CITIZENSHIP AND SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION

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Abstract

Generally, education is the training of the mind and character for effective performance of work. This becomes obvious when the citizens are exposed to functional education, which will eventually be geared for values, knowledge skills and national development. With the recent Federal Government national policy on education, which emphasized free education, and current U.B.E. scheme, it is hoped that before 2020, all might have embraced education, at least, but sad enough to conceive of such policy without first of all considering the environment, availability of human material, instructional materials and resource. The idea for citizenship education in our curricula is for the purpose of giving our youth a better understanding of their environment. In citizenship education the youths from the early stages of their development are taught to develop positive habits, values and attitudes toward their society. In Nigeria for instance, citizenship education is a process of socializing the youths to understand their social and political environment (Kolawale, 2012) noted that, social studies on the other hand, deals with people’s interaction in relationship with various aspects of their environment. In the process they encounter problems and challenges in their quest to live a comfortable, orderly, and meaningful life. Social studies was designed to provide functional and social education to the children and youths within African continent, in order to make them good citizens. Incidentally, youths are rich in the expected values, attitudes and behaviour that characterize socially responsible citizens. According to Manitoba education and youths (2003) citizenship provides the learning focus for social studies at all grades, therefore, for identification of such skills, knowledge and values, that student will need as active democratic citizens, social studies must take into account the society in which they live, and anticipate the challenges they will face in the future. Given the background, therefore, I recommend that the teaching of citizenship education, now introduced into the school curriculum be conceptualized to reflect the local contexts, deviate from the western oriented concepts to enable youths to actively participate in the development of their society.

The Nigerian Nation with an estimated population figure of about 140 million, spread through the 36 states, including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. A country with political intolerance, persistent ethnic and religious conflicts, fused together into one umbrella called federation, they years over, education is still accepted as the best alternative for the Nation’s peace and unity, stability, security and national development. In this, the government has made several conscious efforts to maintain peace and stability, yet some sections of the country still pose problem of the government. This must not be dismissed lightly. In spite of this problem, the federal government still remains focused knowing that to keep Nigeria one is a task that must be done; although not to be achieved in one day. The government also knows for Nigeria to remain one indivisible entity where every Nigerian will consider himself a Nigerian first before seeing himself as an Ibibio, Igbo, Efik, Yoruba, Hausa or Nupe and so on. In other words, a Nigeria in which the National consciousness of her citizens will be light. This may be achieved through citizenship education (Yusuf, 2012).
However, according to Abdullahi, (2012) as the Nation evaluates the new education reform plan, it is necessary to briefly revisit what we know about education in Nigeria. The Federal Government issued the first National Development plan (1966-70), the plan emphasized modernization and technological training. In 1969, national curriculum conference was stages to overhaul the Nigerian education system. One of the goals as outlines in the National Policy on Education (2004) identified citizenship education as, “a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society; character and moral training, and the development of sound attitude; developing in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment”.

In 1996, a new curriculum for citizenship education was developed to reflect the transition to constitutional democracy and the new constitution in 1999. the philosophy of the social studies education hinges in part on the idea that Nigeria schools should not only train individuals to be just and competent individuals, but to function as contributing and participatory members of a free constitutional democratic nation. Given the above background, therefore, it implies that students be taught to rely on the knowledge, skills and awareness of the rights of minority and majority groups to coexist and worship freely; have respect for law and order; have respect for public and private property of Nigerians and non-Nigerians. This includes the awareness of the rights and obligations of citizens to government and society, and reciprocal government responsibility to citizens. The challenges to education and democracy are obvious.

However, be that as it may be, I share the views of Abdullahi and Farouk (1999), who wrote, that in any democratic society, education remains at the core of national stability, security, and an instrument for political and economic growth and development Nigeria has a blend of cultural diversity; and should not be tampered with; rather the child and the youths be shown the right way and far above every other thing be encourage to imbibe the spirit of oneness and that of hard work if they must be acceptable and be able to fit into their society.

Meaning of Citizenship Education

Citizenship education is process of socializing the youths of a society to understand their social and political environment. (N. T. I. 2000). In citizenship education the Nigerian youth learns how to develop positive habits, values and attitude toward their country. Nigerian youths are encouraged to learn the rule and regulations that govern all Nigerians as contained in our constitution as well.

In citizenship education the youths are also taught the rights and obligation as citizens of Nigeria. As a matter of fact, it is in citizenship education that the youths come to know what to do to the government and society as their responsibilities and what they expect the government and society to do for them. In recognition of this fact, Osakwe and Ityere (1995) defined citizenship education as a system for the acquisition and internalization of the value, sentiments and norms of society in which they live and actually get involve to ensure that the common goal of the citizen is catered for including by resisting anti-social and unguided youthful exuberance. Citizenship education is indeed a practical subject through which we understand our roles, discharge our duties and obligation to the society. Citizenship education according to Yusuf (2013) has become an increasingly important means for countries to educate their citizens about their rights and responsibilities. Increasing pluralism within states has encouraged the development of citizenship education that goes beyond simple’ patriotic’ models of citizenship requiring uncritical loyalty to their ethnic group.

The Roles of Citizens Education in Nigeria

The question is what role is citizenship education in Nigeria? Is there any benefit concerning the teaching of citizenship education in Nigerian schools? Answer to these questions shall be supplied within the context of this sub-heading as we continue.

However, in the words of Yusuf (2013) our school system has provided international studies at the expense of National education. Fafunwa (1974) noted that Nigerian Students know more about
European people than Nigerians who belong to ethnics groups different from their own. To create trust and confidence among Nigerians, Metzieobi, Domike and Osakwe (1996), cited by Yusuf (2013) opined that among Nigerians it is necessary to provide Nigeria that type of education that is characterized by Nigerian intercultural education. That has therefore become the norm, for modern citizenship education to have a strong human rights value base, to make specific reference to children’s right and address issues related to diversity and the rights of minorities within society. As have been noted before, a good citizenship education must take into the account the society where they live and anticipate the challenges they will face. In the light of the above, Yusuf (2013) also noted that a comprehensive human rights education takes account of citizenship, and considers that good citizenship is connected with human right as a whole conversely, citizenship education which trains citizens to be aware of the human and political issues at stake in their society or nation requires from each citizens ethical and moral qualities.

All forms of citizenship education aim at shaping respect for others by fostering a spirit of tolerance and pace citizenship education plays an important role in the society. The teaching of citizenship education enables learners to think beyond their individual and ethnic interest; thereby making them to tolerance and respect the views of others. Citizenship education that will enhance unity and stability and human right (Yusuf; 2013). By his earlier work Yusuf (2005). Opined that citizenship education could serve as an instrument for bringing about desirable positive change in Nigerian value orientation. It determines action and shapes the direction in which an individual operates in a given situation. As if that was not enough, he cited Obike (1993) who held that the people’s value orientation and their social attitude, expressed through services rendered to one another constitute the bedrock upon which members of the society depends for their survival. The writer of this paper wants to say that the problem with Nigeria is Nigerians themselves. Imagine how somebody is appointed into the position of leadership and responsibility, yet such tendency will be abused. One may ask, where does this type of spirit come from? Is it inherited and from who? Well, as people always say, half education or the lack of it is madness. Even though some say this negative value may be traced to the early type of education inherited from the former colonial authority, I may differ a little to say, the problems of Nigeria, at least 95 percent are caused by Nigerians. Citizenship education can be used to correct the problems of the past and thus, also be used to produce effective citizenship which is a basic requirement of a strong and United Nation (Yusuf, 2013). In the light of the above, lyewaran (1989) observed that during the colonial years, education was used to inculcate religious ideas and values. To him, the evangelical efforts as Yusuf, noted succeeded partly because they started with children at the elementary stage.

In United States of America, cited from (Yusuf, 2013), (Omare, 1999) observed that the inculcation of national consciousness and National pride became successful through education. Nigeria should borrow ideas from developed countries like USA, and Canada where citizenship education forms social studies. Manitoba education and youth (2013) in offering their view concerning citizenship education reiterated that "Since citizenship issues are rooted in the past, Canadian history occupies an important place in the social studies curriculum. Canada is regionally diverse with vast geographical land space. It is organized as a Federal parliamentary monarchy with a mixed although largely capitalist, economy. It is bilingual and multicultural country committed to pluralism, human rights and democracy. As a matter of fact, Canada is regarded as one of the most prosperous, peaceful and democratic country n the world, although it still has its share of economic and social injustices and inequities.

Rationale for Citizenship Education in Nigeria

Citizenship education is fundamental to living in a democratic society. The concept of citizenship as scholars observed takes on meaning in specific contexts and is determined by time and place. Citizenship education is a deliberate policy in Nigerian education; endeavour to socialize youths to development of positive habits, values and attitudes toward their Country. As a result, the youths are encouraged to learn the rules and regulations that govern all the citizens of their country as
contained in the constitution (N.T.I, 2000). However, the role of education as we know differs from
culture to culture and from society to society. Since this is so, and education is also an, important
instrument for learning through which specific objectives are, achieved. Ukihil (1996) in his writing
support this view by stating that some people view education, as an instrument for achieving a
specific objective such as socialization and means of social mobility while others see education as a
means of inculcating a particular ideology. Furtherance on this, Yusuf (2005) observed that the
school should not be used as an instrument for training in citizenship alone; rather it should be
directed at the training of the mind and the development of the intellect. Perhaps that is why Federal
Government of Nigeria (2004) has one of its educational objectives, as the education of the right types
of attitude for the survival of individual and the Nigeria society

Citizenship Education: An Instrument for National Unity and Stability in Nigeria

The constitution contains rules and regulations by which the citizens of a country are
governed in the same constitution, the rights and obligation of the citizen and that of the government
are spelt out. Rights are those things that belong to citizens/followers and leaders and which nobody
should take away. In citizenship education, we are taught that the rights and obligations of citizens
and the government. The government has obligations to its citizens to provide the health services,
protection, education, employment, housing other social services. The citizens are expected to be
loyal, patriotic, hardworking and honest (N.T.I, 2000). In order to have a peaceful and stable society,
both the government and the citizens must perform their obligations. It is true that good leadership
depends on good followership (N.T. I., 2000). If there had been a time Nigerian history that we need
peace and stability it is now. The need for national unity and stability is now or never this is because,
when you look around and see what is happening every day, news of trouble, violence and repeated
violence every where one wonders, the way we are going in this country. Many highly placed Nigerians have cried out and spoken about this. Yet the situation seems to remain. Education is a very
good instrument that can be used to foster peace and unity.

inculcate in the youth, a set of values and attitude contingent on the need and problems of the society.
To Osakwe (1993), citizenship education conveys to the learners, the body of knowledge, set of
values and behavioural orientation that are considered vital and necessary for the sustenance and well
being of the people. To the writer, education particularly for citizenship is an activity aimed at making
young people and adults functional human beings well-equipped to discharge their duties and
responsibilities in their society. For citizenship education to work well, it needs well informed people,
ready to break out of ethnic shackles and shine out for the society's use.

Social Studies: Its Meaning and Objectives

The emergence of Social Studies in the Nigeria school curriculum is recent. The concept of
Social studies can be understood within the context of the objectives which underlie the philosophy
and aims of a society's education. This is true of all countries which have Social Studies in their
school curricula. Every society's educational aims and goals are developed to help achieve its national
objectives, Social Studies as a subject deals with the problems of human survival differs in concept
according to the needs of different societies (N. T.I, 2007), Thus, in Nigeria and other parts of the
world, Social Studies has no single universally accepted definition. Its definitions are as many as there
are authorities in the field and different societies with their peculiar problems. The problem of
differences in definition as it is observed by scholars is that many of those who are associated with
Social Studies have had their educational background in other Social Science subjects. Therefore,
these tend to define Social Studies in the light of their own area of specialization. The meaning of
Social Studies therefore varies from one authority to another.

Social Studies is the study of man in his environment, a programme through which society
imparts knowledge, skills, values and desirable attitude considered worthwhile. Kolawole (2012) note
that Social Studies deals with people's interaction with their environment. It is concerned with the reciprocal relationships between people and the various aspects of their environment. Kolawole said, while in this process they encounter problems and challenges and meaningful life. By its design, Social Studies should enable people to tackle societal challenges by helping them adapt to the ever-changing environment they live in though the acquisition of relevant knowledge, attitudes, values and practical skills. Thus, social studies education was designed to provide functional and social education to Nigerian children and youths, within the African continent, in order to make them good citizens and great patriots of their nations.

However Famwang (2013), who cited from Nwosu and Corbin (1977) defined Social Studies as a subject dealing with human groups - people and their environment - the world over. They stated that Social Studies covers the nature and functions of these human groups; though their structure, organization and their interactions within the environment, though Social Studies derived its content from the Social Sciences and other related subjects, like anthropology, economics, sociology, social psychology, political science, geography and history among others, it's not exactly these subject. They further agreed that Social Studies, as a subject, goes beyond factual knowledge of these subjects. It is intended to present questions, concepts, issues, generalizations and problems that would be challenging not only to the students but to the entire citizenry. According to Abdullalli (2012) the philosophy of the Social Studies education hinges in part on the idea that Nigerian schools should not only train individuals to be just and competent individuals, but to function as contributing and participatory members of a free constitutional democratic nation. This as he puts it, implies that students must rely on the knowledge, skills, and awareness of the rights of minority and majority groups to coexist non-Nigerians, S. Ebob and D. E. Ukpom (1993) Social Studies as a subject is concerned with man's total way of life whereas for CESAC (1979) Social Studies deals with man in society as a whole. Social Studies education Objective according to Ebob et al (1984) seeks to train Nigerians to be good citizens and nation-builders by helping students to develop good skills, habits and positive attitudes towards one another and towards the nation. To inculcate appropriate values of honesty, integrity, hard-work, fairness and justice at work and play as one's contribution to the development of the nation, Social Studies call for patience and tolerance. Meziobi (1990) stated that there are good reasons why we should not be at war with our neighbours. Neighbours in this respect transcend ethnic boundaries, tribal groupings and regional organizations. The basic philosophy of Social Studies education in Nigeria according to Ebob et al is to provide for unity in diversity among the Nigerian populace. Integration they put it, has never been easy for a nation to achieve especially when the nation is fragmented along ethnic and religious lines. In this respect, Social Studies stresses regard for federal character in government services and programmes, developing all sections of the nation equally, creating national cultures and history, enforcing national language for easy communication and interaction, creating more states and local government for the purpose of grassroots development, developing urban centres to encourage people of all ethnic groups to live together. At the moment, the NYSC scheme is meant to foster mutual understanding cross fertilization of ideas and experiences among fresh graduates. I urge the federal government to do its part in fostering peace, unity and stability in this country. To pursue her goals of preaching the gospel of peace vigorously, especially to urge all sections of Nigerian economy to imbibe peace a necessary instrument for national development and stability.

The Challenges of Social Studies Education

The teaching of Social Studies in Nigerian schools is handicapped because many Social Studies teachers are not professionally trained. They have inadequate training in the philosophy, goals and methodology of Social Studies. As emphasized in the last MDGs conducted by the (N.T.I) for junior secondary school teachers (N.T.I, 2012). Classes are considered to be large if the number of students is about 40, some large classes may have 70 or 120 students. The large number of students in any classroom poses special challenges to teachers, especially in relation to motivation, managing learning activities and discipline. Given the above background, the teacher is encouraged adopt
strategies that ensure more effective participation in learning activities. To show the important of teachers in the teaching of Social Studies, Meziobi, Oyeoku and Ezegbe (2012) all agreed the National Policy on Education (2004) made Social Studies a core subject in the junior secondary Schools in Nigeria with the objectives of inculcating in the line with the objectives skills, values and attitudes for useful living. This is in line with the objectives and goals of the UOE programme at the junior secondary school level. In simple terms, the effective implementation of the UBE in junior secondary school through Social Studies instruction is inextricably dependent on quality Social Studies teachers who are adequately informed about what to teach, how to teach, attitudes, and skills expected to be injected in the learner for the realization of functional educational goals.

However, Nworgu(2007) and Ibiam(2007) cited from Meziobi, Oyeoku and Ezegbe (2012) in their respective Studies established that most Social Studies teachers are not sufficiently informed about the demands, implications, and objectives of education reforms in Nigeria specially the U.B.E. This abnormally is likely to affect the potency, worth, and relevance of instruction delivered to the learners in the light of the above background, it behaves the writer of this paper to say that the first and foremost challenge in the teaching of Social Studies is the teaching itself. It is a serious problem when the teacher is not conversance with the objectives and demands of the very subject he or she is handling. No emphasis may be needed in this type of situation.

Furthermore, Mezieobi and Osakwe (2003), Esu and Inyang-Abia, and Mezieobi (2007) cited from Mezieobi (2012) all have indicated that the essence of Social Studies instruction in junior secondary school is to equip the learner with attitudes, values, Knowledge, and skills for functional living in the Nigerian society. It is therefore imperative that effective implementation of Social studies instruction in line with vocational ideals of U.B.E. be focused on equipping the leaner with entrepreneurial and creative skills for productive living and Social Studies education classroom instruction ought to be innovative in exposing and preparing the learners to discover knowledge, creative ideas and think scientifically. This of course, is a veritable process of exposing and preparing the learners to become job creators rather than job seekers in future. Apart from that, other challenges rousing from, strategies of handling large classes have also been recognized. (N. T. I. 2012) observed that among the most effective strategic of averting these problems are: motivation, THE institute interaction and participation.

Concerning motivation, observed that to motivate learners, the teacher must first motivate himself by planning and executing learners centered activities, and assure learners of the intrinsic and extrinsic value of learning the subject matter, then ensure that learning activities are sufficiently effective to sustain the learners’ interest. Effective interaction ensures that learners relate to one another on both or one on one basis and also in groups.

They may interact and learn from one another through the use of learner text, pair work, intra-group interaction through questioning, discussions, problem solving exercises, role play and debates. A situation where this type of atmosphere is lacking in the learning of Social Studies, it becomes a problem to the student themselves.

In their perception of existent Social Studies classroom interaction process, Ukadike and Iyamu (2007), cited from Meziobi, Oyeoku and Ezegbe (2012), reported that Social Studies teachers are yet to involve learners adequately in active learning engagement and condemned the expository method which is responsible for the poor implementation of the Social Studies curriculum and consequent poor appreciation by learners of knowledge, values, attitude, and skills in Social Studies curriculum. The quality of the Social Studies teachers and the effectiveness of their instructional strategies in the classroom are crucial in the effective implementation of the U.B.E programme.
Given the above background, Ibiam (2007) noted that rapid technological changes in the society render most often learned materials and information in the Social Studies classroom obsolete if the teacher is not resourceful to embrace dynamic changes in the society.

Social Studies Education National Needs/Its Implication for The Nigerian Society

According to Mhlauli (2012), when African countries gained independence from their colonial masters they were faced with a mammoth task of nation building and education, was seen as a transformative tool for development (Verspoor, 2008) cited from Mhlauli (2012), observed, this was a challenge in that they had inherited underdeveloped education system with inadequate human resource capacity. In addressing the issue of Social Studies education to National Need, the writer of this paper, wants to observe that the end of every education must be viewed in terms of skills development and acquisition, especially preparing for the Society's work and services. If at the end acquiring education, the learner is not useful to himself, then he will not be useful to the society. Social Studies education should be able to produce learners that would be considered fit and acceptable particularly, in terms of their contributory and participatory efforts toward the development of their society. One of the objectives of Social Studies education as Eboh et al (1993) stated is to help people develop a good sense of judgment and a sense of moral and social responsibility so that they can become useful members, not destroyers, of their society and nation. Added to that, he also stated; that Social Studies education was meant to inculcate appropriate values of honesty, integrity, fairness and justices at work and playas one's contribution to the development of the Nation. Considering the above, one can see the contribution of Social Studies education to the national needs. The importance of Social Studies education in regards to national needs must not be over-emphasized. Social Studies teach values and ethics necessary for National development. (N.T.I, 2007) noted that despite the expansion is social services, industry and infrastructure, there had been no meaningful development in Nigeria. Development is a multidimensional process which involves the totality of man and it should be seen in all spheres of man's life including his economic, political, psychological and social relation. For a nation to become great there are some attitudes that the citizens have to cultivate. Great nations all over the world are built by citizens with the right attitude to life. Nigerian traditional societies survived because the people cultivated the right attitude to life. For Nigeria to achieve greatness the following values must be inculcated in the citizens, systematically, for patriotism - this in essence means ability of a citizen to render selfless service to the course and ideals of Nigeria and strong resistance against external influences that may undermine these courses and ideals. Loyalty, means to be loyal, in other words to be truthful to yourself, friends, groups and the nation. Social Studies education teaches one to be honest and as well as to be dedicated to ones duty important values that are necessary in a country and desiring in the life of citizens. The implication of the Social Studies education must not be overemphasized. Nigerian nation as everybody knows is a developing nation and it is developing at a very faster speed too. As it is characteristic of any developing nation Nigeria with her multi-ethnic nature is engulfed with many problems, socially, economically, politically and incessant religious intolerance. Nigeria needs citizens with conscious efforts and pragmatic leadership ability to salvage the country from its problems of social, economical, political and religious intolerance. Nigeria belongs to all of us, and she cannot fall or neglect to do proper development of very important subjects like citizenship and social studies education. Nations like Canada and U.S.A. for instance, have used citizenship and social studies education to achieve their National objectives.

Conclusion

Discerning from the discussion, so far, there is no doubt to say that education or schooling has played an important role in the development of citizenship among African nations in the post colonial era. As a matter of fact, sharing and strongly supporting the views of Mhlauli (2012), that there is evidence to the fact that citizenship education is not new to the African continent, to the contrary, Africans have been made to believe that it is a western concept, that is why there have been no attempts to re-conceptualize citizenship education in schools to take into account the socio-cultural
aspect of these nations. Do everything to ensure that citizenship and social studies education continues to be taught in Nigerian schools. Rewrite our history to reflect the six geographically or politically zones, and encourage every Nigeria citizen to see reason to belong to this great family ‘Nigeria.’ Teacher preparing institutions should adequately expose citizenship and social studies teachers to curricula reforms and motivation in education. Apart from that, there is need to restructure and re-strategize the method of teaching social studies in Nigeria’s tertiary institution and secondary schools. In as much as we appreciate the government’s efforts toward the establishment of free education we shall be happier, if the problems of overcrowded classrooms be checked, employ professional teachers, so as not to kill the vision. Creativity should be integrated into the social studies and citizenship education curricula, government should also encourage the stakeholders and private individuals in the education industry to provide effective teaching and learning of citizenship and social studies.

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