

# The need to Reposition Social Studies Curriculum to Address Community-Specific Social Vices in Nigerian Communities: A situation Analysis of Amainyi Community

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## Abstract

*The need to use the Social Studies curriculum to effectively address the actual and most pressing social vices facing each Nigerian community is long overdue. This study therefore investigated the Social Studies curriculum within the context of one of the many communities in Nigeria – Amainyi community, in order to find out what the actual social vices facing the community are, coverage of these vices in the current Social Studies curriculum and, kind of curriculum the community needs to address these vices. The study adopted a mixed-method research design. Using a purposive sampling technique, 232 participants covering all major stakeholders in the community (School Heads, Social Studies teachers, Junior Senior Secondary School students II, past Social Studies students, Parents, and community leaders in Amainyi community) were selected. Data were collected using Anti-Social Vices Curriculum Need Assessment Questionnaire (ASVCNAQ) and Structured Interview Guide for Local Stakeholders on Repositioning Social Studies Curriculum, after the validity and reliability of the instruments were determined. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentage scores and mean (for research questions 1-2) and thematic analysis (for research question 3). The results show the social vices prevalent in Amainyi community, many of which are not covered in the current Social Studies curriculum. Also, the stakeholders reported the need for a locally relevant curriculum to effectively address the problem of vices in the community. Therefore, it was recommended that Social Studies curriculum be repositioned to capture the actual social vices facing each Nigerian community through a curriculum design process that will involve all relevant stakeholders at the local level.*

## Key Words:

### Introduction

Education, through a well conceptualized, designed and implemented curriculum process that involves all relevant stakeholders, can play a key role towards addressing most, if not all, of the social vices prevalent among young people in Nigeria today. This is because when the values of any given society are appropriately integrated into the school curriculum, the resulting education could help to make man well-adjusted in the society and the school could rightly be accepted as a place where good and acceptable behaviours of the society are nourished. In this way, Amiaya (2015) asserted that contemporarily, the world's most difficult problems are confronted using education while Nwaokugha, Nyewusira and Nyewusira (2013) noted that globally, mankind has always resorted to education in attempts to resolve or address his problems

Interestingly, Ajayi and Afolabi (2009) recounted that in Nigeria, education is largely seen as a vital instrument which would help instill in the individuals desirable values. For instance, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) captured the over-all aims and objectives of Nigerian education as one which lays emphasis on turning out individuals who are sound and effective in carrying out their

duties as citizens. This national educational philosophy and objective, according to Jekayinfa (2011), fully reflect the need for the introduction subjects such as Social Studies which, among other things, lay emphasis on students' acquisition of socially acceptable behaviours, attitude and morals that they may need for their survival in the society beginning from the local, national to global level.

As Opoh, Sunday and Ogbaji (2014) put it, the over-all aims and objectives of Nigerian education captures the discipline of Social Studies and its curriculum as viable tools that will be used for, among other things, building the desirable values with the view to combating social vices among young people many of whom are students. This was why Awopetu (2001) considered the introduction of Social Studies education and its curriculum as major developments in the education of the country generally and in the fight against social vices in particular.

Therefore, the inclusion of Social Studies as a school subject in Nigeria and later, the articulation of social vices concepts as topics to be taught through the Social Studies curriculum in schools were, no doubt, groundbreaking developments in the fight against social vices in particular (Oyeleke and Aluko,

2012) and education in Nigeria generally. This is as the curriculum of Social studies, being a subject replete with values and when appropriately conceived and developed with all stakeholders involved, is believed to be capable of doing so many things including stemming the tide of rising wave of social vices among students in many Nigerian communities.

For example, the curriculum is believed to be capable of serving as a means of positively changing the value system of a people; develop student's understanding of their national social heritage and a need to conserve them (Edinyang and Usang, 2012); prepare responsible citizens by leading positive behavioral changes in the learners, improve the effort at human capital development (Arisi, 2015); foster patriotism (Ossai, 2010); engineer sustainable national development (Enu and Effiom, 2012; Opoh, Sunday and Ogbaji, 2014); facilitate the attainment of national development goals by producing responsible individuals (Edinyang and Ubi, 2013). Other potential capabilities of Social Studies and its curriculum include, providing value-based education (Ikwumelu, Bassey and Oyibe, 2015); a means developing socio-civic and personal behaviours (Kabir, 2014) and inculcating democratic values (Mezieobi, 2008); vital instrument for achieving global peace (Odia, 2014) and crime control (Onwuasoanya, nd); serving as an antidote to corruption (Philip-Ogoh and Okloho, 2013) and a means of achieving the various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Ogunfunmilakin, 2015).

Based on the above listed potentials and opportunities of Social Studies, Mezieobi, Ogaugwu, Ossai and Young (2013) captured it as a functional, transformative and an ideal subject for equipping learners with the needed core principles, morals, ideals, behaviours, abilities and expertise that are strong enough for them to survive the challenges of their environment, be it local, national or global environment. Therefore, the overall aims and objectives of education in Nigeria accepts the curriculum of Social Studies as one designed to teach young people in the school system, socially acceptable standards and morals of their immediate environment for effective and vibrant citizenship (Onuoha and Okam, 2011) with the aim of solving first and foremost, local problems, then national and global problems. Therefore, Arisi (2015) summarily stated that the nature of the curriculum and/or programme of Social Studies in secondary schools in

Nigeria is such that it (Social Studies) should be cognizant of societal needs in Nigeria and so, incorporate contemporary issues of local, national and global concerns.

Notwithstanding the strength and opportunities of the curriculum and/or programme of Social Studies in secondary schools in Nigeria as seen above, the weaknesses of the curriculum are also well documented in literature. The Social Studies curriculum, just like many other school curricula in Nigeria, has undergone just few reviews since its introduction and evidence show, the curriculum is laden with shortcomings in addressing social problems facing some contemporary local communities in Nigeria (Akpan, 2008; Balogun, 2009; Ukpai and Okoro, 2011) which is one of the objectives of the subject. Critical of the arguments against the curriculum is that it is content driven and not relevant to contemporary societal needs just like some other subject curricula in Nigerian Secondary Schools.

Kabir (2014) while studying the plausible connection in using Social Studies to correct social ills in Nigeria noted that, the existing approaches and procedures that are incorporated into the teaching and learning of morals among young people across schools in Nigeria are not adequate enough towards helping Nigeria manage effectively the huge moral deficiencies and crises facing the country. According to him, emphasis needs to be placed on all aspects of the curriculum rather than focusing only on the cognitive aspect of the curriculum as it is currently done. Also, he found poor material resources as another hindrance to the effective utilization of the curriculum and discipline of Social Studies to curb social vices among young people in Nigerian schools. Similarly, Mezieobi and Brown (2017) identified the non-use of diversified instructional strategies in the execution or implementation of the Social Studies curriculum at the classroom level, as well as the failure to periodically review the curriculum as key weaknesses of the curriculum. These weaknesses, no doubt, could limit the extent to which the goals of the curriculum, such as helping students acquire desirable social behaviours, could be attained. In view of the failure to periodically review the curriculum of Social Studies, Mezieobi, Ogaugwu, Ossai and Young (2013) noted that the likelihood that the curriculum will be revised and expanded to capture and address social problems in many societies in Nigeria is not insight.

Some other scholars such as Onwuasoanya (nd) and Sofadekan (2012) in their separate studies have found similar challenges facing Social Studies curriculum to include; inadequate content and poor methodology and therefore concluded that, the current content of the curriculum of Social Studies in secondary schools in Nigeria is not sufficient in dealing effectively with the numerous moral deficiency and social ills before many societies in Nigeria of today. Onuoha and Okam (2011) classified the weaknesses of Social Studies curriculum in three areas namely; problem of content areas, problem of teaching and problem of evaluation procedures.

Another critical weakness of the Social Studies curriculum is the exclusion of critical curriculum stakeholders at the local level such as the actual end users of the curriculum (students), those who directs its day-to-day implementation in the classroom (teachers), and other local stakeholders (including past Social Studies students, school leaders, parents and community leaders/leaders of thought), in the process of designing the Curriculum. Some scholars, (Onyeachu, 2008; Kolawole, 2011; Adewuya, 2013; Kolawole, 2015), found this exclusion as common trend in curriculum design and development in Nigeria generally which affects not only Social Studies, but all other school subject in Nigeria. The danger in this exclusion is that the real and actual needs of the people for whom the curriculum is designed for might not be truly captured. This is as the curriculum might only be a reflection or an expression of the ideas of the “experts” that designed it. Secondly, the exclusion could seriously mar the accurate execution and application of the curriculum which could come from of teachers' misconstructions and misrepresentations of the aims, content and procedures of the curriculum.

The preponderance of social vices in many communities in Nigeria, which knows no bound, may be an indication that there is need to reposition social studies in Nigeria to effectively capture and address the real social vices that the communities are facing. For instance, Amainyi-Ukwu and Amainyi-Nta communities in Ihitte/Uboma L.G.A. of Imo State, Social Studies curriculum is implemented in all the schools in the communities, yet its recipients—students and graduates from these communities, all of whom are young people, continue to fermenting troubles in the communities and manifest negative

behaviours in their daily social interactions some of which are explicitly not captured in the current Social Studies curriculum.

It is important to add that many young people fermenting trouble in these communities and engaging in all forms of vices are mostly youths some of who are still in secondary school while others have completed their secondary education where Social Studies was taught. The prevalence of social vices in these communities, where Social Studies curriculum has been implemented for quite a long time, is one practical example which shows that the Social Studies curriculum has some level of deficiency in addressing social vices.

The task of developing any effective curriculum is a systematic exercise that ordinarily should involve relevant stakeholders and end-users most especially, teachers and students. Hence, UNESCO (2005) stated that the agencies and authorities charged with task of developing school curricula should, as much as possible, ensure that the process is participatory. This is to capture the inputs of those whom the curriculum will directly affect their lives. Meanwhile, in Nigeria, a lot of people, mainly those in remote location such as Amainyi community, are virtually excluded in designing and developing educational and/or learning packages that have direct bearings on their lives such as Social Studies. What obtains is that, centrally designed and developed Social Studies curriculum (wherein only a few of these social vices are captured), is disseminated to States and Local Education Authorities from the center, for implementation. This often occurs without adequate inputs of the stakeholders in rural communities and villages where majority of the end-users of the curriculum dwell. Social Studies curriculum, centrally developed, is expected to curb social vices among students in various nationalities in Nigeria irrespective of cultural differences and irrespective of the fact that majority of the people whom the curriculum will directly affect their lives were totally excluded in the design process.

In view of this, there was a need to study the Social Studies curriculum within the context of one of the many communities in Nigeria –Amainyi community, in order to find out what the actual social vices facing the community are vis-à-vis the coverage of these vices in the current Social Studies curriculum in Nigeria. Most importantly is the need to find out, first from the real people, what kind of Social Studies

curriculum is needed in the community to address the problem of vices. Hence, this study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the community-specific social vices facing Amainyi community?
2. What is the coverage level of these social vices in Amainyi Community in the current social studies curriculum?
3. What kind of Social Studies curriculum does Amainyi community need to address the problem of social vices?

**Method**

This study will adopt a mixed-method research design where both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected. The population of the study was made up of all School Heads, Social Studies teachers, Junior Senior Secondary School students II (JSS II), past Social Studies students who have successfully completed the Social Studies

curriculum, Parents, and community leaders in Amainyi community. Three (3) secondary schools in the community were purposively selected for the study. From each of these secondary schools, all Junior Secondary School II students, Social Studies teachers and school heads were selected to participate in the study. Furthermore, twenty-eight (28) parents and sixteen (16) community leaders were purposively selected, irrespective of gender or English language literacy level, to participate in the study. Data were collected using Anti-Social Vices Curriculum Need Assessment Questionnaire (ASVCNAQ) and Structured Interview Guide for Local Stakeholders on Repositioning Social Studies Curriculum to Address Social Vices in Amainyi Community, after the validity and reliability of the instruments were determined. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentage scores and mean (for research questions 1-2) and thematic analysis (for research question 3).

**Results**

**Research Question 1: What are the community-specific social vices facing Amainyi community?**

The result of a quantitative need analysis carried out shows the perception of the stakeholders in Amainyi community on the prevalence of social vices in their community as summarised and presented in table 1.1 below.

S/n	Questionnaire items	High		Medium		Low		Mean	Rank
		F	%	F	%	F	%		
1	Cultism	121	52.2	25	10.8	86	37.1	2.15	12 <sup>th</sup>
2	Drug Abuse	133	57.3	82	53.3	17	7.3	2.50	10 <sup>th</sup>
3	Indecent Dressing	130	56.0	92	39.7	10	4.3	2.52	9 <sup>th</sup>
4	Examination Malpractice	166	71.6	58	25.0	8	3.4	2.68	5 <sup>th</sup>
5	Alcoholism	173	74.6	47	20.3	12	5.2	2.69	3 <sup>rd</sup>
6	Corrupt Practices	89	38.4	55	23.7	88	37.9	2.00	13 <sup>th</sup>
7	Sexual Immorality	159	68.5	62	26.7	11	4.7	2.64	6 <sup>th</sup>
8	Truancy	53	22.8	59	25.4	120	51.7	1.71	14 <sup>th</sup>
9	Stealing	140	60.3	88	37.9	4	1.7	2.59	8 <sup>th</sup>
10	Pornography	157	67.7	62	26.7	13	5.6	2.62	7 <sup>th</sup>
11	Premarital Sex	169	72.8	54	23.3	9	3.9	2.69	3 <sup>rd</sup>
12	Smoking	183	78.9	43	18.5	6	2.6	2.76	2 <sup>nd</sup>
13	Carrying Dangerous Weapons	141	60.8	66	28.4	25	10.8	2.50	10 <sup>th</sup>
14	Fighting	193	83.2	31	13.4	8	3.4	2.80	1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Weighted Mean = 2.68</b>									

**Table 1.1: Summary of Stakeholders’ Perception of the Prevalence of Social Vices in Amainyi Community**

Table 1.1 shows a breakdown of the mean response of stakeholders' perception of the prevalence of and/or youth involvement in social vices in Amainyi community as well as ranking of these vices as

follows: cultism (2.12, 12<sup>th</sup>); drug abuse (2.50, 10<sup>th</sup>); indecent dressing (2.52, 9<sup>th</sup>); examination malpractice (2.68, 5<sup>th</sup>); alcoholism (2.69, 3<sup>rd</sup>); corrupt practices (2.00, 13<sup>th</sup>); sexual immorality (2.64, 6<sup>th</sup>); truancy

(1.71, 14<sup>th</sup>); stealing (2.59, 8<sup>th</sup>); pornography (2.62, 7<sup>th</sup>); premarital sex (2.69, 3<sup>rd</sup>); smoking (2.76, 2<sup>nd</sup>); carrying dangerous weapons (2.50, 10<sup>th</sup>); and fighting (2.80, 1<sup>st</sup>). The weighted grand mean is 2.68

which is above 2.00. This shows a high prevalence of social vices among young people in Amainyi community.

**Research Question 2: What is the coverage level of these social vices in Amainyi Community in the current social studies curriculum?**

S/n	Prevalent Social vices	Rank in occurrence in the community	Coverage in the curriculum
1	Cultism	12 <sup>th</sup>	Covered
2	Drug Abuse	10 <sup>th</sup>	Covered
3	Indecent Dressing	9 <sup>th</sup>	Not Covered
4	Examination Malpractice	5 <sup>th</sup>	Covered
5	Alcoholism	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Not Covered
6	Corrupt Practices	13 <sup>th</sup>	Not Covered
7	Sexual Immorality	6 <sup>th</sup>	Not Covered
8	Truancy	14 <sup>th</sup>	Not Covered
9	Stealing	8 <sup>th</sup>	Not Covered
10	Pornography	7 <sup>th</sup>	Not Covered
11	Premarital Sex	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Not Covered
12	Smoking	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Not Covered
13	Carrying Dangerous Weapons	10 <sup>th</sup>	Not Covered
14	Fighting	1 <sup>st</sup>	Not Covered

**Table 1.2: Coverage of the Prevalent Social Vices in Amainyi Community in the current Social Studies Curriculum**

Table 1.2 shows a breakdown of the coverage of the prevalent social vices in Amainyi community in the current Social Studies curriculum in Nigeria. The table shows that only three out of fourteen prevalent social vices in the community are covered in the current Social Studies curriculum. The prevalent vices covered are cultism (ranked 12 out of 14), drug abuse (ranked 10 out of 14) and examination malpractice (ranked 5 out of 14). This shows a low coverage of the social vices prevalent in Amainyi community in the current Social Studies curriculum.

**Research Question 3: What kind of Social Studies curriculum does Amainyi community need to address the problem of social vices?**

Following a qualitative need assessment and interview conducted, the stakeholders agreed that they need a curriculum that will produce “nwa azuru azu ma o bu nwa n’akpa agwa oma” (meaning a properly groomed and brought up child in all character ramifications). Stakeholders reported the features of the curriculum they need which are categorized into five sub-themes as listed below:

- a. A curriculum that will take students back to the basic community values of Amainyi people and

is taught right from the home, the community and then to the school;

- b. A curriculum that its implementation is not wholly left in the hands of the school but rather, will involve most members of Amainyi community as it concerns teaching and assessing students' learning outcomes;
- c. A curriculum that will consciously and practically educate young ones from Amainyi on the ills associated with engaging in social vices;
- d. A curriculum that captures virtually all social vices facing Amainyi community and in which there is no gap in knowledge; and
- e. A curriculum that places emphasis on attitude and/or good behaviour as the true measure of students' learning outcome.

**Discussion of Findings**

**Community Specific Social Vices in Amainyi Community and their Coverage in the Current Social Studies Curriculum**

The results indicated the most prevalent social vices in Amainyi community in a rank order. Of these prevalent vices, ten (10) of them are not explicitly captured at all in the current Social Studies

curriculum, while three (3) vices seen in the community (examination malpractice, drug abuse and cultism) and captured in the Social Studies curriculum are not pressing social vices to the community as they are ranked 5<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> respectively, out of 14 by the stakeholders. Results from the qualitative need analysis also support the findings of the quantitative need analysis. A participant with the tag School Head\_001 stated that “the three social problems captured in the curriculum are not enough definitely.” A teacher participant with the tag Teacher\_002 decried the situation by stating that “there is nothing much we can do, because we are following the curriculum, even if as a teacher you want to go extra mile, you find out that you are handicapped seriously by the provisions of the curriculum . . . most especially since students are to be examined based on the existing curriculum”. This suggests that the efforts to use the current Social Studies education curriculum to address the problem of vices among youths in Amainyi community have not been channeled towards the real vices facing the community, and could further explain why the prevalence of social vices among youths in the community is quite high (see table 1.1). It therefore means that any curriculum to be developed to address this problem in Amainyi community has to lay emphasis on the vices that the community is facing ahead of other vices which the community does not consider as a serious problem (local relevance).

### **A Locally Relevant curriculum to Address Social Vices in Amainyi Community**

The central theme that emerged from the thematic analysis of the in-depth interview conducted during the situation analysis is the need for a curriculum that will address the problem of vices in the community by producing young people who are well groomed and sound in all character ramifications in Amainyi community (“nwa azuru azu ma o bu nwa n'akpa agwa oma.”). Such a curriculum according to the stakeholders should be able to capture the real vices facing Amainyi community and introduce students to the basic values of the community. Similarly, such a curriculum should not solely rest in the hands of the school, the parent and other community members such as community leaders should be part of the teaching and evaluation of the curriculum.

Some excerpts from the transcripts of the in-depth interview (some of which were translated into English from Igbo) show comments from the about

interviewed stakeholders about the curriculum they need such as “current Social Studies curriculum has not taken us back to the basics; this is because, to curb social vices we have to go back to the basic learning - the family, community and school values” (Teacher\_003); “we want our children to learn about the problems they face in our community and how to solve them” (Parent\_23); “I would have loved to learn about how to deal with some vices that I see every day which our teacher did not teach us” (Past\_S/Studies\_Student\_007); “there are some bad things that I see in Amainyi I think I should have been taught about how to deal with them.” (Past\_S/Studies\_Student\_003); “our children must first of all learn about how we use to live and how we live as a people (Com\_Lead\_15); “Since we are talking about values, we need a curriculum that emphasizes good behaviour as the basis of judging whether a student has actually learnt” (Teacher\_001); “there is no need for knowledge without good behaviour” (School\_Head\_001); “of what need is my child having all intelligence without good morals?” (Parent\_010); “the best way to measure someone who has learnt some values should be the attitude” (School\_Head\_002); “there are any values that should be part of the curriculum . . . these values ought to be drawn from each community where the curriculum is to be implemented” (Teacher\_002). “I think that whatever we want the students to learn in terms of good behaviour has to involve most, if not all members of this community in one way or another because I don't think the school can do it alone” (Parent\_005). These comments and many others of such from the participants suggest the community needs a locally-relevant curriculum to address the problem of vices. It therefore means that the curriculum that will actually help to address these community specific problems in Amainyi community must be such that the community stakeholders will be involved in its design and development stages. This is to capture the real problems facing the community and the best ways to address them.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that:

1. There are community specific social vices in the Amainyi community
2. A good number of these community specific problems are not captured explicitly in the current Social Studies curriculum in Nigeria.
3. Efforts to use the current Social Studies ult

- curriculum to address the problem of Social vices in Amainyi have not yielded the expected result
4. The failure to use current Social Studies curriculum in Nigeria to address the social vices in Amainyi have been channeled towards the vices which are not so pressing to the community. This is because, the real problems are not covered in the current curriculum.
  5. Amainyi community needs a locally relevant curriculum to properly address the problem of vices.

### Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are made; Social Studies curriculum should be repositioned to the effect that the actual problems of each community in Nigeria will be captured. Efforts to designing and/or developing the needed locally relevant curriculum in the community should be such that all relevant stakeholders are carried along in the design process through what could be described as a participatory approach to curriculum development.

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