

CURRICULUM REFORMS, EMERGING SOCIAL ISSUES, AND NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION IN NIGERIA: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL STUDIES AND CIVIC EDUCATION

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Abstract

Nigeria's dynamic socio-political landscape continues to generate emerging social issues, such as insecurity, corruption, moral decadence, civic apathy, unemployment, digital illiteracy and ethno-religious intolerance—that threaten national cohesion and development. Despite successive curriculum reforms, the educational system has yet to respond effectively to these challenges. This paper examines how curriculum reforms can reposition Social Studies and Civic Education as strategic instruments for national transformation. The objectives are to examine the role of curriculum reforms in repositioning Social Studies and Civic Education as strategic instruments for national transformation in Nigeria, provide the transformative potential of Social Studies and Civic Education, review the historical evolution and current status of curriculum reforms in Nigeria, identify and analyze the emerging social issues confronting Nigerian society and their implications, and explore strategic approaches to repositioning Social Studies and Civic Education through curriculum reforms. The functionalist and transformative learning theories as lenses. The paper proposes curriculum renewal, teacher capacity development, innovative pedagogy, digital literacy integration, and strong policy synergy among educational agencies such as the National Education Research and Development Council (NERDC), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), National Universities Commission (NUC) among others. It recommends holistic curriculum reforms emphasizing curriculum renewal, investment in teacher education, policy synergy and implementation, community engagement and public awareness, research-driven policy decisions, participatory learning and ethical reorientation to foster responsible citizenship and national transformation. The paper concludes that reformed Social Studies and Civic Education curricula remain Nigeria's most potent tools for addressing emerging social challenges in achieving sustainable national transformation.

Keywords:Curriculum Reforms, Social Studies, Civic Education, Teacher Professional Development, Value Reorientation

Introduction

Education remains the bedrock of national development and a powerful instrument for social change. In Nigeria, the dynamic nature of society shaped by political transitions, socio-economic shifts, technological advancements, and cultural transformations demands a responsive and adaptive curriculum. Over the years, curriculum reforms have been introduced at various levels of the Nigerian educational system to align educational content with national development goals and global trends. These reforms, guided by the National Policy on Education (NPE), the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), are intended to produce citizens who are morally upright, socially responsible, economically productive, and politically conscious.

However, despite several curriculum reforms, Nigeria continues to grapple with emerging social issues such as insecurity, corruption, moral decadence, ethnic and religious intolerance, unemployment, out-of-school children, technological disruptions, and civic apathy. These issues pose significant threats to national unity, democratic consolidation, and sustainable development. In this context, Social Studies and Civic Education stand out as crucial disciplines within the social science education framework. They are uniquely positioned to inculcate values, knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for responsible citizenship, national integration, and social transformation. Repositioning these subjects through targeted curriculum reforms can serve as a strategic response to Nigeria's complex socio-political realities.

Despite multiple curriculum reforms and policy initiatives, Nigeria's educational system has not adequately addressed the socio-cultural and civic challenges confronting the nation. Social Studies and Civic Education, which should ideally function as powerful tools for social transformation, have often been relegated to peripheral status in curriculum implementation, teacher preparation, and classroom practice. This has resulted in a gap between curriculum intentions and societal realities. Many learners complete their schooling without internalizing critical civic values, participatory skills, and problem-solving capacities. Consequently, issues such as moral decline, weak civic engagement, social fragmentation, and lack of national consciousness persist (NERDC 3013). There is, therefore, an urgent need to reposition Social Studies and Civic Education through meaningful curriculum reforms to address these emerging social issues strategically.

Therefore, the main thrust of this paper is to examine the role of curriculum reforms in repositioning Social Studies and Civic Education as strategic instruments for national transformation in Nigeria. Specifically, the paper seeks to: provide a conceptual and theoretical understanding of curriculum reforms, emerging social issues, and the transformative potential of Social Studies and Civic Education. To achieve this goal, a review of the historical evolution and current status of curriculum reforms in Nigeria shall be examined. In addition to exploring strategic approaches to repositioning Social Studies and Civic Education through curriculum reforms for national transformation.

Conceptual Clarifications

Curriculum Reform

Curriculum reform refers to the deliberate process of reviewing, restructuring, and improving educational content, pedagogy, and assessment to align with societal needs, policy directions, and global developments (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). In Nigeria, curriculum reform has historically been guided by the National Policy on Education (NPE 2013) which emphasizes education as an instrument for national development. According to Offorma (2016), curriculum reform involves “systematic modification of curriculum content and methods to respond to changing societal demands and educational goals.” Such reforms are necessary to ensure that education remains relevant to learners and society, especially in periods of rapid social change (Akinsanya & Ajayi, 2020).

In recent years, Nigeria has undertaken several curriculum reform initiatives through bodies such as the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) to integrate Citizenship Education, Information and Communication Technology skills, and Entrepreneurship into school curricula (NERDC, 2013; NCCE, 2020). However, as Urevbu (2010) notes, curriculum reforms in Nigeria often face implementation gaps due to inadequate teachers preparation, infrastructural deficiencies, and lack of stakeholders involvement.

Social Studies and Civic Education

Social Studies is a multidisciplinary subject designed to equip learners with knowledge, values, and skills for effective participation in society (Mezieobi, 2012). It draws from history, geography, economics, political science, and sociology to help learners understand their environment, develop civic responsibility, and contribute meaningfully to national development (Mezieobi, Fubara, & Mezieobi, 2008). Civic Education focuses specifically on developing citizens’ political literacy, civic values, rights, responsibilities, and participatory skills in democratic governance (Adeyemi, 2017).

According to Osakwe and Itedjere (1993), Social Studies in Nigeria was introduced as a tool for fostering national integration after the civil war. Civic Education was later integrated into the national curriculum in response to democratic transitions and the need to build a politically conscious citizenry (NERDC, 2013). Together, these subjects aim to nurture individuals who are informed, responsible, and actively engaged in the development of their communities and the nation at large.

Objectives of Social Studies and Civic Education

The general objectives of Social Studies and Civic Education are outlined in the National Policy on Education and curriculum frameworks (FRN, 2013; NERDC, 2013). They are intended to develop well-rounded individuals who can function effectively in society. Some key objectives include:

1. **Developing Effective Citizenship:** To equip learners with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for responsible participation in civic life (Adeyemi, 2017).
2. **Promoting National Unity and Integration:** To foster understanding and appreciation of Nigeria’s diverse cultures and promote peaceful coexistence (Osakwe & Itedjere, 1993).
3. **Instilling Positive Values and Ethics:** To cultivate honesty, integrity, tolerance, respect for human rights, and commitment to national ideals (Mezieobi, 2012).

4. Enhancing Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills: To empower learners to analyze social problems, think independently, and develop practical solutions (Akinsanya & Ajayi, 2020).
5. Encouraging Participation in Democratic Processes: To educate learners on their rights and responsibilities and encourage active involvement in governance and community development (NERDC, 2013).

Through these objectives, Social Studies and Civic Education serve as strategic vehicles for social transformation, civic reawakening, and nation-building.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation for this paper is anchored on two complementary perspectives: Functionalist Theory and Transformative Learning Theory.

Functionalist Theory

The functionalist perspective, rooted in the works of Émile Durkheim (1956), views education as a mechanism for maintaining social order and cohesion. Education is expected to transmit shared values, norms, and knowledge that enable society to function harmoniously. Social Studies and Civic Education, when properly implemented, perform integrative functions by instilling civic values, promoting unity, and preparing learners for active citizenship (Durkheim, 1956; Parsons, 1961).

In the Nigerian context, the functionalist lens justifies curriculum reforms aimed at addressing emerging social problems such as insecurity and civic apathy through value reorientation and collective identity-building. As Enoch (2000) emphasizes, education should reflect the functional needs of society by equipping learners with the competencies necessary to address contemporary challenges.

Transformative Learning Theory:

Transformative Learning Theory, developed by Mezirow (1991), posits that learning involves critical reflection that leads to a fundamental shift in worldview. It focuses on enabling learners to question assumptions, engage critically with societal issues, and take informed action to bring about change. This theory aligns strongly with the objectives of Social Studies and Civic Education, which seek to produce reflective, responsible citizens capable of addressing complex social realities (Cranton, 2016).

By integrating transformative learning principles into curriculum reforms, Social Studies and Civic Education can go beyond rote knowledge to empower learners as change agents who can respond creatively and critically to emerging social issues (Akinsanya & Ajayi, 2020). Transformative learning thus provides a conceptual bridge between curriculum content, pedagogy, and social action.

Overview of Curriculum Reforms and its historical Trajectory

Curriculum reform in Nigeria has been an ongoing response to shifting social, political, economic, and technological realities. Over successive policy cycles, reform initiatives have sought to reorient school curricula so that they produce citizens capable of contributing to national development and social cohesion (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018; Offorma, 2016). This section traces the trajectory of these reforms, identifies the principal agencies and policy instruments, summarizes major thematic shifts, and highlights implementation gaps that affect the potential of Social Studies and Civic Education to serve as instruments of transformation.

Scholarship typically describes Nigeria's curriculum reforms in broad phases rather than as discrete, one-off events. Early post-colonial reforms focused on indigenizing content and cultivating national identity; the post-civil war era brought stronger emphasis on national integration and the introduction of subjects such as Social Studies with explicit nation-building aims (Osakwe & Itedjere, 1993; Mezieobi, 2012). Later reforms—articulated through successive editions of the National Policy on Education—shifted attention to basic education expansion, universal access, and skills development, and more recently to 21st-century competencies (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013; NERDC, 2013). The Universal Basic Education (UBE) legislative framework and its implementing structures further prioritized universal enrolment and curricular relevance (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).

Across these phases, recurrent aims have been to: (a) align schooling with national development objectives; (b) respond to social problems through value and civic education; and (c) modernize pedagogy and assessment to foster practical skills and critical thinking (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018; Akinsanya & Ajayi, 2020).

Implementation Instruments for Curriculum Reforms

The successful implementation of curriculum reforms in Nigeria relies heavily on the collaborative efforts of regulatory agencies, curriculum development bodies, and institutional stakeholders. Each agency plays a distinct but complementary role in ensuring that reforms are coherent, standardized, and relevant across different levels of education.

Key among these implementation instruments are the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), and the National Universities Commission (NUC), among others.

The UBEC plays a central role in supervising curriculum reforms at the basic education level, ensuring that curricular content reflects the goals of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme. It oversees implementation in primary and junior secondary schools, ensuring consistency with national educational priorities (NPE, 2013). The NERDC serves as Nigeria's core curriculum development and review agency, responsible for designing, revising, and producing curricula across all levels of education. It ensures that curriculum reforms respond to national development objectives and emerging social issues, while maintaining a standardized national framework (Mkpa, 2017).

The NCCE regulates curriculum implementation in colleges of education, particularly for teacher education programmes. It ensures the production of competent and professionally trained teachers who can effectively deliver Social Studies and Civic Education curricula at basic and secondary levels. Through periodic curriculum reviews, accreditation exercises, and policy directives, the NCCE aligns teacher education with current educational needs (Nwosu, 2020).

Importantly, the National Universities Commission (NUC) is the apex regulatory body for university education in Nigeria. It is responsible for developing, approving, and periodically reviewing the Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) and, more recently, the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) for all academic programmes in Nigerian universities. The NUC ensures that university curricula reflect national development priorities, maintain academic quality, and foster interdisciplinary competencies (NUC, 2022). This is particularly crucial for Social Studies and Civic Education in faculties of education and social sciences, as universities produce the teachers, curriculum planners, policymakers, and researchers who drive reforms at other educational levels.

Therefore, effective curriculum reform in Nigeria must involve synergistic coordination among UBEC, NERDC, NCCE, and NUC. Such collaboration ensures vertical and horizontal alignment between basic, secondary, and tertiary education levels, fostering a coherent and responsive education system capable of addressing Nigeria's emerging social challenges.

Major thematic shifts in recent reforms

Recent reform agendas exhibit several common themes relevant to Social Studies and Civic Education:

1. From knowledge transmission to competency development. Curricula increasingly emphasize critical thinking, problem-solving, and transferable skills rather than mere factual recall (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018; Akinsanya & Ajayi, 2020).
2. Integration of cross-cutting issues. Topics such as citizenship, peace education, gender sensitization, entrepreneurship, and ICT competence have been folded into curricula to respond to contemporary social needs (NERDC, 2013; NCCE, 2020).
3. Learner-centered pedagogy. Policy documents and curriculum guides advocate active, participatory approaches (project work, community engagement) to foster civic agency (Offorma, 2016; Mezieobi et al., 2008).
4. Inclusivity and access. The UBE and related strategies seek to reduce out-of-school populations and make curricula relevant to diverse learners (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004; UNESCO, 2022).
5. Accountability and standards. There is greater emphasis on minimum standards, monitoring, and alignment across teacher training and certification (NCCE, 2020).

These shifts create both opportunities (e.g., making Social Studies more action-oriented) and pressure points (e.g., curriculum overload, teacher readiness) for successful implementation (Adebayo & Omotayo, 2021).

Implementation gaps and persistent challenges

Although policy frameworks are, in many respects, progressive, literature consistently documents several barriers that blunt the impact of reforms:

1. Teacher preparation and capacity shortfalls; Many teachers lack adequate pre-service and in-service training to implement learner-centered, values-based approaches central to Social Studies and Civic Education (Urevbu, 2010; NCCE, 2020).
2. Resource and infrastructure constraints; textbooks, teaching aids, ICT, and classroom environments required for novel pedagogies

3. Funding and political will. Reforms are often unavailable or unevenly distributed (Nwagwu, 2007; Offorma, 2016). frequently underfunded or unevenly prioritized at state and local levels, producing gaps between policy intent and classroom reality (Akinsanya&Ajayi, 2020).
4. Curriculum overload and incoherence. Attempts to add cross-cutting themes without careful pruning of content can produce overloaded syllabuses that teachers cannot cover meaningfully (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018).
5. Weak monitoring and evaluation. Absence of robust M&E systems undermines continuous improvement and adaptation of reforms (NERDC, 2013).

These implementation gaps mean that while curricula may call for active civic learning and values education, actual classroom experiences for many learners remain teacher-centered and exam-driven (Mezieobi, 2012; Nwagwu, 2007). The gap between curriculum design and enactment is therefore a critical entry point for policy action.

Specific implications for Social Studies and Civic Education

Given the historical trajectory and the implementation landscape, the implications for Social Studies and Civic Education are clear:

1. Strategic positioning is needed; where Social Studies and Civic Education are marginalized in teacher education, assessment, or funding, their transformative potential is diminished; conversely, when these subjects are integrated with national priorities (peacebuilding, entrepreneurship, digital literacy), they can become catalytic (Mezieobi et al., 2008; Akinsanya & Ajayi, 2020).
2. Teacher professional development is central. Effective reform requires targeted in-service programmes that equip teachers with participatory methodologies, values education strategies, and digital pedagogies (NCCE, 2020).
3. Curriculum coherence and prioritization. Incorporating cross-cutting themes should be accompanied by careful prioritization so that Social Studies and Civic Education move from token inclusions to coherent, teachable programmes (Offorma, 2016).
4. Assessment reform. Shifting assessment toward performance, project work, and community-engaged tasks will align incentives with the civic and practical aims of the subjects (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018).
5. Community and multi-stakeholder engagement. Strengthening linkages with families, civic organizations, and local government amplifies curriculum relevance and supports socialization goals (Adebayo & Omotayo, 2021).

Emerging Social Issues in Nigeria and Their Implications for Education

Every society evolves, and with evolution comes new challenges that test its social fabric. Nigeria, like many developing nations, is facing a wave of emerging social issues driven by rapid urbanization, technological changes, economic instability, and shifting cultural values. These issues not only affect societal stability but also place new demands on the educational system to produce citizens who can navigate and transform these realities (Adebayo & Omotayo, 2021; Mezieobi, 2012).

Social Studies and Civic Education—plays a central role in equipping learners with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes needed to understand these issues critically and respond constructively (Osakwe & Itedjere, 1993; NERDC, 2013).

Emerging Social Issues

Insecurity and Insurgency: Nigeria faces persistent security challenges including terrorism (Boko Haram), banditry, kidnapping, and communal conflicts. These not only destabilize communities but also disrupt schooling, displace children, and undermine social trust (Adesoji, 2010; Nwagwu, 2007). Schools have been forced to close due to attacks, worsening the out-of-school children crisis. Curriculum reforms must therefore embed peace education, conflict resolution skills, and civic responsibility to build resilience and counter violent extremism (UNESCO, 2022).

Corruption and Moral Decadence: Corruption remains a deeply entrenched social problem, affecting governance, education, and public trust. The normalization of unethical behaviour such as examination malpractice, cultism, and bribery reflects a broader moral crisis (Akinsanya & Ajayi, 2020). Social Studies and Civic Education curricula must be reoriented to instill integrity, ethical reasoning, and accountability as lifelong values.

Unemployment and Economic Inequality: Rising youth unemployment and widening inequality are fueling frustration, migration, and social unrest. Many graduates lack practical skills to compete in the labour market (Offorma, 2016). Education must respond by integrating entrepreneurship education, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills within Social Studies and Civic Education to foster self-reliance and social innovation.

Technological Disruption and Digital Divide:

While the world is experiencing a digital revolution, many Nigerian learners and teachers are left behind due to inadequate infrastructure and digital literacy gaps. This digital divide exacerbates inequality and limits participation in global knowledge economies (UNESCO, 2022). Social Studies and Civic Education curricula should integrate ICT skills, digital citizenship, and media literacy to prepare learners for 21st-century civic life.

Ethno-Religious Intolerance and Social Fragmentation:

Ethnic and religious polarization continues to strain Nigeria's national unity. Hate speech, misinformation, and sectarian conflicts erode trust among communities (Adebayo & Omotayo, 2021). Social Studies and Civic Education must serve as instruments for promoting intercultural understanding, national integration, and peaceful coexistence.

Implications for Education

These emerging social issues underscore the strategic role of education as both a preventive and transformative tool. Their implications include:

1. **Curriculum Responsiveness:** Educational content must be updated to reflect contemporary realities, embedding civic, moral, digital, and peace education themes.
2. **Teacher Preparation:** Teachers must be trained to handle sensitive topics such as conflict, corruption, and identity in a value-driven and participatory manner.
3. **Values and Competencies:** Learners should graduate with not just cognitive knowledge but civic competencies, ethical grounding, and problem-solving skills.
4. **Integration of Social Studies and Civic Education:** These subjects should be repositioned as the central vehicles for fostering national consciousness, social responsibility, and critical engagement with societal problems.

Repositioning Social Studies and Civic Education through Curriculum Reforms for National Transformation

Education remains the most potent instrument for societal transformation, and curriculum reforms are the backbone of any sustainable change within the educational sector. To effectively address the complexities of Nigeria's emerging social issues and catalyze national transformation, there is an urgent need to reposition Social Studies and Civic Education through deliberate, innovative, and context-specific curriculum reforms.

Strategic Curriculum Reform Directions

Repositioning these subjects begins with curriculum re-engineering that is, a systematic restructuring of objectives, content, pedagogy, assessment, and teacher development. According to Mkpa (2017), curriculum reform is not merely about changing topics; it involves "reconstructing the curriculum to respond to societal dynamics and developmental priorities." In the Nigerian context, curriculum reforms must prioritize:

1. Alignment with national development goals such as unity, sustainable development, and citizenship education (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2013).
2. Infusion of contemporary issues (e.g., digital literacy, environmental education, gender equity, security consciousness).
3. Practical and participatory pedagogy that goes beyond rote learning to experiential and transformative learning (Obanya, 2014).
4. Continuous teacher capacity development, ensuring educators are competent in modern methods and content delivery (Nwosu, 2020).
5. Robust evaluation systems that assess not only knowledge but also attitudes, civic engagement, and social responsibility (Okam, 2013).

Repositioning Strategies for Social Studies and Civic Education

To make these subjects effective strategic instruments for national transformation, several repositioning strategies are essential:

1. Curriculum Content Enrichment:

The current content must be expanded to address emerging realities such as digital citizenship, climate change, religious tolerance, security challenges, and entrepreneurship. This content should be localized to reflect Nigeria's pluralistic society while aligning with global competencies (Ajiboye&Adu, 2017).

2. Pedagogical Innovation:

Teachers must adopt learner-centered approaches inquiry-based learning, problem-solving, debates, simulations, community projects—that encourage critical thinking and civic action (Obanya, 2014). This shift transforms students from passive recipients to active participants in nation-building.

3. Policy Integration and Synergy:

Social Studies and Civic Education should be strategically integrated into national policy frameworks such as the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This ensures the curriculum is not isolated but embedded within broader national aspirations.

4. Teacher Professionalization and Motivation:

Effective repositioning requires well-trained, motivated teachers who embody civic virtues and innovative pedagogies. Capacity-building workshops, incentives, and professional learning communities are key to sustaining reforms (Nwosu, 2020).

5. Community and Stakeholder Engagement:

National transformation is not the classroom's responsibility alone. Parents, NGOs, religious bodies, and community leaders must collaborate with schools to reinforce civic values and social responsibility. Such partnerships strengthen curriculum delivery and extend learning beyond school walls (Okam, 2013).

Linking Curriculum Reforms to National Transformation

National transformation involves social reorientation, political stability, economic growth, and moral regeneration. Social Studies and Civic Education are uniquely positioned to cultivate enlightened citizens who are informed, responsible, and participatory in governance. By equipping learners with critical civic knowledge and competencies, curriculum reforms can contribute to:

1. National unity and integration in a multicultural society.
2. Democratic consolidation through active civic engagement.
3. Peace building and security consciousness in the face of ethno-religious conflicts.
4. Economic empowerment through critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
5. Social justice and equity, reinforcing the ideals of responsible citizenship.

As Obanya (2014) aptly noted, curriculum reform is “the heartbeat of national development,” and repositioning Social Studies and Civic Education is the pathway to building a cohesive, informed, and progressive Nigerian society.

Recommendations

Building on the policy implications above, the following recommendations are proposed to reposition Social Studies and Civic Education as strategic instruments for national transformation:

1. Curriculum Renewal: The federal Ministry of Education, NERDC, and related agencies should undertake periodic curriculum reviews to integrate emerging issues and maintain alignment with Nigeria's developmental priorities.
2. Investment in Teacher Education: Federal and state governments should invest in teacher education by establishing structured professional development programs, providing incentives, and ensuring equitable teacher deployment across urban and rural schools.
3. Policy Synergy and Implementation: There should be horizontal and vertical policy alignment between ministries (Education, Youth, Women Affairs, and Environment) to ensure Social Studies and Civic Education contribute to national goals in a coordinated manner.
4. Community Engagement and Public Awareness: Government and educational stakeholders should intensify public sensitization campaigns to highlight the roles of Social Studies and Civic Education in national development. Community participation should be institutionalized through school–community partnerships.
5. Research-Driven Policy Decisions: Policies should be informed by empirical research, encouraging collaboration between universities, curriculum development agencies, and government bodies to provide data-driven solutions to educational and societal challenges.

Conclusion

The discourse in this paper has critically examined the role of curriculum reforms in addressing Nigeria's emerging social issues, with particular emphasis on repositioning Social Studies and Civic Education as strategic instruments for national transformation. It has become increasingly evident that Nigeria's educational system stands at a critical juncture, where curriculum reform is no longer a matter of choice but of necessity.

The paper established that emerging social issues such as insecurity, moral decline, digital illiteracy, environmental challenges, and civic apathy require an education system that is both dynamic and transformative. Social Studies and Civic Education are uniquely positioned to address these issues because they focus on citizenship development, value orientation, critical thinking, and national integration. However, their potential has not been fully harnessed due to outdated curricular content, weak policy implementation, inadequate teacher preparation, and limited responsiveness to contemporary realities.

Through conceptual clarifications, theoretical grounding, historical overviews, strategic repositioning frameworks, and policy recommendations, this paper argued that curriculum reform must be holistic, targeting content, pedagogy, policy alignment, teacher development, and stakeholder engagement simultaneously. Specifically, the integration of emerging social issues into curricula, pedagogical innovation, teacher professionalization, and effective policy coordination among UBEC, NERDC, NCCE, and NUC were identified as critical levers for repositioning Social Studies and Civic Education. Such reforms, if well implemented, will produce informed, responsible, and engaged citizens capable of contributing meaningfully to Nigeria's development.

In conclusion, the paper strongly asserts that education particularly through reformed Social Studies and Civic Education—remains Nigeria's most potent tool for sustainable national transformation. Policymakers, curriculum developers, teacher educators, and other stakeholders must act decisively and collaboratively to reposition these subjects. Doing so will not only address Nigeria's current social realities but also lay a solid foundation for a more cohesive, peaceful, and progressive nation.

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