

REAPPRAISING CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION FOR FUNCTIONALITY AND SELF RELIANCE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to reappraising citizenship education for functionality and self-reliance in Nigeria. The paper identifies that social studies is used in the teaching of citizenship education programmes. It is perceived that today's citizenship education do not adequately prepare future citizens because most people are not aware of citizenship education. Reappraising citizenship education for functionality is geared towards the realization of the aims and objectives of citizenship education. Reappraising citizenship education should also help to ensure the full participation of citizens in nation building. The paper recommends among other things that multi-disciplinary approach should be adopted for the study of citizenship education

of values and attitudes in the Nigerian child. The Nigerian Education Research and Development Council (NERDC, 1991) identifies the objectives of Citizenship Education in Nigeria as follows; (a) to create an awareness of the provisions of the Nigerian constitution and the need for democracy in Nigeria (b) to create adequate and functional literacy among Nigerians (c) to sensitize Nigerians to the functions and obligation of the government (d) to assist in the raising of responsible, were informed and self reliant Nigerian citizens and (e) to inculcate the right type of values and attitudes for the development of the individual and the Nigeria society.

Introduction

Concept of Citizenship Education

Citizenship Education in Nigeria has been conceptualized as a veritable means of educating her citizens about their rights and responsibilities. The aims and Objectives of Citizenship Education as stated in the Federal Republic of Nigerians (2004) stated *intra alia*;

- a) citizenship education should inculcate the right type of 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 the understanding of the world around us
- d) the acquisition of appropriate skills.

Citizen Education is one of the school subjects specifically aimed at inculcating national consciousness and unity as well as the right type

Citizenship Education therefore is a deliberate preparation of citizens to be aware of their social, civil and political rights in the state. It is a systematic and orderly method of transmitting knowledge, skills, political, economic, social and administrative cultures to the citizens of a state for national development (Okpoko, 2009).

In the formal school system, Citizenship Education is taught in pre-primary level and junior secondary level. At the non- formal school system it should be implemented within the adult education programmed that is similar to indigenous way of preparing citizen for effective living in society. It is the belief of many Nigerians that today's Citizenship Education programmed do not adequately address the problems of the country. Many Nigerian's students are not aware of any serious Citizenship Education. Nduka (2004) observed that Nigerians exhibit deplorable ethnical attitudes in virtually every aspect of

life. Our educational system has not been able to address so many social problems in Nigeria such as corruption, indiscipline, cheating in examinations, riotous behaviors exemplified in religious and political disturbances and more recently advanced free fraud, kidnappings and terrorism.

The agencies set up by government to tackle these problems have remained a toothless bulldog. Perhaps that is why the federal government has engaged in a rebranding effort to address these problems. It is against this background that reappraising Citizenship Education for functionality becomes imperative to refocus her education system to achieve its objectives.

Impact of Citizenship Education

Mokwuonye (1991) defined Citizenship Education as a conscious process of inculcating certain values, habits, skills and attitudes, which the society considers desirable and essential for its survival as a unit and for its development. Kissock (1981) added that Citizenship Education entails any organized programmed, formal or informal that can make the citizen to become more alive to their responsibilities and obligations to themselves, fellow human beings and the society at large. According to Dave (2006) the aim of Citizenship Education is to develop young people into responsible citizens. In other words, Citizenship Education will develop in individual attitudes, values and skills that will enable them to participate actively in society. Citizenship Education, which is the major focus of social studies, has been used extensively in Nigeria in shaping the hearts and minds of Nigeria towards value based orientation, reducing ethnocentrism and educating the people on what is required for a stable and enduring democracy (Omere, 1999). The impact of Citizenship Education is yet to be felt in Nigeria. Concerted effort should be made towards eliminating the hydra-headed evil of corruption and nepotism if Nigeria is to be

recognized in the comity of nations. Nigerians are yet to feel the impact of any Citizenship Education that will recognize every Nigerian as their brother's keeper and accord equal respect to one another under a democratic setting.

Appraising Citizenship Education in Nigeria

Citizenship Education has not been taught at all levels of the educational system. For instance, polytechnics do not have it in their curriculum, only one university has it in its curriculum. Recent studies reveal that not many teachers at all levels of our educational system are aware of Citizenship Education (Okpoko, 1999). The crux of the matter is that Citizenship Education in Nigeria has not achieved its desired objectives of transforming, re-engineering and equipping Nigerians with the right type of attitudes values, knowledge and skills needed to function optimally in a modern society. Whatever form of Citizenship Education that existed before now has not addressed the multifarious problems of Nigeria which includes; ethnic diversities, group interests, social, economic and political problems. An anatomy of the Nigerian value system reveals that our value for human lives has deteriorated. Perhaps that explains the numerous cases of kidnappings, politically motivated killings and corruption. In view of the above, there is urgent need to reappraise Citizenship Education in Nigeria so that citizens will assume their roles in contributing to nation building. Agencies such as National Orientation Agency, Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) can lead the way in educating Nigerians to change their unethical behaviours and to embrace hard work.

Re-appraising Citizenship Education for Functionality

The need to re-appraise Citizenship Education should be in line with the objective of Citizenship Education. According to Iyewarun (1989) Citizenship Education should aim at effecting positive changes in citizens and inculcating in Nigerians sense of national consciousness. Furthermore Citizenship Education should equip citizen with practical knowledge, skills, and inspire a new generation of Nigerians who can think for themselves and fulfill their mission in a changing society. The emphasis should be on vocational education, where individuals learn how to be useful in the society.

There is also the need to acquire the right type of attitude to work that will serve as a guild as we interact with people and events in the world (Eyo 1995). In other words, Nigerians must adopt the right type of attitude and shun corrupt behaviours like advanced free fraud and cultivate the attitude of dignity in labour. Nigerians must also see themselves as their brothers' keeper. The need for national unity and stability is greater now in Nigeria, in the wake of Niger Delta crises. Many Nigerian youths are now enrolling as political thugs and kidnapers. Citizenship Education should be given to youths, the type that inculcates moral values, the type that will help raise their civil consciousness and help develop appropriate social values and attributes for effective participation in society (Grey, 2001).

According to Iyamu (1999) Citizenship Education will inculcate in the youth, a set of values and skills contingent on the needs and problems of the society. By so doing, the mind of the youth will be taken away from criminal activities. In recent times, the federal government is doing its best to harness the potentialities of the youth through education. The federal government through education its agencies introduced Universal Basic Education (UBE), established unity schools, Vocational Technical Education (VTE), the Joint Admission and Matriculation

Board ((JAMB) and the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC). This is aimed at establishing intercultural education, encourage unity in diversity and recognize the right of the minority, tolerance and peaceful co-existence.

Citizenship Education which is the major focus of social studies should now consist of content education, service education and vocational technical education. According to Marshal (1999) content education should consist of traditional civics, where students study history and the inner workings of the government; service education requires that students participate in native learning where they serve the community; while vocational technical education should consist of skill acquisition training and entrepreneurship.

Another major problem area that needs be adverse by Citizenship Education is inter-ethnic misperceptions and the struggle for power. In Nigeria, there is lack of trust among the three major ethnic groups. The struggle for political power is always a do or die affair. Each ethnic group tries to outwit the other in a mad quest for power and superiority of one's ethnic group. This type of unhealthy rivalry must be addressed by Citizenship Education to avoid giving the youth wrong impression that life is all about acquisition of economic and political power. The youth must be taught the virtues of hard work and earning honest living through work (Yinka, 2000). To this end, the curriculum of Citizenship Education must include the teaching of human rights, community service education, political participation, attitude and value system.

Conclusion

Citizenship Education should be introduced at all levels of educational system. Multi-disciplinary approach should be

employed as a method of teaching Citizenship Education at higher level of education. Research should be conducted to identify all the factors mitigating against the effective implementation of Citizenship Education. Citizenship Education should be made compulsory in all the schools.

Recommendation

1. Multi-disciplinary approach should be used for the study of Citizenship education.
2. The teachers should intensify efforts through community leaders to adopt the use of traditional system of education to teach moral values and respect for hard work.
3. Education should be free from pre-primary to secondary level so as to encourage full participation of students in Citizenship Education.

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