

## CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AS A CREATIVE INTERVENTION TOOL FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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### **Abstract**

Given the socio-cultural decay in Nigeria, the need for citizenship education remains the Cornerstone of preparing the young learners to acquire skills and values that will enhance the quality of democratic life for national development. The paper argues that a concrete intervention policy on citizenship education deserves urgent attention if the nation must overcome the decadence prevalent in Nigeria. It also examines the need to give citizenship education in Nigeria a boost, and highlight that such a component of education would rid the society of values that have impeded development. The paper also seeks to explore the methods and materials that could be used to improve the learning and internalization of citizenship values, it further agitates a deviation from the pedagogical approaches that rely heavily on lecturing, dictation and note copying to interactive techniques that would help to inculcate in the learner desirable values, social skills and attitudes needed for national development.

**Keywords:** Creativity, Intervention, Development, Citizenship Education.

The spirit of nationalism and patriotism is nothing to write home about in Nigeria hence the persistence of crises in all dimension of social life. In a highly bifurcated society like Nigeria, development would continue to elude the nation if no tangible effort is made to

cultivate and nurture a sense of unity tolerance, honesty, respect for human dignity and patriotism (Falade, 2008). Inter-religious crises and ethnicity which often result in the destruction of lives and properties, the north-south divide manifesting in the calls for the disintegration of Nigeria state,

corruption (especially so as to get-rich-quick) and other fraudulent activities have frustrated efforts at forging a sense of national cohesion which would have served as a catalyst for development.

Worried by the ethno-religious cleavages and the crises it generates successive Nigeria governments embarked on a number of programs to imbue in citizens a sense of shared identity such as the national youth services corps, the establishment of unity colleges, the entrenchment of the federal character in the constitution (Imobighe, 1987). The programs and even war against indiscipline and corruption of the Babangida and Abacha administrations waged against the self control chaos or disorderliness (Elaigou, 2005) could not change the orientation of Nigerians. What is missing in all this programs is a lack of systematic education process of training the mind and the intellect to the orientation of the people from greedy, selfish, chaotic, dishonest and unjust living to that of seeing fellow Nigerians as equal members of the polity with a shared sense of responsibility. In this sense, citizenship education can be seen as all-encompassing involving the training of the mind and the intellect to imbibe and accept a particular ideology or world view (Metzieobi, Doruikke & Osakwe 1996).

The paper contends that citizenship education will impact positively on the learners if the right intervention strategy is used in the teaching/learning process.

### **Conceptual Classification:**

Citizenship education is a process of teaching training, or helping a growing child to become active, informed and responsible citizen (Oladipo, 2013). To Osakwe (1993), citizenship education is that which inculcate in the learners, the body of knowledge, set of values and behavioral orientation that are considered vital and necessary for the sustenance and well being of the people. Some people conceive citizenship education as a system of education that enables the learners acquire and internalize the values, sentiments, and norms of the society in which the live by working for the common good of the citizenry.

Citizenship education is concerned with building characters, values and the development of soft skills (i.e. skill of communication, initiative, interaction well with people and team work) which make the learners active, well-informed and responsible, ready to take part of their quota to the socio-cultural upliftment of their society.

### **Why the Need for Intervention in the Education of the Nigerian Citizenry.**

The observation that no society rises above the quality of its education underscores the fact that the higher the quality of the education the better the training its citizenry receives for effective participation in national development. Nigeria is at crossroads in her pursuit for national development. This is due largely to the neglect of its educational system especially in the area

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of the implementation of the curriculum which would have instilled positive value on the nation.

The present state of instability and chaos emanating from fear of one ethno religious group dominating the others has lead to unhealthy rivalry for the control of political and economic power (Olu – Adeywmi, 2006). This fierce competition among social groups has robbed Nigerians of social justice and fairness which are the hallmarks of democratic governance. The corollary is that the political environment becomes strikingly corrupt with all sorts of anti-social vices like nepotism, embezzlement, falsification of accounts and so on. At a sophisticated level, one may tend to attribute social decadence in Nigerians to that of poor leadership (Achebe, 1981) while corrupt leadership cannot be totally dismissed with the wave of the hand, it has failed to explain why both military and civilian leaders in succession have not been able to stamp out corruption in spite of their promises to do so. (Umez, 2000). The source of corrupt practice and underdevelopment in Nigeria can be located within the prevalent value system that even makes the implementation of education system unworkable. The prevailing value system glorifies graft as a necessary means to an end.

The ₦195bn pension scam leveled against Alhaji Maina, the \$ 6bn subsidy scam defrauded from subsidy fund involving people like Mammau Ali and Muhud Tukur, the indictment of Mr. Stephen Oronsaye former head of

service of the federation over alleged ₦123bn during his tenure between 2009 and 2010. The alleged fraudulent act traced to Atiku Abubakar Kigo, Mrs. Uzoma Attang (the chief accountant of the police pension office) and four orders involving ₦32.8bn, Stella Odua's car purchase scandal of inflated rate of ₦225m, the ₦7bn dolled over to Christian religious leaders to fraudulently campaign for the election of Jonathan which pastor Kallamu Musa – Aikwa from Bornu state confirmed are some of the allegations of the corruption that have channeled the collective resources of Nigeria into dubious hands (facebook, twitter, 2015).

Holding periodic election as a means of unseating corrupt incumbents and to installed "angel" would be counterproductive as far as they are all part and parcel of the decadent social values (Umez, 2000). The anti corruption organization like EFRC has not helped in stamping out corruption because it does not address the fundamental issue of re-orientating the value system in Nigeria. This can be done through citizenship education. It is through citizenship education that ethical and value question can be resolved (Umez, 2000). The mentality of Nigerians towards government property is an issue of concern. Either due to ignorance or mis-education, Nigerians see governmental property as no man's property. Their ignorance could not enable them to see the connection between the tax they pay and he property the tax provides for their

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comfort (Umez, 2006). The looted public funds are spent on inglorious things like title-taking, naming ceremonies and gorgeous appearance thus denying the economy of investment for increased productivity.

**The Role of Citizenship Education for National Development**

Citizenship education as a conscientizing and mobilization subject has been used by many countries like the United States of America to solve their political problems (Yusuf, 2015). Through citizenship education, individuals in a plural society are systematically trained in social skills, values and attitudes that help them build an egalitarian society devoid of discrimination. At the head of citizenship education is the cultivation of patriotic and nationalist spirits that help to oil the wheel of developmental process. Citizenship education teaches that leaders are the servants of the people. It is therefore wrong to subject a fellow human being to dehumanizing condition (Umez, 2006). Citizenship education constantly appeals to the conscience of the learners that stealing is a crime against humanity. It is barbaric to loot and stash away public funds in foreign accounts when millions of fellow country men and women have no jobs, electricity, pipe-borne water, roads, hospitals, clinics or even food to eat (Umez, 2000), Dave (2006) contends that citizenship education enables the citizens to be well – informed about their rights and responsibilities and to

gather facts about their socio-political processes and to reject ethno-centric views in preference for national consciousness. This is because ethno religious conflict has caused indelible-damage to lives and properties (Adagonye 2015). The fratricidal-Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970, the Maitatsine religious riot of 1980, the Kafanchan religious crisis, the Zango-Kataf crisis, the Tiv-Jukun disturbances, the Niger-Delta struggle for resource control, the Boko-Haram insurgency in the north-east were all fought on the altar of greed which can be traced to poverty of value system.

**Teaching for Internalization of Citizenship Values**

The national policy on education, FGN (2004) declared “the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society”. What is an issue is not the concepts to be taught, but how are the values taught to impact positively on the learners. The objective of citizenship education as adapted from social studies education by CESAC (1993) are:

1. To train Nigerians to be good citizens and nation builder.
2. To enable Nigerians know and use the resources of their physical environment very well.
3. To equip the young people and adult to understand the modern world.
4. To train people to be effective leaders and good followers.

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5. To enable Nigerians learn about their heritage.
6. To make people understand not only their own culture but also the culture of other people.
7. To help develop a good sense of moral and social responsibility.
8. To learn to appreciate the values of honesty, hard work and cooperation with others.
9. It helps people acquire skills of communication, initiative, analyzing issues, observation etc.

Despite the implementation of citizenship education in the nation's secondary schools, there seems to be no hope in realizing the ideals enunciated above. The nation is still witnessing practices like examination malpractice, certificate forgery, looting and ethno-religious violence, to mention only but few. Citizenship education just like social studies education may not realize its objective of producing responsible citizens because of the predominance of the conventional methods of lecturing, dictation and rote learning (ADESINE & Adeyemi, 2003), the methods and techniques that lead themselves to easy inculcation of values are: inquiry, guided discovery, concept mapping, games resource person, debate, discussion, role play simulation, field trip and construction.

Teaching for the inculcation of desirable social skills, attitudes and values requires interactive techniques and instructional materials to appeal to learners' sense. Teaching

resources/materials are things that the teacher uses in facilitating or promoting the teaching and learning of concepts or ideas. When learning resources are provided, students tend to learn faster and will be able to remember what they have learned (Adekunle, 2005). The use of resources such as textbooks, newspapers, pictures and charts, maps, models, real objects, audio-visual objects and other improvised instructional materials are important and their selection should be based on student's age, ability and interest.

### **Conclusions**

The social vices being witnessed in this country such as ethnic and religious quarrels, bribery and corruption, examination malpractice, favourism, dishonesty and lack of social justice can be tackled head-on if citizenship education pays particular attention to the pedagogical processes that have the capacity to reorientate the values and attitudes of the learners.

The fire-brigade approach in tackling social ills like war against indiscipline and corruption, and the use of anti-grafts agency such as EFCC to jail corrupt government officials will make no significant impact in character reformation of Nigerians. It is through the training of the mind and intellect to appreciate the need for honest living as embedded in citizenship education that can move society to a higher and better level of social existence.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations if strictly adhered to will tremendously change the prevailing Nigerian value system that has constituted obstacles to the development process.

- Interactive teaching techniques and the use of instructional materials should be encouraged.
- Workshops should be constantly organized for teachers to equip them with innovation in the field of teacher education.
- Government should provide schools with instructional materials. When they are not provided, the teacher can improvise.
- The use of ICT for students to access current information is desirable.
- Government should ensure that student-teacher ratio of one teacher to twenty-five students is achieved. This is to ensure adequate intervention between the teacher and the students especially when it concerns teaching values that need practical demonstrations.

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