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The Possibility of Attaining a Sustainable Future Democratic Governance in Contemporary Nigeria through the Instrumentality of Social Studies Education.

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Abstract

This paper examined the possibility of attaining a sustainable future democratic governance in Contemporary Nigeria through the instrumentality of social studies education. Social studies education is seen as a problem-solving course of instruction designed to train and produce effective and active citizens who are fully loaded with critical knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to enable them to make effective and informed decisions in society. The development of sustainable future democratic governance is at the heart of social studies education as it tries to assist through its teachings to inculcate core social and cultural values in the learners. The paper extensively looked at the concepts and objectives of social studies education, democracy, and democratic governance, and how it can be used to ensure a hitch-free modern Nigerian society. The paper identified government partisanship as one of the main obstacles to the attainment of effective democratic governance in Nigeria, as well as widespread poverty, corruption, political thuggery, ethnic profiling, compromised security personnel, voter suppression, and intimidation, requiring urgent action to reverse this negative trend. Finally, it was noted that a leader's

	character, competence, creativity, commitment, thoughtfulness, transparency, and integrity are only a few examples of the elements that solidify sustainable democracy anchored on effective governance. Therefore, the paper recommended among others that, the senior secondary social studies curriculum, as prepared and approved but not yet implemented, must be completely embraced and implemented right away, as this would extend the intellectual agility of the young students and help them fully comprehend the complexity of democratic governance.

Introduction

After the British Colonial Masters united the Northern and Southern Protectorates as one territorial entity in 1914, Nigeria, a developing nation, has spent years struggling in vain to create, practice, nurture, and preserve a sustainable democracy endowed with excellent governance. One would have reasoned that following the discovery of crude oil in enormous quantities in 1956 and the country winning political independence in 1960, the nation conceivably could have attained rapid cultural, social, economic, and political prosperity on all fronts. Unfortunately, due to unpatriotic democratic leadership that has succeeded in fostering greed, crime, religious and ethnic disputes, insurgency, militancy, banditry, abduction, and other problems, these advantages have gravely turned into a tool for national failure. Even though the nation has made some notable progress in terms of economic growth and development over the years, a sizable portion of the country's population continues to live in multidimensional poverty, while the country's few wealthy political elites are busy stealing and embezzling public funds. The situation has further triggered high level of unemployment, with hunger, armed pilfering, kidnapping, prostitution, drug peddling, insurgency, youth restiveness, ethnic, and religious intolerance as the accompanying negative effects engulfing every strata of the Nigerian economic and socio-political terrain. Given that the majority of the population no longer has faith in the government and the elected politicians holding public office, the aforementioned statement appears to appropriately sum up the current state of affairs in Nigeria. The fact that Nigeria, a developing country, has over the years fallen short of its responsibility to meet the needs, interests, and aspirations of its thronging population, is now an obvious truth.

Gordon in Shuaibu and Shuaibu (2020) claims that Nigeria has been dubbed the best example of the "paradox of plenty," which perfectly describes this situation. Instead of using the money it received from the sale of its crude oil to unite, integrate, and become a stable, sustainable, and democratic state, Nigeria instead became well-known for its numerous military coup d'état, disorderliness, political fraud, pervasive corruption, and center of extreme poverty. Similar to this, Shuaibu & Shuaibu (2020) noted that the multiplier impacts include that all poverty

indices are dangerously high, the standard of living is pitifully poor, and that ethnic, religious, and general insecurity have become the norm. Furthermore, Nigeria's most intelligent and well-educated citizens are fleeing the nation in large numbers in search of better opportunities both inside and outside the borders of Africa due to the fragile state of the country's infrastructures and the underinvestment in science, technology, education, health care, and power. An obstacle to Nigeria's efforts to create a unified, vibrant, robust, and democratic society is the country's historic-long struggle to forge a formidable democracy accompanied with sound governance. This has seriously tarnished her self-described status as the "giant of Africa", which has immediately become a major issue for not only Nigerians but also for Africa and the rest of the globe. In agreement with the aforementioned claim, Rotberg (2003) asserted that failed states pose a threat to their own citizens as well as those of their immediate neighbors, and that in today's highly globalized world, they also likely pose a threat to the global economy and the vital interests of other countries. A failed state, according to Rotberg (2002), is one that performs poorly in terms of its capacity for maintaining security, engaging in politics, delivering of social services, and resolving conflicts. In addition, Rotberg (2003) emphasized the following as signs of a failed state:

1. Enduring violence: This engulfs significant areas of the state and is mainly directed at the existing government or regime.
2. Growth of criminal violence: Arms and drug trafficking become common. Citizens turn to warlords or other figures for protection.
3. Flawed institutions: If legislatures exist at all, they exist to ratify the decisions of executives. Democratic debate is absent.
4. Effective education and medical systems are informally privatized: Literacy rates fall and infant mortality rises.
5. Declining GDP: Declining real national and per capita levels of annual gross domestic product.
6. The government or regime loses legitimacy: Rulers are perceived to be working for themselves and their kin rather than the state. As a result, their legitimacy, and the legitimacy of the state, decline.

By applying Rotberg's criteria for a failed state, one can correctly infer that Nigeria is one because it has suppressed democracy, freedom of speech, and political involvement in addition to using its security forces against its people. As Nigerian politicians have so severely impoverished the populace, which they exploit as a political tool to maintain their hold to power, the populace are now at their mercy. They make token gestures for the welfare of the poor suffering people who elected them to serve as their representatives. Everything in Nigeria has broken down, including family morals, education, healthcare, infrastructure, the rule of law, respect for human life, as well as religious and ethnic tolerance, it is abundantly clear. Contemporary Nigerian society is morally, culturally, socially, economically, politically, and technologically deficient; as a result, immediate action is needed to stop the sad trend. Kofi Annan lending his voice to good governance as cited in Adejumobi (2004:11) stated:

> *"Without good governance, without the rule of law, predictable administration, legitimate power, and responsive power, and responsive regulation, no amount of funding, no amount of charity will set us on the path of prosperity".*

In particular, third world nations and some wealthy economies are experiencing a crisis of open-minded democracy, decent governance, and development (Ayatse, Onaga, & Ogoh, 2013). In actuality, Nigerian society is not doing too well when it comes to democracy, good governance, and development, as evidenced by the high levels of indifference, self-isolation, distrust in public discourse and political office-holders, declining levels of citizens' involvement in social and political life, and deteriorating confidence in both the government, the judiciary, and the rule of law. According to Thomson (2004), the general perception of the African continent is that it operates according to a reverse logic of political disorder and irrationality, where politics is about outright stealing and a game of the belly, where political motion is one of vacillation and retreat rather than any advance or progress, and where the rules of the "jungle" prevail over those of the constitution. The aforementioned claim accurately captures how developments in Nigerian politics have undermined the idea of a single, indivisible country held by our founding fathers. The failure to impart and inculcate in the populace the critical knowledge, attitudes, values and skills that may be acquired through the correct teaching and learning of social studies education is the cause of all the issues mentioned above. The leaders' character, ability, competence, integrity, and commitment are only a few examples of the elements that solidifies sustainable and resilient future democratic governance. These are the essential tenets that good democratic governance is built upon. The main goal of this paper is to evaluate the contribution that social studies education makes to Nigeria's development of sustainable democratic governance.

Conceptual Explication

The concepts of social studies education, democracy, and good governance were extensively explicated.

Social Studies Education

The study of social studies is regarded as a powerful subject that provides students with the knowledge, attitudes, values, interests, and skills they need to achieve Nigeria's educational objectives, which in turn will hasten the country's social, economic, cultural, political, and technological development. Instilling intellectual and manipulative abilities in students through social studies education can be seen in their ability to solve problems, communicate, and express themselves, all of which help them adapt to a fast changing society. According to Edinyang and Kalu (2016), social studies is a subject that examines how people behave and interact with their surroundings. It aims to support people in leading meaningful lives by teaching them moral principles, socially acceptable skills, attitudes, and information. According to Unimna and Ohanyere (2018), social studies education largely focuses on the analysis of man, his immediate surroundings, the society in which he lives, and the results of the interactions between these three components. In a similar vein, Muhammad in Jimoh (2014) defined social studies as the study of man as he engages in various settings. Cultural, social, political, economic, or physical environmental factors could all be involved. The unifying

theme is that social studies education is the study of how people interact with and are influenced by their physical, cultural, and social environments (Unimna and Ohanyere, 2018).

In the same way, Jimoh (2014) concluded that, in relation to his physical, social, economic, political, technological, educational, and cultural/traditional contexts, among others, man is at the center of social studies education. To effectively live, engage, and relate to others and to constructively contribute to the economic, social, political, and cultural growth of society, Emoefe (2021) argued that one must possess an awareness of human relationships, values, and logical reasoning. In Emoefe (2021), Bayero expressed the opinion that social studies is the culmination of knowledge acquired from the numerous facets of human thoughts and experiences to address man's sporadic issues. In addition, Coe in Edinyang, Unimke, Ubi, Opoh and Iwok (2017) viewed social studies as a subject that prepares students to be responsible members of a democratic society in a multicultural and interdependent world. Although the growth of democracy and sound government in Nigeria depends on the development of certain citizenship attributes, such as integrity, obedience, loyalty, and patriotism, among others, these traits are included in the social studies school curriculum.

The values, information, attitudes, and skills children acquire through social studies study are thought to have a significant influence on their lives and help them make decisions as adults that benefit both them and society as a whole. This serves as additional evidence of the value of social studies (Ohanyere and Ohanyere, 2022). By the use of social studies curricula, the above-described citizenship attributes might be effectively taught and learned, resulting in citizens who would act as change agents in society and politics to meet the generation's needs for democracy and good governance. However, for democracy to function in the twenty-first century, citizens must actively participate in societal advancement while also being aware of events both locally and globally. Education in social studies prepares and arms young students with potential analytical and problem-solving abilities that support the growth of democracy and good governance in the ever-evolving society. Such efforts must be devoted to the teaching and study of social studies, which contain certain important societal fundamental values, if Nigeria is to prosper in the democracy and good governance that are so essential to the 21st century. According to Mbakwem and Ibeh (2012), social studies is expected to offer materials that can be used to equip students with the critical thinking, feelings, and behavior skills that will help them not only live effectively with greater dignity and satisfaction but also to participate and positively contribute to the development of the society. Through its lofty objectives, social studies education provides young students with the desirable knowledge, values, interests, skills, and attitudes needed to make wise decisions and take appropriate actions that will greatly assist them in contributing to the establishment of a sustainable democracy and a good government relevant to the rapid development of the society.

The instrumentality of the social studies educational program design is coordinated towards the accompanying destinations: confidence and creativities; power of creative mind; desire for information and consistent learning; sense of sympathy for the less advantaged; It makes a feeling of regard for and resilience of the perspective on others; social ethics and practices, for example, collaboration, investment; relationship; dependability, acquiescence, trustworthiness,

unbiasedness, industriousness and genuineness (Garb, Singh, Yusuf, and Saad, 2012). Thus, according to Edinyang et al. (2017), social studies education aids in presenting both the positive values of human behavior and the negative social vices, such as prostitution, armed robbery, indiscipline, embezzlement, diversion, and misappropriation of public funds, ethnic conflict, and religious intolerance, that have negative social repercussions. The learners must be made aware of the negative consequences that result from engaging in undesirable behaviors such as indiscipline, dishonesty, waywardness, intolerance, ethnic and religious violence, kidnapping, armed robbery, drug abuse, yahoo fraud, etc, for Nigeria as a nation to succeed in developing and producing sound and responsible citizens who would then use their acquired intellectual prowess to build a sustainable democratic society. This is only possible if our schools have excellent social studies resource rooms where all of the detrimental repercussions of these social vices (issues) in our communities are exposed for the students to see personally.

Objectives of Social Studies Education

The specific goal of social studies, a value-laden discipline, is to develop students' minds toward scientific inquiry and creativity for the advancement of democracy and good governance. This includes instilling societal core values like hard work, honesty, integrity, dedication, patriotism, and commitment that are important for harmonious and peaceful coexistence among society's members. Bozimo and Ikwumelu (2009) quote the Social Studies Association of Nigeria (SOSAN) as having the following general aims for social studies education:

i. To help the learners fit into the society to which he/she belongs;
ii. To create an understanding of environment – it's man-made, natural, cultural, and spiritual resources and the conservation of these resources for development;
iii. To develop an awareness and appreciation for the inter-relatedness of human knowledge and human life;
iv. To develop capacity to learn and acquire skills essential to the formulation of satisfactory professional life and further studies;
v. To develop capacity for logical thinking and sound rational judgment;
vi. To make the students aware of the problems of his country and the world in general and a systematic appreciation of diversity and interdependence of the local community and of the wider national and international communities.

However, how far these mentioned objectives of social studies education are achieved depends largely on effective teaching and learning of the subject matter anchored on the educator's professionalism, pedagogical expertise, classroom management, commitment, motivation, as well as students' study habits techniques, and psychological readiness to learn. In the absence of effective teaching and learning of social studies education, students cannot be inculcated with the core democratic principles which are basic tenets of democratic governance.

Democracy

There exist no consensus definition of the concept "democracy" as it has been defined by different scholars based on their perceptions of the concept. Some of these definitions of the concept will be considered as it relates to this paper. Democracy is said to be government of the people, by the people and for the people. This implies that under democratic society, the leaders emerge through elected representatives who are held accountable for their conduct while in the office. In modern democracy, the people rule through a simple system of representatives, with the addition of checks and balances which is seen as vital to democracy and the rule of law. Here, all citizens are equal before the law and must conduct themselves based on the dictates of the rule of law. For a nations' democracy to be seen as ideal, it must have achieved the main objectives of ideal democracy which include freedom, and political equality. Democracy must be good enough and people oriented before it can qualify to be called a democracy. What then is a good democracy? A good democracy in the words of Leonardo (2004) is said to be one that presents a stable institutional structure that realizes the liberty and equality of citizens through the legitimate and correct functioning of its institutions and mechanisms. Secondly, a good democracy is one in which the communities, associations, and citizens of which it is meant for enjoy at least a reasonable level of liberty and equality.

There are obstacles to a robust democracy in Nigeria at all levels of government. Conflict, spurred by political rivalries, communal, ethnic, religious, or disputes over the distribution of resources, as well as a deficiency in civic education, is a serious threat to democracy and national cohesion (USAID, 2019). In a good and ideal democracy, the citizens have the collective power to evaluate and check whether the government pursues the objectives of liberty and equality according to the prevailing rule of law. Leonardo (2004) on a similar notion stated that the citizens monitor the efficiency of the application of the laws in force, the efficacy of the decisions made by government, and the political responsibility and accountability of elected officials in relation to the demands expressed by civil society. Also, Ayeni & Ajibogun (2013) viewed democracy as a form or system of government under which the governing power is utilized either directly or through the representatives that the people elect periodically. Accordingly, Democracy in the words of Idike, Okeke, Okorie, Ogbah and Ugodulunwa (2020) also refers to a generic community attitude for freedom through equal opportunities. The authors stated further that equality is an important value of democracy, and equality in this sense must not be seen in absolute terms but more plausibly as equality of opportunities, manifested in inclusion, open competition, particularly in the creation of room for equal chances in governance.

Democracy, as the case may be, results in true representation with well-considered action taken to address the political and socioeconomic problems of the people; in the absence of this, the society's efforts to create a dynamic, progressive, united, and integrated nation could become merely a hallucination, resulting in disorder in the society, noted (Akpama, Ohanyere & Inyang, 2022). Aderonke (2013) maintained that democracy involves the opportunity to participate in decision making in the political process. It repudiates arbitrariness and authoritarianism. Accordingly, therefore, citizens in a democracy should be entitled to equal protection of their persons, possessions, and rights; have equal opportunity to pursue their lives

and careers; and have equal rights of political participation (Zakka, 2014). In addition, Aminu, Gbenga and Bolaji (2014) maintained that democracy provides periodic elections that allow people to change (and control) their government personnel (and in some cases, government policies through referenda), accordingly, elected officials are presumed to respond to the public opinion or risk rejection at the poll. The assumed relationship between democratically elected leaders and the citizens is based on reciprocity. Nweke (2015) stressed that democratic societies seek to guarantee their citizens certain freedom, including freedom of religion, freedom of the press, and freedom of speech. Ideally, citizens also should be guaranteed freedom of association and assembly, freedom from arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, and the freedom to work and live where and how they choose.

Despite the laudability of current sustenance of democracy in Nigeria, the question remains as to the extent Nigerian democratic leaders have justified the essence of democratic leadership. If Nigerians' clamor for democracy was propelled by the quest for good governance aimed ultimately at enhancing national development, then Nigerians must have clamored for the assurances of the general benefits of democracy. This definitely includes visions for real democratic governance (Nweke, 2015). Democracy in Nigeria according to Arowolo and Aluko (2012) has three unique features which include: insulation of economic matters from popular participation, manipulation and monopolisation of democratic process including the use of violence and electoral fraud to secure legitimacy and peripheral participation of citizens. From the foregoing, one can conclude that the basic feature of democracy according to Nassbaum as cited by Nwogu (2015) is the capacity of all voters to participate freely and fully in the life of their society.

Democratic governance

For proper understanding of the concept "democratic governance", effort is made to explicate in detail the meaning of governance. Governance is seen as the direct application of control in a democratic system in relation to judicious management of a society's available resources for cultural, social, economic, political, and technological advancement. Agreeing to the above point are Sharma, Sadana, and Kaur (2012) who defined governance as, "the manner in which authority of government is exercised in mobilizing a society's social and economic resources, to add the issues of public interest". According to Iwokwagh cited in Jato and Akwen (2014), governance is the art of exercising authority, or control in a political system through policy formulation and implementation. Ideally, Arisi and Ukadike (2011) described governance as an approach or perspective that focuses on state, societal institutions and the relationship between them as well as on how rules are made in a society which are accepted as legitimate to enhance values that are sought by individuals and groups within the society. The UNDP in Abdulhamid (2016) view governance as the totality of the exercise of authority in the management of a country's affairs, comprising of the complex mechanism, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights and mediate their differences. From the foregoing definitions of governance, it shows

that governance major aim is public good of the concerned society. Also, whatever happens to the existence of a nation and its citizens depend largely on the form of government and governance that is in practice in the state. It therefore becomes pertinent to state that the best form of governance suitable for a democratic system to thrive, is the one that represents the "governed-centered policies" i.e. having the interest of the citizens as its cardinal objective.

Therefore, in the Nigerian context, democratic governance is understood to be a form of government that enables active consultation, engagement, and participation of all citizens, regardless of gender, culture, language, region, ethnicity, or religious affiliation, in the formulation of policy frameworks and the making of decisions. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, OSCE (2023) looked at democratic governance as a form of government where institutions interact with other institutions in a way that upholds democratic principles both internally and outside. According to Arodoye, Izevbigie, and Omo-Ikirodah (2017), democratic governance is a system of government that allows the minority voice to be heard while the majority has its way of making decisions and resolving various issues that confront them as an entity for the good and fairness of all. Also, Bello-Imam and Obadan (2004) defined democratic governance as the exercise of governmental authority based on the consent of the governed, either directly or indirectly through representation. And that there is room for state institutions to communicate the states' generally agreed position on all fundamental socioeconomic and policy matters that affect the people (Arodoye et al, 2017). The practice of democratic governance extends beyond the creation of democratic institutions and basic democratic procedures. It entails fostering democracy's long-term viability, which includes the capacity for the separation of powers and the independence of the executive and legislative branches; the exercise of power in accordance with the rule of law; respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights; and the transparency and accountability of an effective civil service operating at both the national and local levels, noted (United Nations Mission in Timor-Leste, UNMIT, 2012).

Furthermore, Ikpi (1997) asserted that democratic governance can be examined from six perspectives, including the start and maintenance of rapid socioeconomic growth, the establishment and growth of a free market economy, the establishment of a fundamental organizational framework to serve as a springboard for further development, the creation of an absorptive capacity for capital and other inputs, the encouragement of private sector investment, and the improvement of worker productivity. These principles essentially sum up democratic governance. OSCE (2023) noted that the foundation of democratic governance includes political pluralism, institutional responsiveness and accountability, a vibrant civil society, respect for human rights, the rule of law, and free and fair elections. Importantly, these fundamental qualities are essential for democratic governance's power to promote and strengthen the social compact, public trust, state legitimacy, and advance socioeconomic and political growth in society (Omodia and Aliu, 2013). Council of Europe (2023) are of the opinion that, for societies to be democratically secure, trusted, open, and accessible democratic institutions are essential at the national, regional, and local levels. Democracy and good governance work together to prevent conflict, advance stability, handle crises, promote economic and social advancement, and foster an environment where the rule of law and respect

for human rights are upheld consistently. Democracy cannot be imposed from outside; it must be accepted by the domestic political establishment and the electorate, and it must be maintained and safeguarded by institutions of democracy that are in full working order.

However, Nigeria's diversified society necessitates the fervent efforts of its many citizens to work together in a coordinated manner to face the enormous challenge of establishing and fostering excellent democratic governance essential to long-term national development.

Key barriers to sustainable future democratic governance in Nigeria

Throughout the years, Nigeria's efforts to develop a strong nation have been hampered by severe problems with democratic leadership. Tribalism, nepotism, an unreliable voter registration system, inter-ethnic strife, religious intolerance, and political and economic instability are just a few of the difficulties that society faces today. A democratic society devoid of an effective rule of law is like a structure without a firm foundation that can never withstand a powerful wind. The recent Presidential and National Assembly elections of February 25, 2023, saw a low turnout despite the collection of over 80 million PVCs. This reflects a rapid loss of peace and order, weak leadership, and complacent followership, all of which point to a lack of support for the democratic structures that would keep democracy alive in Nigeria. Several anomalies such as documented vote buying, voter intimidation and suppression, ballot box snatching, result rigging and manipulation, bribery, and corruption tainted the election. Before the polls, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari and the head of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) made enormous commitments to hold free, fair, and credible elections, but woefully fell short of the lofty expectations of the electorates, and the general public. Be that as it may, the following highlighted points are some of the barriers impeding the development of a sustainable democratic governance:

1. **Mass poverty:** Another serious issue bedevilling the development of a sustainable and resilient democratic governance in Nigeria is mass poverty amongst the citizens. Based on UN report as cited by Olanrewaju (2017), over 80 million of the Nigerian population i.e. 42.4% currently live below the poverty line. The report has it that by February 2018, Nigeria would have overtaken India as the country with the most people in **extreme**
2. **Poverty**. This makes the poor masses susceptible for the few rich to buy over during election; with alluring empty promises of bettering their lives after elections.
3. **Corruption in its ramifications:** Nigeria, a developing nation is deeply immersed in corruption as the country is currently ranked 150th among 180 countries based on International Transparency Corruption Index, making it one of the most corrupt nations of the globe. No nation of the globe can ever make progress nor develop to its optimum capacity by running a porous and corrupt system as done in Nigeria. Except something drastic is done to stem this ugly tide, it will continue to stand as a stumbling towards the achievement of a sustainable and resilient democratic governance in modern Nigeria.
4. **Political thuggery:** The fact remains that the teeming Nigerian youth population has become political tools in the hands of politicians, acting as thugs during elections to sow unrest,

anarchy, and trouble because they lack modern, entrepreneurial skills and decent jobs to keep them occupied. When it comes to killing, maiming, injuring, intimidating, and suppressing voters as well as members of opposing political parties, politicians are now using the youth who were once seen as the beacon of hope for the construction of a resilient and sustainable future democratic governance.

5. **Ethnic profiling:** Igbos in Nigeria have historically been the target of ethnic profiling by residents of South-Western Nigeria, especially during elections when they are intimidated, repressed, hurt, and occasionally threatened with death for choosing to exercise their right to vote. When Jimi Agbaje, a child of two Yorubas, ran for office in 2015, there were controversies about "perishing Igbos in the lagoon" if they supported him. The same thing happened in the recently finished general elections when Igbos in Lagos were urged not to cast ballots if they not ready to cast their votes for the ruling party APC's nominees in either the presidential or the governorship elections. If not immediately addressed, this is nasty and obscene and can serve as a breeding ground for religious and ethnic intolerance.

6. **Lack of Accountability:** According to Okoye (2005), there is no transparent structure in place that allows the public to engage in policy creation and have a say in how policies are executed. Nigeria has a wealth of natural resources but lacks adequate accountability measures. This could be attributed, in part, to a lack of connective infrastructure such as roads, internet connectivity, and energy, on which service delivery and social accountability systems rely. In Nigeria, the public sector does not appear to be accountable to the people; there appears to be disconnect between what happens in government and what is communicated to individuals.

7. **Compromised security personnel:** The nations' security personnel are regrettably compromised as they usually side the government in power to the point of helping them rig and perpetrate election fraud of all sorts. As the nation still has a long way to go to reverse the ugly trend, these offensive acts of misbehaviour pose as a barrier to any chance of developing and fostering a sustainable and resilient future democratic administration in Nigeria. The protectors of democracy as it is practiced in industrialized countries around the world are security professionals, but Nigeria sorely lacks this.

8. **Weak judicial system:** The judiciary formally seen as the beckon of hope for the common man has over the couple of years failed to prove that indeed it is independently discharging their assigned duties without the interference of the executive arm of government. The Nigeria judiciary shuck the foundation when in 20th January 2020 the Supreme Court gave devastating judgement removing then the incumbent government of Imo State Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), replacing him with the candidate of All Progressive Congress (APC) that came a distant 4th during the governorship election in the state. The same Supreme Court gave judgement in favour of two APC Senatorial candidates that did not stand for the party's primaries, a judgement that contravenes the INEC electoral act of 2022 as amended.

Overcoming barriers to sustainable future democratic governance in contemporary Nigeria

It is pertinent to note that, laying the path for sustainable development on all fronts and putting in place appropriate mechanisms aimed at stabilizing the democratic achievements gained thus far, Nigeria, a developing nation, stands a higher chance of achieving a sustainable

future democratic governance. That said, Nigeria can work toward attaining sustainable democratic governance in the future by implementing the following outlined points.

- **Independent of the judiciary:** To ensure that the rule of law is followed, an independent judiciary is required. Judicial independence means that judges are free to make impartial judgments based purely on truth and law and are not subject to pressure or interference. An impartial judge can ensure that your case is determined based on the law and the facts, rather than the changeable political context and technicalities (American Bar Association, 2019).
- **Accountability in government**: All holders of public offices like the executives, legislatures, and the judiciary owe the obligation of accountability to the public under a constitutional democracy. A wide range of regular processes, such as elections, systems of reward and punishment, financial accounting, recall campaigns, and referendums, can be used to ensure accountability. Constitutional democracies provide for public responsibility for government actions because government representatives are answerable to the populace (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2023).
- **Stemming the tide of corruption:** Indeed, corruption has grown widespread in Nigeria, where it is done in every sphere of life, including the home, the workplace, the church, the mosque, and both governmental and commercial institutions. Almost every Nigerian citizen now benefits from corruption activities. Leaders can battle corruption while also advancing peace. Governments must provide room for the public to participate in decision-making, from activists and business owners to members of marginalized communities and young people. People may speak up in democracies to fight corruption and seek a safer society for all of us (Eriksson, 2022).
- **Acceptance of diversity:** Accepting diversity simply implies appreciating and understanding the differences of others, such as language, culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and so on. Nigeria will undoubtedly establish a harmonious, peaceful, and democratic society if all of its various people choose to work together as one indivisible nation free of discrimination, stereotyping, marginalization, profiling, ethnic and religious bigotry.
- **People orientated policies:** Successive Nigerian governments' creation, development, and implementation of people-centered policies will leave a lasting legacy that will help to usher the country into a long-term period of democratic governance relevant to the social, economic, political, and technological transformation of modern Nigerian society. Since sustainable development is people-centered, any development plan in modern Nigeria without sensible, workable, and people-centered government policies is doomed to absolute failure.
- **Reformed security system:** The urgent need for a complete overhaul of the country's security architecture is due to the monumental failure of the current security set-up, as those charged with the responsibility of defending and protecting the citizens of Nigeria are not performing up to the standards in their primary assignment. This is preventing the country from achieving sustainable future democratic governance in modern-day Nigeria. For instance, the men of the Nigerian police force are busy brutalizing the defenseless citizens of Nigeria with

such aplomb while also extorting money from transporters, instead of performing their primary assigned function of enforcing the law.

- **Enactment of stringent electoral act:** Given all the irregularities and the colossal failure of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) during the Nigerian presidential election in 2023, it is urgently necessary to design, develop, and enact strict electoral laws that are supported by constitutional provisions and that must be followed by all citizens, regardless of status, gender, culture, region, ethnicity, or religion. Nigeria, a developing nation, cannot continue to view the process of establishing a democratic government free from nepotism, corruption, dishonesty, and mediocrity with levity.

Impact of social studies in the development of sustainable democratic governance in Nigeria

As the case may be, social studies education is replete with the essential fundamental social and cultural values pertinent to the development and realization of sustainable future democratic governance that will revolutionize Nigerian society on all fronts. The social reconstruction of current Nigerian society, which will transform into sustainable national development, would be made possible by the successful teaching and learning of social studies education at all levels of education in Nigerian schools. Nevertheless, the following highlights the direct contribution that social studies education makes to the creation and realization of a democratic governance that will be able to endure into the future.

i. **Nurturing of transformational leadership:** The successful teaching and learning of social studies education would contribute to the development of engaged and effective citizens who are endowed with the fundamental transformational leadership abilities required to have a long-term impact on the growth and realization of sustainable future democratic governance in modern Nigeria. The crop of Nigerian men and women who present themselves as leaders and hold various elected and appointed positions now are lacking in this aspect.

ii. **Imbibing of the spirit of good governance:** The effective interpretation of social studies education content in Nigerian schools would act as a lubricant engineering the development of creative citizens endowed with the spirit of good governance and who would constantly give their all in seeing to the attainment of sustainable future democratic governance that will pave the way for a transformed society. Without sound governance, a democratic form of government is like a structure without a sturdy base that would eventually crumble.

iii. **Preservation of moral values:** Nigerians should be deeply concerned about the shocking degree of moral depravity in their society today because it is impeding the country's ability to establish a lasting democratic government. Therefore, if there is any chance that Nigeria may build a sustainable society based on solid moral principles, it is imperative that social studies education contents be taught effectively at all levels of the country's education system. Social studies education functions to preserve a society's moral values.

iv. **Inculcation of national consciousness:** It is possible that good social studies instruction will instil in young students a sense of national consciousness, encouraging them to put the interests of their country above those of their various ethnic groups and contribute their all to the development of modern-day Nigeria. When people are aware of the advancement of their country, politics of competence triumphs over ethnic considerations.

v. **Development of the spirit of tolerance:** In the absence of tolerance, there is a propensity for anarchy because people would spend all of their time trying to outsmart one another, which will make it challenging to unite in order to establish and maintain sustainable democratic rule. Achieving sustained national development is made possible by social studies education, which influences young learners' behaviour by establishing in them a sense of acceptance, empathy, and love for one another.

vi. **Development of patriotic citizens:** The successful teaching and learning of social studies education in Nigerian schools would serve to instill in young learners the spirit of patriotism that is now lacking among contemporary Nigerian people. A patriotic citizen of a nation will leave no stone unturned in ensuring the development and attainment of sustainable democratic governance as the hallmark of the nation's transition.

Findings of the paper

i. The paper discovered mass poverty, corruption, political thuggery, ethnic profiling, compromised security personnel, voter's suppression and intimidation, as well as government partisanship as key barriers militating against the attainment of sustainable democratic governance in Nigeria, needing urgent action to stem the obnoxious tide.

ii. It was noted that Nigeria being a multicultural society necessitates the fervent efforts of its many citizens to work together in a coordinated manner to face the enormous challenge of establishing and fostering excellent democratic governance essential to long-term national development.

iii. Also, a comprehensive strategy for sustainable governance for and by all Nigerians is therefore required to advance the culture of democratic governance in the country as this will foster sustainable national development.

iv. The paper also discovered that the best form of governance suitable for a democratic system to thrive, is the one that represents the "governed-centered policies" i.e. having the interest of the citizens as its cardinal objective.

v. Finally, the paper unmistakably stated that the development of transformational leadership skills, inculcation of the spirit of good governance, preservation of moral values, instillation of national consciousness, development of the spirit of tolerance, as well as development of patriotic citizens in the learners, would possibly result from effective teaching and learning of social studies education in order to achieve a sustainable society.

Conclusion

It is a known fact that any nation that supports democratic governance invites a wide range of political engagement, including a pluralistic system of political parties, a thriving civil society, and the media. Furthermore, women and minorities are supported and integrated at all levels of the government and society as a whole through strong democratic institutions. Additionally, a true democratic governance practices will possibly help Nigeria to uphold the rights and dignity of all the citizens including women, the youth, the disable and the impoverished poor masses. Advancing a sustainable democratic governance in contemporary Nigerian society

requires mapping out a long lasting comprehensive strategy that will stimulate the development of the country.

A thorough examination of the papers' content analysis positions social studies education as a valuable subject of study that has the capacity to improve, restructure, overhaul, and rebuild an individual social studies education learner who may eventually turn out to develop into a transformational democratic leader prepared with the anticipated intellectual ability, skills, and expertise that would change the unpleasant narrative of the current Nigerian democratic governance failure.

Recommendations

i. For effective teaching and learning of social studies education, Nigerian schools should have excellent social studies resource rooms where all of the detrimental repercussions of reoccurring social vices in contemporary Nigerian society are to be exposed for the students to observe and possibly take corrections.

ii. The senior secondary social studies curriculum as designed and approved but not yet implemented must be fully adopted and implemented immediately as this will broaden the intellectual horizons of the young learners and enable them to fully understand the complexities of democratic governance.

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