

EXPLORING EMERGING REALITIES IN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION FOR PROMOTING AND SUSTAINING DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND PRINCIPLES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Citizenship education is one of the topic addressing the multiple problems such as high crime rate, civilization, ethnicity, economic injustice, ruthlessness, terrorism. This paper examined emerging realities of citizenship education for promoting and sustaining democratic value and principles in Nigeria. The main objectives of this paper are to identify the roles of citizenship education in promoting and sustaining democratic values and principles in Nigeria. To assess the obstacles associated with citizenship education in promoting and sustaining democratic values and principles in Nigeria. For being one of the courses offered in tertiary institutions under general studies department it was introduced to promote democracy and healthy leaving in Nigeria. It was discovered that the content of citizenship education in social designed to prepare students became active citizens that promote democratic principles and values for active participation in national development. The sources of this paper is secondary generated from text books, journals, magazines etc. This paper recommended that the curriculum of citizenship education should apart from emphasizing rights and liberties of citizens, include moral and ethical expectations of responsible citizens. The curriculum should be structured to address our specific and unique problems such as banditry, kidnapping,, terrorism, breaking away agitation, tribalism, religious conflicts and drug addiction that is almost learning the nation apart instead of its current western oriented content and The policies and programs dished out by educational institutions should be worthy of emulation in both private and act in tandem with the goals and expected outcomes of teaching citizenship education in Nigeria.

Keywords: Emerging, Realities, Citizenship Education, Democratic Values & Principles

Introduction

Worldwide citizenship education occupies a place of priority in the reform program of nation and educationist considered myriad of problems such as terrorism, youth agitation, violence, conflict, virus infections, global warming, energy dilemma, desert encroachment and political uncertainly ravaging the world (Kerry, 2012).The crumbling of the United soviet socialist Republic and the admittance of Eastern bloc countries into the European union, the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the exodus people from underdeveloped countries to advanced nations necessitated for the new

strategies have been reiterated in many international conventions one of which declare as “a collective responsibilities all the administrators of educational sector of countries of the universe resolved earnestly to prioritize transforming modules, content of reading materials and other learning tools including modern techniques with the aim of ultimately producing loving and trustworthy citizens that value peaceful co-existence, civil liberties, popular government and long-lasting progress tolerant of others cultural values, committed to promoting freedom, human self-respect and dissimilarities, as well as committed to conflict prevention or addressing the conflict through mechanism devoid of violence”. Therefore, the development of authentic citizenship education at all level inclusive of global perspective is quintessential (UNESCO, 2005).

In a related development UNESCO (2005) Affirmed that all signatories should be ready to encourage, tiers of learning, a functional civic education that provide citizens with opportunities to acquire knowledge of the operation modalities and task of social institutions, be it communal, state or worldwide and to involve in the socio-cultural and political life of the community. This participatory approach entails improved connection between education and pragmatic steps to provide solution to problem at all levels of life. Students’ involvement in the planning of studies and governance of their schools should be prioritized in civic and global education (UNESCO, 2005).

At a local content problems of Nigeria has captivated the interest of academicians, human rights activist, administrators and concerned citizens. This gave rise for the collective concern is not far-fetched as Nigeria's status as giant in the African continent steadily fading out due to the multiple fault lines militating against national integration and nationhood (Saliu, Yusuf, Agbonna and Jakayinfa, 2011). Some of the problem are tribal sentiments, suspicion and misunderstanding among various groups, fossil fuel induced deltanians region conflict and North-South divide. Others include progressive moral degeneration, politically motivated killings, unpatriotic conducts, hostage taking and gross indiscipline which brought the country to disrepute among community (Alfa, 2012).

In the same vein Kabir (2014) stressed that indiscipline has become endemic in the country manifested in unruly attitude in public, careless and risky driving culture, disrespect for normative values, rampant avarice, shortchanging and oppression of fellow citizens, poor attitude to work, indecency and lack of sound ethical foundation mentors in scamming, pilfering and advance fee fraud.

It is also worthy to note that policies, has been made by the Nigerian government to revive the situation, with little success. Some of the policies formulated by various administration in Nigeria include; Ethical Revolution in 1983, War Against Indiscipline (WAI) in 1984, (MAMSER) in 1987 National Orientation Agency (NOA) in 1983. The Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) in the year 2000, followed by the establishment of Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) in 2003.

Idowu, (2015) maintained that, although all the programme were unique attempts aimed at equipping citizens with expected civic and citizenship values, but they failed largely because of indoctrination, compulsion and propaganda associated with the programmes were ineffective in enforcing obedience. It ended with the regimes that initiated them. In consideration of the poor success recorded by the policies and recognized that re-orientation would yield optimum dividend at the higher educational levels from where prospective leaders, policy makers were groomed. With regard to this Nigerian government introduced citizenship education into the curriculum of higher educational institutions. National board of technical education NBTE (2005) stated that citizenship education is aimed at sensitizing learners on the key concepts and provisions of the Nigerian constitution as well as inculcate in them democratic principles, democratic values, citizens liberties and commitment to the society.

Despite many decades of introducing citizenship education in Nigerians tertiary institutions, there is little to show as meaningful outcomes, rather the situation degenerated. Presently Nigeria is at evident endemic financial improprieties, ethnic bigotry, banditry, prostitution, terrorism, Boko Haram and ISWAP religious sect, Sunday Egboho's agitation for south-west independent and Kanu's Biafran agitation which collectively obscures the process of national integration and attainment of true nation hood (Neszmelyi, 2020).

Concept of Citizenship Education

Citizenship can be seen from the mutual relationship between a person and the community in which he resides. It is concerned with the civil and political responsibilities of persons to their society and the basic obligations of government to such individuals and constitutes a form of participation in governance (Adesiyon & Muyiwa, 2004). Citizenship of Nigeria could be acquired by birth, registration or naturalization (1999 Nigeria constitution).

Citizenship education is a long life learning centered on inculcating political consciousness, public awareness and national unity, teaching approved ethical conduct and promoting positive behavior towards political processes (Micheal & Graham, 2003). Okam & Ibrahim (2011) stated that citizenship education emerged as a panacea to address the multiple problems such as high crime rate, civilization, ethnicity, economic injustice, terrorism and failed state phenomenon confronting nation states. In an attempt to address the problems of nationhood in Nigeria, school syllabus is designed for students and focused on equip them with skills required for effective citizenship and intimate them about the internal operations of government in the society as well as their duties and responsibilities (Enem, 2007). The present school syllabus in Nigeria focused on the following critical areas; Democracy, equity, values, liberties and responsibilities as well as uniqueness and people differences for harmonious existence. Also citizenship education in Nigeria teach the following to the learners:-

1. About presidential and other systems of government.

2. About citizens roles in political and legal institutions.
3. Knowledge about democracy and justice rights and obligations.
4. About how different rights and obligations affect individuals and communities.
5. About multiple identities and its implication.
6. About diverse national, cultural, environmental and religious values in Nigeria.
7. To consider the inter connections between Nigeria, Africa and global community.
8. To explore the forces that brings about changes in communities over time
9. The skills of advocacy and representation.
10. Critical thinking on contemporary issues.
11. How to make informed and reasonable action as citizens. (Jackson, 2020).

Concept of Democracy

There is no single definition that is globally accepted but the most popular definition is that of the definition coined by the former United State of American presidential in person of Abraham Lincoln in 1863. “As the government of the people, by the people and for the people”. Democracy is a system of government where the power lies with people, either directly or through elected representatives. It involves free and fair election, protection of individual rights, and the rule of law.

Democratic Values

The core democratic values are the fundamental beliefs and constitutional principles of Nigerian society, which unite all Nigerians. Some of these values are expressed in the 1999 Nigeria’s constitution as amended in 2010, and other significant documents. Thus;

1. **Life**:- Each citizen has the right to the protection of his or her life.
2. **Liberty**: - Liberty includes the freedom to believe what you want, freedom to choose your own friends, and have your own ideas and opinions, to express your ideas in public, freedom of association and also the right to have any lawful job or business across the country.
3. **Pursuit of Happiness**:- Each citizens can find happiness in his or her own ways, so long as he or she does not step on the rights of others.
4. **Justice**:- All people should be treated fairly in getting advantages and disadvantages of our country, where no group or person should be favored.
5. **Common Good**: - Citizen’s should work together for the good of all, the government should make laws that are good for everyone in the country.
6. **Equality**:- Everyone should get the same treatment regardless of where the person come from, his race, religions and his economic status or that of his parents.
7. **Truth**:- Both government and citizens of Nigeria should not lie.
8. **Diversity**:-Differences in language, dress, food where the person born, race and religion are not only allowed but accepted as important.

9. **Patriotism**:-This means having a devotion to our country and the core democratic values in what we do and what we say.
10. **Popular Sovereignty**: - The power of the government comes from the people and recognize by them.

Democratic Principles

Jonathan (2022) came with the following as the major principles of democracy in any society.

1. **Participation of Citizens**: - Citizens participation is the foundation that makes democracy of any nation become strong and sustained. Participation is not just voting on Election Day, although this is surely most notable form. But equally important are public debate, town hall meetings, and peaceful protest among others.
2. **Equality**:- It is not important but necessary that all people are treated equally in a democracy. This means that they are not discriminated against, because of their ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation that is the fundamental element of equality in a democracy.
3. **Accountability**:- People entrust powers to those they elect, and they are tasked to use these power to enrich their communities, politicians are accountable to the people that gave them mandate and must act in consistent with their will, and have a duty not abuse power to enrich themselves and their friends.
4. **Transparency**:- It simply means government actions should be clear to the people the information of government should be made available and civil societies. People should be able to ask their politicians questions on government important document.
5. **Political Tolerance**: -Although majority rule is at the heart of democracy, but this does not mean that the minority is forgotten. In a true democracy the rights of all citizens are equal and must be respected regardless of who is in power.
6. **Multi-party System**: - Citizens must have a choice on Election Day, means that there should be more than one single political party but more to make people freely participate in an election.
7. **Control Over the Abuse of Power**:- Abuse of power occurs when people on power decided that they are above the law. Democracy can only survive if everyone got support of citizens through their voting day and all other times during the period.
8. **Freedom of Economy**:- In a real democracy people should be able to decide what they want to do with their life as long as they follow the rules, it is not the governments to tell them what to study or what job they must take or what they must grow. Economic freedom is important in order to develop strong communities and strong national economics.
9. **Bill of Rights**:- This is a list of the rights and freedoms people have, such as freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. As a bill, the document is part of law, and many countries

include Nigeria enshrined it into their constitution. So when someone thinks their government is violating their rights they can turn to the courts and seek for redress.

10. **Human Rights:-** Many of the rights provided by a bill of rights are what called human right. Citizens should have regardless of where they come from, cultural or gender affiliation. Freedom of speech and freedom of association and assembly are also cornerstones of democracy and allow it to function properly.
11. **Free and Fair Elections:-** People should have equal access to the polls, that everyone's vote has the same value and that all votes are counted and outcomes are announces publically.
12. **Free Courts:-**In a perfectly functioning democracy, dispute are bound to occur. In this situation it is important that both parties have equal access to independent body that can resolve the dispute.
13. **Accepting Election Results:-** When election outcome didn't favour those in power they must accept the result and steps down. Peaceful handling power defines the real democratic process. Losers of election must accept defect but they should openly continue share their ideas and participate in public debate.
14. **Rule of Law:-** This is cardinal principles of democracy. Countries operate the rule of law, this means that government of nation apply equality to all people regardless to their political affiliations.

Problems Associated with Citizenship Education in Nigeria

Teaching new recruits to become full and responsible citizens of society has been a basic need, hence, there is hardly any society without a deliberate program aimed at satisfying that need. However, after many decades of integrating citizenship education into the Nigeria curriculum as a mandatory requirement of graduating from any program in the country's tertiary institutions the outcomes have been unimpressive (Idowu, 2012).

A large proportion of scholarly works on citizenship education in Nigeria and its role in society has been predicated on belief, conceptual framework and experiences of western civilization. Second reason is the relegation of moral ethics to the advantages of rights and liberties of citizens. In fact, it has become the buzz to define citizenship nearly exclusively from the prism of possession of rights. More so problematic citizenship education in Nigeria is the prevalence of financial misappropriation, kidnapping banditry and ritual killings for money, white collar and public order crimes in Nigeria are pointers to the failure of checks and balances of democratic experimentation countering self-interest and primitive accumulation (Ikem, (2007).

Another challenge of citizenship education in Nigeria is the issue of multiculturalism. Many countries continue to experience massive migrations with its attendant merits and demerits, the resurgence of primordial alignments, new cultural and political institutions, sub-cultures and

multivariate identities. In visualizing citizenship education, it is important to recognize that Nigeria emerged from the context of disparate people, cultures and belief systems (Ameachi, 2019).

There is also the problem of indigene/settlers dichotomy that has made it almost impossible to encourage true Nigerian citizenship. Also, it is no longer new that unqualified personnel are employed to teach citizenship education in many higher and lower educational institutions due to consideration that it is just a matter of read and teach while is beyond that perception. Then some of the course tutors who are expected to show example of good citizens engage in such practice like extortion, sex for marks, nepotism and election rigging in the large political space which negates the essence of teaching citizenship education. Guardian (2020) discovered that in fact, Nigeria's educational institution sin their present configuration are basically /undemocratic establishments and such are the commitment and belief in democratic values and incapable of instilling in students democratic principles.

Finally, Nigeria's experience in tertiary institutions where the citizenship education was made compulsory for all students has shown that teaching students the theoretical component of citizenship education is ineffective and misleading, unless institutions and teachers reflect democratic practice by given students' chance to participate in decision making that affect them directly. It is on record that most heads of Nigeria's educational institutions often mobilize financial arsenal at their disposal to stifle and determine outcomes of student's union elections, thereby depriving them of the practical aspect of citizenship. Many instances abound where the principals, vice chancellors, rectors and provost proscribe students' union activities for flimsy excuses and simply handpick individuals student based on primordial consideration.(Emmanuel, Ogu & Amakwe 2020, Tribune, 2017 Vanguard 2019, Punch, 20210).

Theoretical framework

Participatory Theory of Democracy and Citizenship Education

This theory emphasizes active citizen engagement in political decision making processes. It advocates for active citizen participation in political decision making process. It seek to empower citizens to directly engage in governance, often through mechanism like citizen assemblies or grass root movements. Citizenship education aimed to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills to participate effectively in democratic societies. It posters critical thinking, civic engagement, and understanding of democratic principles. It is also closely to linked to the participatory of democracy as it emphasizes teaching individuals about their right, responsibilities, and the importance of active engagement in democratic process. By educating citizens about democratic principles and practice such as voting, advocacy and community involvement, it promotes more informed and participatory society. In essence, citizenship education nurtures the values and skills necessary for individuals to contribute meaningful to the democratic process as active and responsible citizens.

Methodology

This study used qualitative approaches in achieving research objectives. The qualitative approach enables researcher in getting in-depth information. Meanwhile, the secondary data sourced through consultation of relevant and related literature such as text books, journals, magazines etc. However, deductions and inferences were objectively and subjectively made based on the data sources.

Discussion of Major Findings

Precisely, it is discovered that democratic values and principles recognized in Nigeria promotes democracy at all level of government. It was also find out that citizenship educate citizens about democratic principles and practice such as voting, advocacy and community involvement, it promotes more informed and participatory society. In essence, citizenship education nurtures the values and skills necessary for individuals to contribute meaningful to the democratic process as active and responsible citizens. There is also the problem of indigene/settlers dichotomy that has made it almost impossible to encourage true Nigerian citizenship. Also, it is no longer new that unqualified personnel are employed to teach citizenship education in many higher and lower educational institutions due to consideration that it is just a matter of read and teach while is beyond that perception. Then some of the course tutors who are expected to show example of good citizens engage in such practice like extortion, sex for marks, nepotism and election rigging in the large political space which negates the essence of teaching citizenship education.

Conclusion

Teachers' role is highly significant in shaping the future of a nation by teaching the young minds as the architects of the future generation. Teacher's should be successful in producing men and women of good moral character, dedication, lifelong learning spirit and teaching as a mission for shaping the humanity in all times to come. Teaching citizenship education is one of the ways of mitigating social problems and promoting democratic values and principles in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The researchers recommended that:

1. The curriculum of citizenship education should apart from emphasizing rights and liberties of citizens, include moral and ethical expectations of responsible citizens.
2. The curriculum should be structured to address our specific and unique problems such as banditry, kidnapping, and terrorism, breaking away agitation, tribalism, religious conflicts and drug addiction that is almost learning the nation apart instead of its current western oriented content.
3. Students should be taught the concept of democracy in both theory and practice by visiting institutions where democratic values and principles are visibly applied.

4. The policies and programs dished out by educational institutions should be worthy of emulation in both private and act in tandem with the goals and expected outcomes of teaching citizenship education in Nigeria.
5. Heads and teachers of educational institutions should depart from limiting academic freedom by undue interference in the conduct of the various unions' election for sustaining democratic principles and values.

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