (1993).

1. Social studies education is to train students to be good citizens and nation builders by helping them to develop good skills, habits and positive attitudes towards one another and towards the nation for the attainment of self-reliance thereby helping to alleviate poverty in the nation.
2. Social studies enables Nigerians to know and use the resources of their physical environment effectively so as to improve on their quality of life.
3. Social studies education helps people to develop a good sense of judgement and sense of moral and social responsibility so that they can become useful members not destroyers of their society and nation by helping to execute community-based projects that will alleviate poverty.
4. Social studies makes people understand their own culture and the culture of other Nigerians so as to appreciate their differences and the need to live together in one great nation.
5. It helps people to acquire different kinds of skills and competencies like reading, listening, observation and analysis.
6. It helps develop in students positive attitudes of togetherness, comradeship and co-operation towards a healthy and prosperous nation.
7. Social studies education also inculcates appropriate values of honesty, integrity, hard work, fairness and justice at work and fair play as one's contribution for the attainment of self-reliance and eradication of poverty.
8. The teaching and learning of social studies create an awareness and understanding of our evolving social and physical environments as a whole in its natural, man-made, cultural and spiritual resources together with the rational use and conservations of these resources for self-reliance that leads to poverty alleviation.

The overall aim of social studies education is to produce good citizens and to be good citizens, students must learn and acquire certain qualities such as co-operation, loyalty, discipline, dedication, faithfulness, honesty, moral and social responsibility, spontaneity, conviviality, empathy, sympathy and positive regards to human beings as well as to the rules and regulations of the society.

### **Conceptual Clarifications** **Poverty Eradication/Alleviation**

Poverty Alleviation is a governmental programme designed to either ease or completely eradicate the pains and resultant effects of poverty on Nigerians by making available adequate income generating projects.

This definition agrees with Udofot's (2003) definition of poverty alleviation as a drastic approach towards improving our capacity building for sustainable human development aimed at reducing, alleviating or banishing poverty and unemployment in our society.

### **Self-Reliance**

According to Ikoku (1980), self-reliance is the right and ability to set one's own goal and realize them as much as possible through one's own effort using one's own factor. He said further that, it is highly organized and is set out to assist nations to realize their potentialities and the true meaning of independence. Longman dictionary of contemporary English (1978), described self-reliance as the use of one's own powers of action and

judgement without depending on others. Self-reliance according to Olabosu (1990) is an act of making use of one's own resources to bring about improved and accelerated socio-political and economic development. Gundu (2003:77), opined that self-reliance is:

A development strategy aimed at looking inward creatively and providing solutions to nations socio-economic and technological problems through its own efforts and at its own pace and its own valuation consistent with its own long term interest.

Self-reliance is also seen in terms of using one's own resources to bring about improved and accelerated socio-political and economic development which manifests in creating jobs for oneself instead of waiting for government or others to offer employment (Das 2003, Idamoyibo 2003). It presupposes the attainment of self-sufficiency, independence and autonomy without resorting to begging. (Eboh and Ukpong cited in Agu, Stella 2009). Self-reliance could also be used as an economic and socio-political term loaded with emotive values. It implies the ability to take decisions, set goals for oneself and be able to achieve them without recourse to external assistance. It has the element of self-respect, self-esteem, industry perseverance and decisiveness embedded in it. These are the ingredients that make somebody stand firm to push through an action that is stated no matter the obstacles. It also involves the element of risk-taking.

### **National Development**

The term “National Development” means growth or advancement in all areas of our national life. This includes our social, economic and political life. For a developing nation, development should be considered to be what Enahoro (1974) referred to as the transformation of the community into a fully participatory and modern society, whose citizens enjoy as much economic and social well-being as they generate.

National development is concerned with what the government and the people want to achieve for the nation and the people within a stated time frame, say, ten or twenty years.

A common approach in most literature was to tie the definition of national development to sustained increase in gross national product (GNP). Thus, Todaro (1977) saw development as the capacity of a national economy that had been dormant to generate and sustain an annual increase in its gross national product at rates of perhaps 5 to 7 percent. Salvatore and Dowling (1977) also saw national development as a process whereby a country’s real per capita gross national product (GNP) or income increases over a sustained period of time through continuing increase in per capita productivity. National development objectives may include the provision of electricity to all local government headquarters nationwide, the construction of an overhead bridge across a river and building of flyover to provide

communication link for communities, industrializing backward states establishing universities or polytechnics in all or some of the states of the federation within a stated period of years or there about; improving the standard living of people through better social services and better means of communication and transport facilities etc.

### **Some of the Objectives of Poverty Alleviation and Job Generation Programme**

The overall objectives of this programme in Nigeria was to provide direct jobs for 200,000 (two hundred thousand) unemployed persons and stimulate production within the period of one year. The immediate objectives of the programme are:

1. Stimulate economic growth through engagement of semi skilled and unskilled labour in productive activities.
2. Immediate reduction of social vices and tension in the society by removing idle hands from the streets.
3. Engage the unemployed in direct activities as veritable means of reflating the economy.
4. Improve the environment/arrest environmental degradation
5. Minimise rural urban drift through the improvement of rural communities
6. Committing the fund to direct benefit of the participants rather than services or overheads. ie making the fund available to the participants rather than to the people incharge of the job generation.

7. Eradication of absolute poverty and reduction of general poverty
8. Integration of goals and targets for combating poverty into overall economic and social policies and plans at the local and national levels.
9. Fighting of urban and rural poverty
10. Enhancement of opportunities for income generation, diversification of activities and increase of productivity in low income and poor communities.
11. Seeking of international assistance to meet the commitments.

To achieve the objectives of the poverty alleviation programme in Nigeria, direct jobs were created through some key labour – intensive activities, which can readily mop up some of the unemployed in different parts of the country. These areas were:

- (a) Patching of potholes on highways
- (b) Environmental sanitation
- (c) Afforestation
- (d) Control of vegetation along the high way
- (e) Cleaning of hospitals and cutting of grasses therein
- (f) Renovation of schools and public places which include the removal of posters displayed indiscriminately on public buildings.
- (g) Rehabilitation of public utilities and facilities for communities
- (h) Construction of bio-cost building and assistance in food production.

### **Social Studies Education as a Tool for Fostering Poverty Alleviation**

Man is the pivot of social studies education. In so far as social studies has some utility for man, it is only through his ingenuity that the aims and objectives of social studies can be attained. The primary aim of social studies education is to help individuals, groups and organizations to become aware of the social, political, economic and cultural realities of man's social and physical environments and to prepare man by shaping and grooming individuals to fit into the society.

Allen (1971) saw Social Studies as a subject that teaches self-awareness, self-discipline leading to the development of a sound mind in an individual. The teaching and learning of social studies helps to inculcate the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual thereby reducing poverty in the society.

Social studies education also helps an individual to acquire appropriate skills, competencies and abilities both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society, which can therefore lead to self-reliance and poverty eradication.

In this period of new political order, the teaching and learning of social studies helps students to develop their social and civic consciousness, instill discipline and orderliness in them as well as make them become effective citizens.

The Federal Government of Nigeria is highly concerned about the alarming rate of crime and vices such as

bribery, dishonesty, corruption and lack of patriotism among its citizens. This may explain why it had set up such bodies as Poverty Alleviation Programme, War Against Indiscipline (WAI), Mass Mobilization for Social Justice, Economic Recovery and Self-reliance (MAMSER), Environmental Sanitation and Code of Conduct Bureau among others. It is expected that a social studies programme that is well planned and effectively taught will complement the government's efforts in solving these problems.

Social studies education leads to self-reliance thereby promoting poverty eradication in the sense that through the teaching and learning of social studies, students are taught about the different mineral resources found in their physical environments and how to utilize, conserve and control the tapping of these resources so that the nation does not resort to importation.

Social studies education helps the students to know more about science and technology in the society. The knowledge about science and technology can generate full and gainful employment for majority of the citizens in a given community, hence poverty is being reduced. And this can also lead to the protection of a community's domestic industry from aggressive external competition. Indigenous scientists and technologists are being mobilized for research and development. New ideas are invented, facilities for food storage are manufactured, hence the attainment of self-

sufficiency and independence in some manufactured products.

Social studies education enables a citizen to know more about his civil duties and obligations. In the teaching and learning of social studies, an individual is well informed to understand and see the need for some civic duties and obligations in the society. For instance the need for payment of taxes as at when due. Tax payment indicates "citizens" loyalty and support to the government of the day. Above all, tax payment is a way of improving the revenue capacity and as a strategy for economic development, which leads to the attainment of self-reliance and poverty alleviation.

### **Some Measures of Alleviating Poverty in the Society**

These among others are some of the measures of alleviating poverty in the society.

- (a) **Provision of a Community Based Project:** An article written by Funmi Parel Mallan in "This Day" March 16, 2000 stated that "A comprehensive strategy of poverty alleviation should incorporate community – based projects aimed at progressive transformation of existing norms. Project initiation and implementation should be presided over by rural councils with equal gender representation at membership levels and so stimulate bottom-up socio-economic development through popular participation and women empowerment.

**(b) Loan Facilities to Private Investors and Entrepreneurs:**

To alleviate poverty, there should be improvement in incomes of micro-entrepreneurs, so as to create avenues where they can obtain loans to establish on their own, thereby creating jobs for others through enhancement and expansion of their businesses.

**(c) Empowerment of Citizens in Both Rural and Urban Areas:**

The empowerment will come by way of provision of “necessary socio-infrastructure tools” based on the identification of priority projects in the areas of rural electrification, water supply, women and youth development, primary health care, agriculture, food, security and education. With this, employment opportunities will be created nation wide in both rural and urban areas.

**Recommendations**

1. The task of alleviation of poverty effectively should be that of economic rather than a political matter
2. There is a great need for change in the social attitude and government policy towards agriculture.
3. The government poverty alleviation programmes should be taken to the grass roots, which means that most of the projects to alleviate poverty should be undertaken in the rural

areas so that the down-trodden masses will be fully benefited.

4. Government should create job opportunities for young school leavers in the community
5. Government should pay more attention to the peasant farmers by giving them loans, fertilizers, and making provisions for improved farming implements that will lead to mechanized farming. With these, the total food production will not show substantial decline with a corresponding increase in population in excess of the rate of planned food increase
6. The government should make provision for mass education with emphasis on the economically profitable aspects such as family planning, birth control and better management of resources.
7. Adequate social studies teachers who would transmit the desirable objectives of social studies to the learners must be trained and the necessary instructional materials procured.
8. The government should give loans to small-scale industrialists and manufacturers to enable them function well and uplift their progress.

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