

Obstacles for Effective Implementation of Citizenship Education in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: Citizenship education is a concept synonymous to some social sciences in Nigeria such as social studies, political sciences etc. As a discipline, it is a new introduction into the curriculum models of Nigeria educational system. It is a curriculum instrument meant to bridge the gaps where other social sciences failed to cover in terms of creating the needed moral and national consciousness among the youths, which equally facilitate sound upbringing of citizens with adequate love and pride for their fatherland. The primary aim of citizenship education is to inculcate in the minds of the youths that habit of “NIGERIA FIRST”, irrespective of their cultural and religious variations. This paper is aimed at justifying the curriculum content of citizenship education as an instrument for effective national integration in Nigeria. It also explore the major obstacles that hinders effective implementation of citizenship education in our education system. The paper further concludes by outlining the relevant strategies for the effective implementation of citizenship education in Nigeria as a curriculum tool for national cohesion and development.

KEYWORDS: Citizenship, Citizenship education, Curriculum implementation, Obstacles.

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I. INTRODUCTION:

Citizenship education is ‘citizenship’ and education combined. According to Kazi (2014), citizenship is the sole structure attendant to the status of a citizen. It implies not only membership of a country, but also the roles he play as a member of the country. Boating (1991), defined citizenship as “the status of a person owing to the state and possessing certain rights and duties there in. Similarly, Kazi (2012) defined citizenship education as the relationship between an individual and the state involving the person’s full political membership in the state and his permanent allegiance to it. This further explains that other persons may be subject to the authority of the state and even owe allegiance to it, but citizens have duties, rights and privileges that non citizens share to lesser degree or not at all. It is the possession of full political and social rights as well as some privileges by an individual in his or her country (Kerr, 1999). As a general rule, all the people who are born into a country are called “Citizens”, and those not born in the country are called “aliens” (Kazi, 2006).

Citizenship education as construed in this paper is a discipline that studies in a measured dimension the important socio-political and environmental concepts and phenomena relevant to the well being of Nigeria, (Oduşini and Onanuga, 1996). These related concepts include such as citizens rights, obligations, duties, national ethics, national identity, national integration, rule of law, constitution, bureaucracy, ethnicity, political socialization, democracy, participation, social policy, environmental hazards and protection etc. (Okege, 1992).

This paper is meant to expose certain identified obstacles in the implementation of effective citizenship training in Nigeria. It is also meant to discuss the potentials of citizenship education in a country where ethnic and religious rivalries among the multi polar nationalities has become the index of measuring the chances of individuals and groups in the country. The paper also concluded by glare indications of how best to implement the true content of citizenship education in Nigeria.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF NIGERIAN EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP TRAINING:

The National Policy of Education (2013), outlined the following goals of education in Nigeria;

- A free and democratic society;
- A just and egalitarian society;
- A united strong and self reliant nation;
- A great and dynamic economy
- A land full of bright opportunities for all.

The Nigerian philosophy of education is based on the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen through the provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens in the country whether at primary, secondary and tertiary levels both within and outside the formal school system. To this end, education is to lead the child towards self realization and actualization. In keeping with this philosophy, four (4) cardinal national educational goals have been outlined, thus;

- The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity.
- The inculcation of the right types of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society.
- The acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipments for the individual to live and contribute to the development of his society.
- The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around him.

To realize the above mentioned goals and philosophy of education in Nigeria, citizenship education as introduced is intended to prepare the learners to assume the shared rights and obligations as their world of knowledge and experiences expand. Learners are equipped with the basic citizenship skills which emphasize their human dignity and worth as they operate as members of their families, community, nation, continent and the world. Consequently, the curriculum content of citizenship education is highly loaded and laden with following concepts;

- Citizenship (process, types, acquisitions, renunciations, denials etc),
 - Rights, privileges and liberties of a citizen,
 - Duties and obligations of a citizen to a state,
 - Responsibilities / obligations of the state to a citizen,
 - Political institutions (state, nation, nation-state, political socialization, political parties,
- Constitution, power, authority, rule of law,
 - The Executive, Legislative and Judiciary,
 - Federal, State and Local Government authorities,
- Democracy and Electoral process,
 - Social policy and administration,
 - Nationalism, national ethics and national interests, etc.

IMPORTANCE OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN NIGERIA:

The importance of citizenship education in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. This is more attributable to the cosmopolitan nature of the country. As it is, Nigeria's multi cultural, religious, ethnic and historical variations made it one of the most complex countries in the world. In addition to this, the inefficiency in the distribution of national resources, poor political orientations, rivalries among the religious and ethnic group, unhealthy competitions for political and economic opportunities and the high rate of illiteracy and unemployment among the youths of the country creates a wide gap to be filled by programs of citizenship education (Oluniyi, 2011).

Falade (2008), opined that lack of civic and citizenship (patriotic) education had let disorientation in schools and the larger society, whose consequences are being felt in all the strata of our villages, communities, state and across the nation. Notable events of the past have indicated that Nigeria is on the brink of losing its much cherished sense of nationhood, cultural identity, religious orientations and indeed hospitable spirit (Falade, 2008). The prevalent trend of profound corruption, indiscipline among the youths and the elderly, disrespect for both elders and the rule of law, no-commitment to duty, taking of arms against the state, destruction of national life-wires, international terrorism etc are some of the major manifestations of negative values in the Nigerian society. Kerr (1999) hinted that citizenship an important component of education that cultivates citizens to participate actively in the public life of a democracy, to use their rights and discharge their responsibilities with the necessary and skills. It was clearly recognized that a free society must ultimately depend on its citizens, and that the way infuse the people with the necessary qualities is through relevant and functional education. Also, Shefritz (1988), sees citizenship education to mean all processes that affect people's beliefs, commitments, capabilities, and actions as members or prospective of communities, the relevant of this curriculum model cannot be overstressed particularly at this present day Nigeria.

The trending events in Nigeria especially after the return of civil rule greatly exhibited manifestations of negative values in the Nigerian society. These calls for urgent value re-orientation because of these growing impacts on nation-building. The position of the school is also impeccable, more so curriculum contents taught in these schools with emphasis to citizenship education. Thus, the urgent need to inculcate the type of values and sentiments through effective citizenship education has become paramount.

Obstacles for Effective Implementation:

The noble idea behind the introduction of citizenship education in Nigeria is faced with some serious challenges, especially in terms of realizing its curriculum content for a better Nigeria. Below are some of the identified bottlenecks to the successful implementation of citizenship education in the country.

- Overlapping nature of the course content:

The course content of citizenship education is loaded with overlapping concepts and topics which ultimately brings misunderstandings among scholars or curriculum implementers. Many concepts and topics are assumed to be borrowed or integrated into the course from other social sciences. This has made somehow uninteresting to many would-be scholars and teachers alike. Such prominent concepts like respect, loyalty, obedience, rule of law, democracy, nationalism, authority, power etc are all prominent features of other social sciences courses such as social studies, political science, and government.

- Difficulty in selecting appropriate teaching methods:

The occasional changes needed in the area of teaching methodology are a bane to the effective utilization of citizenship education in Nigeria. Largely due to the poor educational funding, which equally brings insufficient supplies of teaching hard- wares to schools. Such methodologies as excursions, camping and participatory instructions are becoming highly difficult to utilize in our today's classrooms, despite their usefulness. A teacher can do a great deal to keep up the interest of the learner by varying his methods of teaching and his way of presentation. As Catty (1981,p.51) pointed, the more variety he can bring into the work, the greater will be the interest of his pupils, even in works which are intrinsically uninteresting. For instance, the judicious use of field trips can help learners acquire firsthand knowledge and skills from other cultures, tribes, religions and places different from the one they are used to (Pinsent, 1989, p.120).

- Inadequate instructional resources:

Coupled with the problem associated with selecting appropriate teaching methodology is the shortage of relevant classroom resources for the effective teaching of citizenship education. The maxims of teaching method is for the teacher to proceed from the known to unknown, from concrete to abstract from easy to more difficult , simple to complex , logical to psychological as well as induction and deduction for a successful classroom delivery. (Welton, 1979 p.64). Due to the limited time space and other compounding issues, the use of appropriate teaching resources have become necessary . However, adequate resources relevant to the teaching citizenship education are either costly or in short supply in most our classrooms in Nigeria. For instance, things like slides and projectors, video clips, simulators, local resources and historic places are difficult to obtain and apply.

- Challenges to national integration:

Nigeria is going through the most hazardous and turbulent periods of its co-existence. The spate of religious and inter tribal conflicts, the high rate unemployment poverty and restiveness among the youths, and the scourge of militancy and insurgency which results in taking of arms against the legitimate authority of the state is torn in the flesh of its nationhood. The prime consequence of these challenges is the lost of pride and hope among sections of the country. This has equally become a bane in the effective implementation of citizenship education in Nigeria. So many people in the country are no longer hopeful about their chances in the country despite its huge human and material resources. (Onyishi, 2011, Kazi, 2003,

Hanson, 2010, Famoyin, 2007, and Hornby ,2010). As a global phenomenon, terrorism as described in Sampson and Onuoha, (2011), and Achumba et al (2013) has created serious divisions among Nigerians which has threatened its co-operate existence to date. This has genuinely affected the implementation of effective citizenship education in the country.

- Impunity and elderly misconduct:

The case of impunity has become a national disgrace in Nigeria where people commit all sorts crime and go freely with it. This has affected the national psyche and also contributes towards dismantling the legitimacy of the state particularly before the common man (Hanson, 2010). In Nigeria, instances have shown where a public office holder will siphon the national wealth beyond common sense but such a person will be rewarded with chieftaincy title and celebrated like a national hero. So many politicians were vying for political offices despite glaring evidences of corruption hanging on their heads in various courts of law. In addition, lack of exemplary conducts from the elders in our respective communities, states and country has made it cumbersome to the transmission of genuine cultural values, attitudes and beliefs to the growing generations. The activities of many state executive officers and law makers such as governors and senators leave so many in doubt as to their values and attitudes toward the progress and wellbeing of the country. Where there is inability

from the leaders to show adequate concern and love for the country, the average Nigerian will only heightened his grudges against the perceived injustices meted to him in the state, thereby declining him to actively contribute meaningfully to the development of the country.(Lambora,2009).

- Corruption:

Like many third world countries, Nigeria is bedeviled with high rate of profound corruption in both private and public sector organizations. Aduda (2007), describe corruption as an instrument of destruction of the realms of the country whereby few elites and their collaborators through abuse and or monopoly hijack the resources of the state for their personal benefits. Corruption is either formal or informal, private or public. The worst among these classifications is obtained in the public sector organizations. Nigeria today is rated as one of the most corrupt countries according to 2016 ratings. Aluko (2004) observed that corruption is now a norm and no longer an aberration in Nigeria, as young are born into it, grow in it and possibly die in it. Aduda (2007) opined that corruption may be embezzlement of funds meant for education, economic, social, political or security purchases for the development of the country.

Vittal (2013) suggest that many key aspects of the Nigerian society are infected with the scourge of corruption. According to Olagunju (2012), ostentatious living and affluence are the strong reasons for corruption in the country. He stressed further that obsession with materialism, compulsion for short-cuts to affluence, glorification and approbation of ill-gotten wealth enhances the rise and spread of corruption in Nigeria. Thus, corruption has invariably affected the goodwill and hope of the ordinary youths in Nigeria including their commitment and loyalty to the fatherland.

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION: Below are some basic strategies for the effective implementation of citizenship education in Nigeria.

- **Group discussion method:** The use of group discussion as a method of instruction may give learners opportunity to share and accept divergent views and opinions on issues of national concern. It will also enhance collective responsibility towards problem solving both at individual, community, state and national levels.
- **Practical classroom instructions:** There should be adequate preparation for practical instructions in teaching selected concepts and topics in citizenship education rather than theoretical application. This will help in dispensing the ideals of the course. Such concepts like leadership, rule of law, rights, freedoms, elections, peace resolutions, co-operation, effects of conflicts etc should be more exemplified than theoretical exposure. Classroom instructions should be supported by the use of physical objects and concrete materials for assimilation rather than observations. Efforts should be placed on imitation and copying the past heroes and heroines instead of telling their stories to the learners.
- **Participatory teaching:** The learners are supposed to be driven to discover problems and participate fully towards solving them. For instance, learners should be guided to identify the causes and effects of desertification and at the same time participate in advancing solutions through compulsory participation in tree plantation exercises.
- **Democratic group formations:** To effectively advance the course of citizenship education, the need to form democratic groups among the learners become necessary. Class members should be divided and instructed to choose from among themselves leaders of various positions, such that every class member will occupy one position at a time across the number of groups available in the class. By this strategy, there will be adequate responsibility and acquisition of leadership roles among the members of the class.
- **Excursions / Educational trips:** The use of excursions and educational trips enhances direct contact and firsthand knowledge to the learner. It helps the learner to acquire practical experiences outside the normal classroom settings. Therefore, the use of excursions give a lifetime opportunity to discover new environments, objects, cultures and places which hitherto would have been difficult for the learner.
- **Use of documentaries:** All citizenship education classes should as a matter of fact utilize a great deal documentaries either through libraries, film slides, videos and tapes to depicts the past, realize the present and build the hope for the future. Thus, classrooms should be decorated with evidence of the brighter past (e.g. pictures and portraits of heroes and heroines), using notable quotes of famous leaders, biographies of important personalities and highlighting their contributions. This will surely go a long way in uplifting the consciousness, pride and hope of the learner.
- **Cross cultural activities:** Concepts and topics about tolerance, co-operation, unity, integration, respect, etc in the curriculum should be extended to the learner via cross cultural activities to fuse and bind these values among them. This will ensure learners to realize and uphold recognition of cultural diversities in the country, which will equally go a long way in addressing many occurrences of conflicts.

II. RECOMMENDATION:

This paper realized the imperatives of citizenship education in Nigeria as a unique and indispensable course of study and recommend as follows;

1. There is the urgent need to re-orient the attitudes of Nigerian youths through a stiff and exhaustive citizenship educational programs to enhance moral, social and national values among the learners.
2. The government of Nigeria must consider and prioritize delivery of quality educational programs in the country for the effective enlightenment of the youths in particular, and the entire population in general for building one Nigeria for the common good of all.
3. Like elsewhere, the government and people of Nigeria must imbibe the popular habit of “NIGERIA FIRST”, in both private and public engagements so as to reduce the rate unnecessary conflicts and violence in the country. Such unpopular views on religion, tribe and cultural considerations should be regarded as belonging to the ancient world to which a modern Nigeria does not subscribe to it.
4. There should adequate advocacy strategies to galvanize support and solidarity towards the country, to counter the high rise in parochial and sectional sympathy which undermines effective national integration.

III. CONCLUSION:

This paper concludes by realizing the imperatives of citizenship education in Nigeria as a fighting machine or tool towards eradicating the problems of associated with diversity and ignorance particularly among the youths of the country. With quality and patriotic implementers entrusted to discharge its course content under a robust and conducive atmosphere devoid of intolerance and discrimination, the subject is meant to contribute immensely to the overall growth and development of all spheres of the Nigerian society.

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