

PROSPECT OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AND ITS IMPACT IN PROVIDING QUALITATIVE VALUES TO NIGERIAN SOCIETY

Ba'shama Kaze Akwanga¹, Aliyu Yusuf Chunbaya², Dorcas David Anjugu³ & Musa Gamaliel⁴

¹St. Fimbar's Catholic Church Kurmi Tagwaye II, Akwanga Parish, Akwanga Nasarawa State. akwangakaze@yahoo.com

²Department of Biology Education, University of Jos Nigeria. chunyusufa@gmail.com

³Department of Educational Foundation, Faculty of Education, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, dorcasanjugu@gmail.com

⁴Flat 3 Opposite ECWA Church Amba. Musagamaliel3@gmail.com

Abstract

The wave of insecurity, various agitations and economic instability has reached a high level and, if not properly addressed, may lead to an outright break up of the country. Against this background, this paper considers citizenship education as a means by which Nigeria can inculcate the right values to attain much-needed stability and development among the citizens. A state citizen qualifies an individual to enjoy all the rights and benefits that the state or society has to

offer its citizens, i.e. political, civil, social and economic rights. Citizens also have duties and obligations to render to society, promoting good values, cordial relationships and a basis for imparting and acquiring qualitative education. The paper set out to evaluate the prospect or relevance of citizenship education and process, duties, roles of citizens and how citizens acquire good morals by impacting qualitative values on Nigerian citizens through model reasoning.

Keywords: *Citizenship, Education, Values*

Introduction

Presently, in Nigeria, various agitations are geared toward separation, including restructuring the country, calls for confederacy and secession, widespread inter-religious crisis, inter and inter and inter intra-ethnic violence in the country. Amongst these are header/farmer clashes, southeast secession agitators, the creation of a regional security outfit in the southwest, etc.

The government have made conscious efforts to maintain peace and stability in Nigeria without much success. Education as an instrument for social change and development is the right approach to achieving peace and development in a country like Nigeria. Consequently, Citizenship education has become an increasingly important means for countries to educate their citizens about their rights and responsibilities.

Citizenship education is the process of teaching students, from their early stage, to become clear-thinking individuals and enlightened Nigerian citizens who will be willing to participate in making decisions that will better the Nigerian society.

The aims and Objectives of Citizenship Education, as stated in the Federal Republic of Nigerians (2004), indicated; that a) citizenship education should inculcate the right attitude are values for the survival of the individual and Nigerian society. b) inculcation of national consciousness and unity. c) the training of the mind in understanding the world around us d) the acquisition of appropriate skills.

Values are the strongest weapons for any country's political, socioeconomic, scientific and educational development. This is why it is described as the bedrock of the development of

any nation. Only when these values are strongly cultivated by the citizens of that country that positive results are yielded. Values refer to moral or professional standards of behaviour, principles, and beliefs. These values are taught to children at home by their parents, teachers and preachers in schools, churches and mosques.

Values are also spelt out in the National Policy on Education. Values are included in the citizenship education curriculum so that children will have to learn so that as they grow or become older, they will rely upon them. When all hands are on deck in imparting values through citizenship education, Nigerian citizens will possess good values that will move this country to a greater height in terms of political, socioeconomic, technological and educational development.

Values abound everywhere in education; they are involved in every aspect of school practice; they are basic to all matters of choice and decision-making. Using values, teachers evaluate students, and students evaluate teachers. Society evaluates courses of study, school programs and teaching competence, and educators evaluate society itself. According to Enoh (1999), values play an important role in almost all areas of education in terms of aims, contents, methods and materials and also in the National Policy on Education 2004. The question of educational aims constitutes what is considered to be valued in life as applied to the educational process. The content of our curriculum includes what society considers to be of value that the growing generations must be exposed to. Methods of our teaching are also related to the axiological issue because we are always conscious of the attitudes or states of mind we want to develop in pupils. Such considerations influence our methods.

Citizenship

A citizen is a true and legal member of a country. They have rights and responsibilities in the country where they live. Thus, citizenship refers to the status of a person in the country. A citizen of Nigeria is a true son or daughter of Nigeria. He has the rights and privileges of being called a Nigerian. According to Joseph (1994), citizenship is primarily the act of living in a community. To him, the goal of education is teaching the child (citizen) how he should live, the problems of living and giving guidance on life's pilgrimage. Good citizens are made. They are not born. The child must be trained to live a full and useful life in his community. Citizenship is the right given to a person to become a member of that particular country to enjoy all the rights and privileges due to him.

Types of Citizenship; according to Olagunju, Sa'ad, Ansi and Nwadike (2009), the types of citizenship include citizenship by birth, citizenship by marriage or registration and citizenship by naturalisation.

Citizenship by Birth: Become a citizen by birth, a person must be born in Nigeria, and one of their parents must be a citizen of Nigeria. On the other hand, if a person is born outside Nigeria and either of the parents is a citizen of Nigeria, such a person is equally qualified to be a citizen of Nigeria.

Citizenship Marriage or Registration: - Is a situation where a non-Nigerian woman is legally married to a Nigerian man. She has become a citizen of Nigeria by registration or marriage. Also, a person of adult age (18 years and above) born outside Nigeria but whose grandparents are citizens of Nigeria can become a Nigerian citizen by registration. A foreign child adopted by Nigerian parents can become a citizen by registration.

Citizenship By Naturalization: This is where a non-Nigerian makes a formal application to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for a certificate of naturalisation. Any person who wishes to become a citizen of Nigeria by Naturalization must:

- i. Be above 18 years and of good character;
- ii. Have spent at least fifteen years in Nigeria before such application is made;
- iii. Show a clear intention to continue to reside in Nigeria till death;
- iv. Renounce their former citizenship.

Duties of a Citizen

In the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In chapter 11, section 24, the duties of every citizen are spelt out as follows:

- a) Abide by this constitution; respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag, the National Anthem, the National Pledge and legitimate authorities.
- b) Help to enhance the power, prestige, and good name of Nigeria, defend Nigeria and render such national service as may be required,
- c) Respect the dignity of other citizens, the rights and legitimate interests of others, and live in unity and harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood.
- d) Make possible and useful contributions to the advancement, progress and wellbeing of the community where he resides;
- e) Render assistance to appropriate and lawful agencies in the maintenance of law and order; and
- f) Declare his income honestly to appropriate and lawful agencies and pay tax promptly.

A citizen has to be taught to recognise and appreciate his duties for good citizenship.

Citizenship Education

According to Ajose (2001), citizenship education is one subject specially designed in content and function to produce healthy, good and active citizens, wherein a good citizen is seen as patriotic, responsible, disciplined, conscientious, and morally sound with a love for his state. Mokwunye (1991) considers citizenship education as a conscious process of inculcating certain values, habits, skills and attitudes that society considers desirable and essential for its survival and development.

According to Joseph (1994), there are several levels of citizenship characterised by the inclusiveness or scope of the communities in which the citizen belongs. Each level presents its peculiar education problems and opportunities. They are: the local community, the state, the world community and voluntary association etc

When citizenship education is fully implemented, it will change society. It must promote peace, mutual understanding, good human relationship, love, kindness and justice among individuals, peoples and nations.

The Role of Citizenship Education in Nation Building

According to Chukwu (2018). the following are the contributions of citizenship education through nation-building. They are:

1. Giving students the knowledge, understanding and skills to enable them to participate in society as active citizens of a democracy

2. Enable students to be informed, critical and responsible and aware of their duties and rights
3. Providing a framework which promotes the social, moral and cultural development of pupils
4. Enabling students to become more self-confident and responsible in and beyond the classroom
5. Encouraging students to become helpfully involved in the life of their schools, neighbourhoods, communities and the wider world. Promote their political and economic literacy through learning about our economy and our democratic institutions
6. Helping students gain a disposition for reflective discussion
7. Showing students how to be useful in their life, the nation, locality, region, and international community.

Meaning of Values and their Types

The concept of value may mean different things depending on the usage and the conditions governing it. It can be regarded as the worth of something compared to its price. According to Olagunju et al. (2009), values are standards, rules and criteria that influence and determine how individuals behave in a society. They determine the worth of people or things. Values also have to do with what people like or dislike. Some values include Honesty, discipline, integrity, commitment etc. Schofield (1996) stated that values could be classified into two categories:

- a. Absolute Values
- b. Pragmatic Values

Absolute Values: Absolute is derived from two Latin words, 'ab' meaning "from" and 'solutus' meaning "to free", and it simply means "freed from" and unrestricted by. It is, therefore, infinite, unlimited and unbounded. Absolute values are external values and are concerned with ends rather than means. They exist as ideas, and the answers to fundamental values are theoretical because these ideas live in thoughts, and the answers to absolute values are obtained by "sitting and thinking". Examples of absolute values are goodness, truth, justice, beauty, honesty, etc. Those who believe in absolute values are called idealists. Absolute values are often very difficult to understand and often based on authority.

Pragmatic Values: The word is derived from the Greek word "pragma", meaning a deed or doing. An American philosopher, American philosopher, invented it called, William James, and it later became the Philosophical thinking of John Dewey. Pragmatic values are concerned with means rather than the end and are also known as instrumental values. Pragmatic values are values an individual develops or acquires from doing something, especially in a particular situation. They also emerge to us due to the experience of trying things in a problems situation and going and doing things. The pragmatists believe that what is important in education is experience. To Dewey, the father of this school, the supreme authority of values is experience.

In our National Policy on Education (PE, 2004), section 1, sub-section 8 states that the quality of instruction at all levels has to and must be geared towards inculcating the following values:

1. Respect for the worth and dignity of labour

2. Faith in man's ability to make a rational decision
3. Moral and spiritual principles in inter-personal and human relationship
4. Shared responsibility for the common good of the society
5. Promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development of all children and
6. Acquisition of competencies necessary for self-reliance.

These are our collective values enshrined in our National Policy or Philosophy of Education. Nigerian society has several ethnic or linguistic groups, but they all share certain values. Some of the values, according to Ilori (1994), include:

- i. Every individual is his brother's keeper
- ii. Extended family system
- iii. Respect for elders
- iv. Hospitality
- v. Corporate responsibility of bringing up children
- vi. Chastity before marriage on the part of the women

Conclusion

The need for national unity, stability in the economy and security of lives and property is greater now in Nigeria than ever, especially with rampant insecurity and kidnapping ravaging the country. Education is a potent instrument that can be used to foster peace and unity. Therefore, Nigerians should evolve a type of education that will inculcate the ideal of national consciousness and awareness in the learners. These will be achieved through citizenship education for right and appropriate values.

If values are taught with a high sense of sincerity through citizenship education in our schools, our youth will graduate to take this country to a greater height.

Recommendations

For Nigeria to have good citizens with adequate values, the following recommendations are made:

1. Our national values must be redefined.
2. Nigerian youth must learn to value hard work, integrity, honesty, and accountability over financial gains.
3. Citizenship education should be introduced as a course in tertiary institutions to graduate professionals that will teach not only such courses in Primary and Secondary Schools but also be good professionals in their service to the nation.
4. Citizenship Education should be taught in Civic Education and Social to increase their knowledge of methods and techniques of teaching values in schools. There should be an enlightenment campaign by the National Orientation Agency on our values through mass media to the country's citizens.
5. The National Orientation Agency (NOA) should work for hand in hand with professionals in academics to produce a set of values for all Nigerians and to be compulsorily part of a legal document on the values system for our country.
6. Citizenship education should be included in the school curriculum to form part of general studies where children can learn more about the good values and the consequences of bad values.

If the above recommendations are strictly adhered to, there will be an effective implementation and teaching of citizenship education at all levels of education for good values among learners.

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