

CHAPTER 10

IMPERATIVENESS OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TO THE NIGERIAN STUDENTS

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10.1. Introduction

The 1990s have been characterized by increased global concerns on citizenship quality because of life-threatening issues like terrorism, armed conflicts, HIV/AIDS, global warming, energy crisis, desertification, political upheavals, among several others, which the world grapples with. As a result of these, attention is being drawn to the challenge of effective citizenship development through education. Governments are challenged to address local and regional responses to the rise of phenomena like poverty, harmful cultural practices particularly in relation to women, drug trafficking and abuse, HIV/AIDS, religious fundamentalism, armed conflicts, and environmental degradation which largely border on ineffective citizenship competencies. The United Nations through the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) championed the course of citizenship Education in the globe. This she did through various global education conferences aimed at giving people the opportunity to discuss why and how to integrate the values inherent in sustainable development into teaching and learning processes. The need to re-channel educational efforts towards the attainment of sustainable development is a global one but it tends to be more pronounced in developing countries such as Nigeria.

Since her amalgamation in 1914, Nigeria has been greeted with a lot of vices which range from social, economic to political and religious problems. These are manifested in corruption, ethnicity, war, nepotism, tribalism, secession, religious crises, terrorism, contempt for law, loss of value, negative attitude to national issues, lack of patriotism, political gangsterism, prostitution, bribery, fraud, oil bunkering and a host of other practices, which dents the corporate existence of the nation. More so, in the past three decades, Nigerians have witnessed dramatic oppressions from military dictators and have seen one authoritarian regime after another toppled in the midst of different forms of political violence. Even with the entrenchment of democracy in Nigeria in 1999, some of these problems still linger. Further, the spate of corruption in Nigeria is alarming and transcends to every aspect of National life from the professionals to the politicians. Consequently, the loss of value, the imbibing of false values, the lack of self-spiritedness, patriotism etc. have become the lots of Nigerians. These social ills have sneaked into all sectors, all aspects of the society that they constitute the essential problems with which in reality, Nigerians have to contend.

According to Chinsman (1996), these ills are likely to have been caused by what he summed up as: the seemingly perpetual subservience of the Nigerian population, their inability to empower themselves and put themselves on the driver's seat of the vehicle for development and their powerlessness to engineer political, social and economic change and transformation. This could mean that a good number of Nigerians are yet to understand and

live the type of citizenship qualities needed for the human and material development of the country. Hence, Ali (2008) and Oluniyi (2011) opined that the best way to change the Nigerian situation, strengthen her democracy and meet the challenges of this millennium is to guarantee a universal, qualitative and excellent citizenship education for every child in this country. This is in line with Nduka (2004) who observed that although our value disorientation is glaring, and has in fact reached an explosion level, it is the utmost belief of the academicians that the best hope of saving ourselves from our ethical shipwreck is a resuscitated educational system.

In a beleaguered society like Nigeria, this revamped educational system is reposed in a subject like citizenship education. The arrangement of instructions, programmes, sensitization, and training for juveniles in a formal school setting that cultivates in them desirable habits, values, behavioural patterns, spirit of common identity and patriotism that instills changes in the citizens towards productive rewards to the state (Anumba, 2013). Citizenship education is a veritable channel and formidable tool for educating 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 (Yusuf, 2006). It is in the light of the growing need for civic awareness and training that the thrust of this work will delve into the concept of citizenship, citizenship education, issue-oriented citizenship education, its usefulness and the attitude of people to it.

10.2. Objectives of the work

At the end of the lecture, students should be able to:

1. discuss the problems that have plagued Nigeria;
2. explain the concepts of citizen and citizenship;
3. highlight the different types of citizens and ways citizenship can be acquired;
4. appraise the concept of citizenship education; and
5. State the subjects/disciplines that teach citizenship education.

10.3. The Concepts of Citizen and Citizenship

Every country or state is made up of citizens and aliens. It now behooves on us to draw a clear difference between the duos. In the western perspective, the term citizen is used to refer to a person who has full rights as a member of a society, nation or country, either by birth or by being granted such rights. In the traditional setting, the term simply means a freeborn person of any community. A citizen is a bonafide, legal and authentic member of a state. He/she enjoys all rights and privileges. Aliens or foreigners do not enjoy all these rights. In the constitution of the state are spelt out rights and responsibilities of citizens. It is deemed that non-citizens cannot enjoy any right in the state. By implication, citizenship could be said to be a legal status possesses by any person. In other words a citizen is a legal member of a community or a state or a nation. It is that individual that is seen as genuine member of a state recognized under the law. With special reference to the Nigerian constitution, citizenship could be acquired through birth, registration and naturalization.

There are different types of citizens according to Westheimer and Kahne (2004) and they

include the personally responsible citizen, the participatory citizen, and the social-justice citizen. The personally responsible citizen is one who behaves responsibly in the community, assists the needy, works, and pays taxes. The participatory citizen is one who is actively involved in community activities, helps organize community efforts to cater for the needy, and knows how government agencies work. The social-justice citizen is one who assesses social, political, and economic structures objectively, knowledgeable about social movements, discovers and addresses cases of injustice, and endeavour to be fair and promote equal opportunities.

In an heterogeneous and democratic society like Nigeria, citizens must be ready to make their own outstanding contributions. Good citizenship thus implies that citizens are voluntarily ready and able to weigh different perspectives, explore strategies for change, and meditate on matters bordering on justice, equality/inequality, and democratic involvement. A good citizenship centres on the willingness to act in a socially accepted and responsible way within a society.

10.4. The Concept of Citizenship Education

Citizenship education in its unique form seeks to involve citizens in their communities and schools by teaching them the skills necessary to effectively participate in civil society. Citizenship education is all about teaching citizens how to behave in a state or a nation. This takes different forms; informally and formally. It encompasses the preparation of young people for their roles and responsibilities as citizens and, in particular, the role of education (through schooling, teaching and learning) in that preparatory process (Kerr, 2004). Originally, the school is a place for young people to gather democratic experiences and ruminate upon these in addition to experiences gained elsewhere (Daniels, 2001). Ruminating on these can contribute meaningfully to the identity development of young people and ultimately enhance the quality of their participation in society. According to Oluniyi (2011), the aim of citizenship education is to develop young people into responsible citizens, who understand their rights and responsibilities and can play an active part in society. The subject should teach students how to be politically literate using real life situations. This is because being taught to respect the law without learning how bad laws can be changed and better ones promoted, tend to create apathetic subjects rather than active citizens. Citizenship education involves people making their own decisions and taking responsibility for their own lives and society. Patrick (1999) observes that the concept of citizenship is at the core of education for democracy.

Citizenship education though under different captions like civics and civic education can be simply defined as the subject that teaches people (citizens) their rights and obligations in the place where they live (Oladiipo, 2013). Citizenship education is now a widely contested field. Citizenship education reflecting in Social Studies and Civic Education is one of the **subjects** in the national curriculum that teaches about the way to behave in the society, **democracy**, justice, **politics**, the **economy** and the **law**. Other ways to attain citizenship education goals include social sciences, world studies, education for democratic citizenship, life skills, moral education and character education (Kerr, 1999; Huddleston & Garabagiu, 2005; Winton, 2007). It is the discipline that centres on the developing of youths for their adult life within the community, particularly in the area of doing what is right and standing by it.

Ajose (2001) opined that citizenship education is specifically designed in content and function to produce healthy, good and active citizens, wherein a good citizen is seen as patriotic, responsible, disciplined and conscientious, morally sound with love for his state. In essence, it is the all-round education for the citizenry in order to contribute and impact the society positively. Citizenship education involves shaping the development of character with a view to improving man and the society. Arising from this, citizenship education shares close semblance with Education for Sustainable Development which according to UNESCO (2009) equips people to develop the cognition, value and skills to participate in decisions about the ways we do things, individually and collectively, both locally and globally, that will improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future.

To this end, a functional citizenship education must convey fresh knowledge, develop existing aptitude and impart useful skills so as to help learners develop the type of quality of life that involves respect not only for human beings but also for resources, existing on the planet. The Nigerian government in the National Policy on Education recognized the place of citizenship education and consequently included it in the schools' curricula (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). Further, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) (2007) developed a civic curriculum for the teaching and learning of citizenship education in Nigerian basic schools.

10.5. Emergence of Citizenship Education in Schools

Citizenship education before the epoch 1969 National curriculum conference was taught as Civics. Ever since the contents of the subject have been captured inside Social Studies, it was only taught as a topic. The new outlook of citizenship education surfaced in 8th November 2007 in the subject called Civic Education. The Federal Government made the subject compulsory when she adopted the 9 year Basic Curriculum. This was a brain child of the National Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) to address the world changes in the social and economic spheres. The mandates of NEEDS are value re-orientation, poverty eradication, job generation, wealth creation and harnessing education to empower the people. With its ten major themes; our values, citizenship, national consciousness and national identity, human rights and rule of law, representative democracy, duties and obligations of citizens, Nigerian constitution, social issues, peace and conflicts, national economic life, it nurtures and prepares the citizens.

At the senior secondary school level, citizenship education or civic education is now made compulsory just like the other subjects like Mathematics and English. This is a requisite subject needed to be passed in the o'level irrespective of subject combination. It is a course under the GNS at the N.C.E, Polytechnics and Universities. Aside the formal teaching of citizenship education in schools, most agencies and commissions like Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and the National Orientation Agency (NOA) teach citizenship through their advocacy, awareness and sensitization. Despite the landmark achievements recorded by this education of citizens, more efforts need to be pooled in the tertiary level.

10.6. Issue-oriented Citizenship Education

There are three major pedagogical strands of citizenship education that necessitates its approach to curricular issues (Kerr, 1999). There is *education about citizenship*. This helps to provide students with enough knowledge and understanding of national history and the structures and processes of government and political life as done in the traditional, classroom-based civic education. The second approach is *education through citizenship*. The aim here is to engage students in learning by doing, through active, participatory experiences in the school or local community and beyond. On the long run, this reinforces the knowledge component through direct field experience. The last approach is *education for citizenship*. This approach houses the other two strands. It demands that students be equipped with a set of tools - knowledge and understanding, skills and aptitudes, values and disposition - they require to participate actively and sensibly in the roles and responsibilities they encounter in their adult lives. This approach connects citizenship with the whole educational experience of students (Kerr, 1999).

Education, indeed, suggests that Nigeria subscribes to the issue-based curriculum approach in agreement with the realities of our environment and the modern world" (FRN, 2004, p.4). The new *Social Studies for Upper Basic Education* (NERDC, 2007) put this recognition in proper perspective by hammering contemporary issues of local and global concerns. These include issues such as youth unemployment and youth restiveness, environmental issues, drug abuse, child/women trafficking, and family life education. Others are HIV/AIDS prevention education, peace and conflict resolution, the mass media, globalization, millennium development goals (MDG), and Nigeria's National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS).

10.7. Usefulness of Citizenship Education

Huddleston (2017) opined that a consideration of the teaching of controversial issues serves only to underline the importance of good citizenship education from an early age. Children who are used to discussing their differences in a rational way at the lower basic school are in a better position to accept it as normal in the post-basic years. They are able to investigate and inquire into topical, ethical and controversial issues. The knowledge of citizenship helps to prepare young people to cope with problems and turmoils maturely and tolerantly, thereby, take responsibility for their deeds and others. In a nutshell, it nurtures them for adult life which entails taking good decisions. The objective of citizenship education is much more beyond collecting, locating, discussing and describing.

Teacher education with specialty in citizenship, through a variety of routes including N.C.E, Bachelor's degree, Postgraduate degrees and Professional certifications have been of tremendous help in the development and growing success of citizenship education in schools in Nigeria. The emergence of citizenship education as a specialist path for teacher education has also opened up the teaching profession to a range of individuals with degree backgrounds

in subjects related to politics, law and economics who previously may have found it difficult to enter the profession (Peterson, 2011). The non availability of specialist teachers of citizenship education will hinder the ability of schools to play their role in producing and educating knowledgeable and responsible citizens.

If citizenship education wasn't given a pride of place in the school curriculum, a generation of young people will (or at least may) be deprived of a chance to formally learn about, investigate, and actively participate in the political and social communities within which they inhabit. This aspect of schooling is too important to be treated with levity. Thanks for the relentless efforts of the government of Nigeria in giving citizenship education its pride of place by making it a compulsory subject especially in the basic and senior secondary school.

Anumba (2013) asserted that citizenship education will make members of a society possess full knowledge of the state, their duties and obligations to the state, their rights and expectations from the state, the necessity of total conformity with accepted ways and standards of life of the people, the need for full compliance with rules and regulations and total allegiance to the state. The essence of it all is the need for relevant education that will transform the citizens to live legally in the society and contribute meaningfully to its progress. It is this kind of socialization orientation and training that can properly be referred to as education for citizenship. Falade (2008) opined that civic education is a tool that can make Nigeria achieve the aims of integration, cohesion and national unity.

Through its themes, it fosters tolerance and respect for the nation.

Many civic skills must come into place in working for a sustainable future. These include: a desire to investigate issues in the local, school and wider community, a readiness to recognize social, economic, ecological and political dimensions of issues needed to resolve them, the ability to analyze issues and to participate in action aimed at achieving a sustainable future. Building these skills is the realm of citizenship education. Indeed, active democratic citizenship is one of the underlining features of a sustainable society. Most importantly, the importance of citizenship education has been emphasized in several international agreements and the Nigeria government.

Citizenship education is not just about teaching alone, it transcends to making students demonstrate citizenship through the way they operate in the society. It is an ideal instrument for exploring the values required by the nation. The usefulness of citizenship education could be seen in its function of building character and developing the soft skills that employers of labour are on the lookout for- ability to work under pressure with minimal supervision, social interaction, communication, team work to mention a few.

At the forefront of citizenship is the entrenching of democracies. In achieving this, active, informed and responsible citizens who are willing and able to take responsibility for themselves and their communities and contribute to the political process are needed. Citizens should be alive to the following among others:

- consciousness of their rights and responsibilities as citizens;
- knowledge about the social and political world;
- concern about the welfare of others;
- critical/objective in their views and arguments;
- capability of having an influence on the world;
- responsibility about their communities;
- being of good character in how they act as citizens.

The above qualities are not inborn but learned. The world we find ourselves today has proven that learning either informally or in the four walls of the classroom is insufficient to tackle the complex tasks of the society. A more robust approach to citizenship education must be embraced if citizens are to be alive to public life and affairs. Citizens Foundation (2017) listed some of the approaches as follow:

- **inclusive:** An entitlement for all young people regardless of their ability or background;
- **pervasive:** Not limited to schools but an integral part of all education for young people;
- **lifelong:** Continuing throughout life.

The study of citizens must not be relegated because of its feasible importance as citizenship issues are topical; current today, real; influence people's lives, sensitive sometimes; can affect people at a personal level, especially when family or friends are involved; often controversial; people disagree and hold strong opinions about them; and finally moral; relate to what people think is right or wrong, good or bad, important or unimportant in the society.

Citizenship education helps learners to develop **self-confidence** and successfully tackle life changes and challenges like bullying and discrimination. It gives learners a **voice** in the life of their schools, in their communities and in society at large. More so, it enables them to **make a landmark contribution** by developing the expertise and experience needed to claim their rights and know their responsibilities and training them for the challenges and opportunities of adult and working life. With its essential elements like knowledge and understanding, skills and aptitudes, values and dispositions, citizenship education focus on the development of individuals.

Today, citizenship education has changed the attitude of Nigerians in so many ways. This could be seen in the fact that orderliness is now being maintained in banks and other public places where people queue. It is the prerogative of the citizens to be law abiding in the society. The teaching of citizenship education has greatly impacted in this regard. More so, through teaching, awareness and advocacy, citizens know that it is unlawful to break traffic rules bearing in mind the penalties accrued to defaulting.

The policies adopted by some world leaders like Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini and African leaders like Idi-Amin, Gbagbo, Mugabe are simply draconian. These political demagogues have no respect for democracy, representative government and dignity of human persons.

The attention of Nigerians has been drawn to issues that deny the country of its corporate existence. Citizenship education has opened the eyes of the citizenry to understand that nobody can be a life-leader. Citizens now understand their rights, the constitution, and also their duties. The major significance of citizenship education is to make citizens responsible. This responsibility makes them take decisions that are considered very analytical.

10.8. Summary and Conclusions

Citizenship education is a necessity for all students. However, the school is not the only place where citizenship can be learned and is learned. The attributes of students and their home environments play important roles in the development of citizenship, which means that the contribution of education may be relatively modest. Those types of citizenship education that involve the pedagogical climate and include dialogue and discussion in the classroom can promote the development of citizenship. Citizenship education that includes classroom activities carried out as part of a formal educational method or program such as civic instruction can also promote the development of citizenship. The forming of the minds, capable of taking informed decisions, being responsible and conforming to the society standards is the onus of citizenship education. Despite the integration of citizenship education into different subjects like Civics, Social Studies, Social Sciences and ultimately civic education, it has proved to be a veritable instrument of breeding national consciousness, peaceful co-existence and forging national unity. It is not out of place to conclude that learning experiences, which include formal education, help people to develop citizenship competences (e.g., civic knowledge, skills, attitudes, and reflection) and thus become active citizens. Though the Nigerian nation is bedeviled with so many vices, citizenship education if well internalized by students is quite useful in tackling them. However, a lot still needs to be done. The following are recommended to make citizenship education deliver more good fruits:

10.9. Recommendations

1. Since it is not only the school that helps in the teaching of citizenship education, the home, religious bodies, mass-media and agencies like NOA, ICPC etc should intensify efforts in fostering the education of citizens.
2. The curriculum contents of citizenship education should be more detailed and comprehensive to accommodate some other issues.
3. Certification in citizenship education should be used as criteria in getting some appointments, employment or issuance of licenses etc.
4. Citizenship education should concentrate more on the dialogue and cooperation between students during class. This will enhance active learning and enable them to practice citizenship (learning-by-doing) and accumulate democratic experiences.

Revision Exercise

1. _____ is a veritable channel and tool for educating citizens about their rights and responsibilities.
2. According to Westheimer and Kahne (2004) there are _____ different types of citizens.

3. Through advocacy, awareness and sensitization, agencies like _____ and _____ now teach citizenship.
4. Citizenship education can be taught both _____ and _____.
5. The Nigerian educational research and development council launched a _____ civic education curriculum for basic schools in _____.

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