Citizenship Education: A Tool for the Inculcation of Socio-Cultural Values for the Enhancement of Nation Building

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Abstract

The thrust of this paper is to unravel citizenship education as a tool for the inculcation of socio-cultural values for the enhancement of nation building. Nigeria is inevitably craving for national development that has eluded the people for quite a long time due to absolute collapse of socio-cultural values which are sacrosanct for nation building. The place of citizenship education has been seen as a potent tool in the inculcation of these socio-cultural values through the patterns of family, school, religious bodies and media. Consequently, this encourages the transmission of these socio-cultural values like honesty, integrity, and respect to the next generation, building capacities, promotion of national unity, production of responsible citizenship and sustenance of democratic process. Sadly, certain challenges are often manifested to impede the inculcation process of these socio-cultural values. This paper proffers strategies to tackle these challenges that weaken citizenship education as a tool for the inculcation of socio-cultural values for nation building.

Keywords: Citizenship, education, socio-cultural values, nation building

Introduction

Citizenship education is an essential tool in nation building. This is because citizens are often seen as the nucleus of every society, and better still agents of social change. So, on accounts of this, for a nation to experience growth and development which is seen as nation building, its citizens must be adequately equipped with requisite skills like attitude, beliefs and socio-cultural values that will enable them to contribute positively to nation building. Citizenship education is an ideal tool for exploring, harnessing and inculcating socio-cultural values in Nigeria. It is a

veritable means in a country like Nigeria to instill unity in diversity despite the differences in culture and belief system.

Socio-cultural values seek to understand why people behave or act as they do based on the influence of their social and cultural group relationship. Similarly, the socio-cultural values of Nigeria are so rich to be left without being transferred, hence the need to be properly handed over to the next generation to ensure posterity. Perhaps, when these socio-cultural values that define a people are made known to the citizens through the right tool of citizenship education, nation building becomes inevitable. For instance, the breakdown of value system primarily has led to the insecurity phenomena the nation is experiencing. Edinyang and Archibong (2016) state that due to the poor citizenship education in Nigeria, the country is at a cross road because of Boko Haram activities in the North, herdsmen activities in the middle belt of Nigeria, militancy in the Niger Delta, kidnapping, grazers/farmers conflict, ethno-religious conflict, ethnic militia and other security challenges which impede nation building.

Clarification of concepts
The expression "citizenship education" has two words "citizenship" and "education". Citizenship refers to the relationship between citizens and the state and among individuals within a state. On the other hand, education is the process of inculcating values, skills and attitude. Ukaegbu (2005) defines education as a gradual process of learning and development. Therefore, citizenship education could be seen as the totality of learning instruction and equipping which a citizen needs to be able to play his/her role effectively (Ozumba, Eteng & Okom, 1999). Moreso, citizenship education is a deliberate or conscious preparation of citizens to be aware of their cultural, social, civil and political rights in the state (Chukwura, 2011).

Socio-cultural values entail the value system that identifies and defines a people for nation building. Social cultural values could also be seen as instructions, rules, standards, orders, principles and belief system that direct the behaviour of the people within a given society. These values are universally accepted and they promote national and international cohesion. These socio-cultural values permit positive interaction among the people. Social cultural values occupy a prime position that propels thoughts and actions of a group of people. To support this assertion, Satoshi and Donald (1987, cited in Teilanyo, 2015) see socio-cultural values as the evaluative and judgmental facet system, helping its members determine what is right or wrong, good or bad, important or unimportant. Socio-cultural values could be beliefs or desirable goals that move action. These are principles, standards or quality considered worthwhile or desirable for nation building (Ojukwu, Obielozie & Esimone, 2016). These socio-cultural values develop the ability of the individual to

adapt to his changing environment, thereby inculcating national consciousness and willingly becoming a responsible citizen capable and willing to contribute to nation building (Edinyang & Archibong, 2016). In everyday discussions, these values preoccupy the minds of people.

Nation building refers to the process of constructing or structuring a national identity using the power of the state and collective responsibility (Poroma, 2013). Nation building as regards this paper could be seen as the conscious effort of the citizenry to contribute to the development of the country as a result of the socio-cultural values they have learnt or acquire. Such values are patriotism, respect for elders, integrity, honesty, commitment, justice, etc. Nation building is a work in progress. Nation building could also be seen as development of behaviour pattern that protects, preserves and promotes the nation's interest. In view of this, nation building exists through the individual's positive contributions as a result of socio-cultural values that are made manifest. A nation cannot grow when its citizens are lacking these necessary socio-cultural values which are transmitted through the tool of citizenship education. Better still, a nation cannot build or develop above its level of citizenship education. Sequel to this, this paper sought to unravel citizenship education as a tool for the inculcation of socio-cultural values for nation building.

Socio-cultural values
A brief explanation is hereby given on the different socio-cultural values that can enhance nation building.

Truthfulness: This is the quality of being honest and telling the truth at all times. It behooves on citizens of a nation to imbibe this virtue. As far as this socio-cultural value is concerned, people should realize the need for them to have a reputation for being truthful and avoid telling lies.

Impartiality: This is another socio-cultural value which every Nigerian should cultivate. Impartiality implies not being partial in dealing with people. It means not showing an undue favour to one and neglecting the other. It is the absence of favouritism. It is the act of being fair and just to all. Impartiality presupposes the value one places on merit, efficiency and productivity while also recognizing the equality of all people irrespective of their state of origin or their religious affiliation. This will bring about increased productivity.

Loyalty/Patriotism: Loyalty presupposes truthfulness and faithfulness to one's duty or obligations. In other words, loyalty connotes owing allegiance to a cause or to someone or better still, to one's country. When a citizen is loyal to his country and bears true allegiance to it, such a person can be described as patriotic. When a

citizen pays his tax, respect national symbols, protect government property and performs his civic responsibilities as at when due, he is patriotic.

Justice: This is quality of being fair and just to all in administering the law. It is an essential aspect of all social, human, and economic relationships. Social order and peace are anchored on the principle of justice (fairness). Thus, in ensuring conformity with the social order and maintaining a high degree of ethical standard, justice and its enforcement is crucial for societal good. Justice presupposes the meting out of appropriate sanction or punishment on erring members of the society according to laid down rules. In addition, justice connotes fair play, equality, especially in the distribution of goods and services or in the provision of infrastructural facilities. Justice is an essential socio-cultural value that enhances nation building.

Respect for tradition: This socio-cultural value refers to the honour and dignity the citizens attach to their tradition. Tradition is the belief, custom or way of doing something for a long time among a particular set of people For example, festival, dances, way of greeting and delicacy. This value identifies a people and so should be respected.

Hospitality: This is the friendly and generous behaviour towards guests. Nigerians have different ways of expressing hospitality. These are in the forms of presentation of kola nuts, traditional gin, coconuts, etc. in diverse communities according to their peculiarities. These are often presented to visitors to depict that he/she is welcome.

Respect for elders: The respect for elders as a socio-cultural value cannot be over stated. It has been observed that Africans have deep respect for old age. This is seen in the respect and acceptance of their proverbs such as "the words of our elders are greater than amulet". It means that they give more protection than the amulet. "What an elderly man can see while sitting cannot be seen by a child who is standing." Citizenship education can help to transmit this to the young ones.

Generosity: This is the quality of somebody willing to give without expecting anything in exchange. It is one of the great socio-cultural values that build a community and society in general. In the traditional society, community effort was paramount; members were sponsored educationally, sharing of common good without sentiments was prevalent.

Gratitude: This is the quality of being grateful or appreciative to a person or group of persons that have rendered assistance in time of need. This value needs to be inculcated into the young ones through citizenship education to enable them show some level of appreciation when help or assistance is made manifest.

Patterns of inculcating socio-cultural values through citizenship education

1. Informal pattern

This involves the unorganized means of transmitting socio-cultural values to the young ones through citizenship education. Within this context, children are made to know the rudiments of life at home. Citizenship education at this level enables the citizens to know that there are prohibitions and the ability to keep away from the falling victim of these prohibitions is what makes one a good citizen (Mbakwe, 2016).

a. The Family

The family unit is the primary focus of value re-orientation informed by parental roles, goals, values that promote nation building (Njoku, 2015). The family is the bedrock of nation building. It is where socio-cultural values are transmitted through citizenship education by parents, neighbours, uncles, nieces, brothers, in-laws, sisters, etc to enhance nation building etc. The family is the cradle of a child's socio-cultural values development since the family is the first environment the child comes in contact with (Edinyang, Okey, Osim & Ushie, 2013). It is interesting to note that a child who is not educated at home is uneducated because not all teachers are parents but all parents are teachers. Nation building which starts from home (family) is all about transferring the right values to the young ones.

b. The Religious Institution

Nigerian religious institution has a lot to contribute to the inculcation of socio-cultural values needed for nation building. According to Ojoajogwu (2014) religion can serve as a spring board for the inculcation and improvement of socio-cultural values which are fundamental to actualizing correct human behaviour patterns particularly as it relates to productivity and nation building. It must be stated that the three major religions (Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion) in Nigeria teach and practice these socio-cultural values that make them contribute to nation building. Religious institution in Nigeria plays a great role in character building and the promotion of values like truthfulness, patience, love, kindness, etc. which are sacrosanct for nation building. None of the three religions promote negative values, though some persons do out of extremism.

c. Media

The mass media includes the print media such as newspapers, journals, textbooks and magazines and electronic media such as radio, internet and television (Khalid, Ahmed & Mufti, 2015). The significance of the mass media is that it can reach a broad spectrum of the masses spread across the society instantaneously. Thus, the media could be used not just to perform its traditional functions of education, entertainment and information, it has equally been used successfully to mobilize and inculcate socio-cultural values geared towards nation building (Njoku, 2015). The

media has on several occasions criticized and brought to the public certain corrupt individuals both in government and private sector (Okafor, 2014). Furthermore, the media through its programmes that are rich in content educate the people on these socio-cultural values that can enhance nation building.

2. **The formal pattern**
a. **The school system**
The subject matter of socio-cultural values in the school system can be seen in diverse subjects. The National Council for the Social Studies (2002) opined that value education should constitute an indispensable part of education. The school is a worthy platform for the restoration and teaching of our cherished values (socio-cultural values). Progressively, Bolarin (2005) observed that a look at the "curricular for all levels of education indicate that Nigeria cherished the inculcation of socio-cultural values (societal values)." The school being an agent of social change is expected to assist in its effort to socialize the people (Enu & Esu, 2011). This made Bohliha (2001) to agree that with intentional, thoughtful character and value education, schools can become communities in which socio-cultural values such as responsibility, handwork, gratitude, generosity, honesty, and kindness are taught and respected by the citizens.

The importance of citizenship education in inculcating socio-cultural values
1. **Societal values are transmitted to the next generation**
 The activities of government, knowledge about right, duties and obligations of citizens are brought to the knowledge of students, through the robust content of social studies and citizenship education, thus enhancing students' knowledge on democratic practices (Odogbor, 2015). Citizenship education provides the kind of learning experiences and opportunities which help develop the individuals to improve their ability to understand and accept the customs, standards, traditions and social cultural values of the group of which they are members, and to cooperate and participate actively with the group (Nwaji, 2011). Socio-cultural values are believed to be important for social equilibrium and maintenance of the system. Since socio-cultural values are transmitted, they play crucial role in determining human behaviour and social relationships as well as maintaining and regulating social structure and interactions on the one hand and giving them cohesion and stability on the other (Verma, 2004). As relevant as these socio-cultural values are, the tool of citizenship education is being used to pass it on to another generation for posterity sake. Therefore, citizenship education is one of the potent social institutions through which socio-cultural values are transmitted from one generation to another.

2. **Building the capacities of individuals for national development**
The inculcation of socio-cultural values is an essential component that is being taught through citizenship education. In refocusing citizenship education as a means

for nation building through the inculcation of socio-cultural values, one will be shaped in human behaviour, as the propeller of all other fields of national development (Ukpong, 2014). The National Policy on Education (2004), sees citizenship education as instrument "per excellence" for effecting national development. It is in recognition of this fact that citizenship education is in place or established to equip the individuals with the necessary skills that would promote national development. According to Odogbor (2015) the nation has been yearning for citizens who are patriotic, thus, citizenship education is no doubt one area of study in education aimed at fostering national development through its citizenry. He went further to state that this is in line with the patriotic slogan of former American president, J. F. Kennedy, that Americans should not think of what the nation can do for them but what they can do for the nation. This can only exist when the citizens are equipped with these capacity, skills, attitude and values that will enable them contribute positively towards the growth and development of the nation. It is on the basis of this that citizenship education becomes a veritable tool in inculcating these socio-cultural values (societal values).

3. **Promotion of national unity**
Citizenship education has been utilized as a tool for achieving social cohesion and unified national identity. Citizenship education develops in people the spirit of unity and peace while recognizing differences. It emphasizes common heritage and the reason why every citizen should be patriotic (Ukpong, 2014). Citizenship education is a potent instrument that can be used to foster peace and unity in Nigeria. People in a heterogeneous society such as Nigeria are always characterized by ethnic group, class and individual interests, intentions, motives, needs, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, fears and anxieties. These diversities, however, have been positively harnessed for greatness by other nations of the world, hence, the need to utilize this great opportunity in adopting the tool of citizenship education to inculcate these socio-cultural values in the young ones. In this 21st century, and the unfortunate intra/inter ethnic and religious bigotry, ethnic militia, kidnapping, herdsmen attack, bomb blast, indiscipline, including leadership challenge that have become a common occurrence in Nigeria, it becomes imperative to emphasize and use citizenship education tool to inculcate socio-cultural values (Yusuf, Agbonna, Tekayinfa & Saliu, 2011).

4. **Production of responsible citizens**
According to Jekayinfa (2004), citizenship education through Social Studies is to produce healthy, good and active citizens who are patriotic, responsible, disciplined, well-informed and conscientious. In other words, citizenship education as a tool for socio-cultural values trains the child for social responsibility and to become responsible citizen. This means that, citizenship education will develop in individuals, skills, attitudes and values that will enable them to show concern for the

well-being and dignity of others, respecting the worth of others and approaching civil decision in a rational manner (Yusuf, Agbonna, Tekayinfa & Saliu, 2011).

5. Sustaining our democratic process

Yusuf (2008) noted that citizenship education has become an increasingly important means (tool) 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. Citizenship education is said to provide knowledge of common historical experience of imperialism, colonialism and nationalist against alien forces (Zaria & Shamiji, 2005). By this, one is able to collate, analyse and interpret issues critically and utilize the historical benefits to proffer solution to similar emerging issues and the ones in the future. Moreover, knowledge about democracy is better understood through citizenship education, because it has a robust curriculum and co-curricular content that can equip the learner for life as far as democracy is concerned (Odogbor, 2015). Sustainable democracy in Nigeria is very much linked to citizenship education. Citizenship education specifies what every individual should do for the growth and development of the society.

Challenges of citizenship education as a tool for the inculcation of socio-cultural values

Some of the challenges of citizenship education as a tool in the inculcation of socio-cultural values are as follows:

1. Neglect by parents on proper family upbringing

The family is the foundation of societal values. The family may be broadly perceived as a unit of two or more persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, adoption or consensual unions. It is considered the basic unit of the society, to meet the needs of individuals and society. It decides and enhances the growth and development of individuals, that is; it is a major means of emotional affinity and social activity. That is the reason why a collapse on family's socio-cultural values automatically affects the society negatively. For example, children raised in broken family settings are at greater risk of engaging in criminal activity during adolescence and later in life, while a supportive family acts as a protective factor against such an outcome; widespread family breakdown is symptomatic, or even to a certain extent causal, of wider social breakdown, given its association with a wide range of social problems, whereas supportive families are the bedrock and foundation of a cohesive society. According to Orisa (2013), the factors responsible for collapse of family values are lack of proper family socialization, inadequate care and protection, divorce, lack of emotional support and lack of parental involvement in educational provision. It has been seen that socio-cultural values are drastically affected by

urban influence and subsequent assimilation of western ideas due to the effect of modernization. Traditional values have declined considerably.

2. **The quest for materialism**

All societies whether traditional or modern have evolved, learned and shared guidelines for behaviour by its members. These guidelines are so internalized that they become the behaviour pattern of the people. The quest for accumulation of wealth is responsible for the high rate of corruption and other social problems in Nigeria. Capitalism and flexible accumulation of wealth has influenced the age-long contentment for wealth. People acquire wealth enough for their lifetime, their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. The get-rich-quick syndrome has further been entrenched into the social system by the quest for titles. The more titles you have, the more you command respect in society. Chieftaincy titles, religious titles and even academic titles show one's class (Nwauzor, 2014). The dignity of labour, hard work, chastity, respect for human life, etc has been altered over time. Ifeanacho (2010) observes that "materialism has severely affected the value system which date back to traditional Nigerian society. Labour was not paid but reciprocated. The family provided social welfare for all members." Sadly, Nigeria does not manufacture cars but the most expensive and flashy cars are owned by Nigerians. This class of people place order from foreign nations for everything they need. They hold their weddings in five-star hotels and go for honeymoon abroad. The social structure of the Nigerian society is negatively impacted upon. So, this gives the people who have not acquired and internalized these socio-cultural values to think of negative and unapproved means of earnings in order to live ostentatious lifestyle.

3. **Ineffective governance in the country**

Nigeria has experienced and is still experiencing its share of socio-cultural value laxity and social vices especially as depicted in political instability, corruption in high and low places, drug trafficking, smuggling, advanced fee fraud popularly called 419, increasing crime wave, theft, robbery, religious and ethnic violence, unemployment, injustice, poverty, among others. Therefore, meaningful development has been halted and the nation is in the throes of disintegration. In every society such as Nigeria, the followers always look on to their leaders to provide certain services to them. Hence, there is a correlation between leadership and service delivery. According to Agboso and Duke (2012), the primary responsibility of the leader is to deliver services considered to be crucial to the citizenry. In Nigeria, the ability of the government to legitimately tax and govern people is premised on its capacity to deliver range of services required by its population which no other player will provide (Adamolekun, 2002). Thus, poor leadership is, therefore, responsible for poor service delivery to Nigerians.

4. **Poor educational system**

In the educational sector, things have fallen apart. Educational institutions which are supposed to be the bedrock of moral instructions have been hit by this cancer caused by poor funding. The rapacity of strikes and industrial actions in our institutions is stupendous. This culminates in half-baked students with little or nothing to show at the end of the day. This accounts for the high incidence of cultism in our tertiary institutions. For Obasola (2015), when the issue of Nigerian educational system today is raised, the first sets of thoughts that come to mind are: decline in standard, deterioration of facilities, examination malpractices, mass promotion syndrome and the like, before any other thing else (Odia & Omofonwan, 2007).

Strategies to tackle challenges that weaken citizenship education

A critical concept that is advanced by the citizens of a country is nation building. Therefore, for Nigeria to experience growth and development, her citizens must be ready to adopt the tool of citizenship education to inculcate socio-cultural values that are the foundation of every great nation. So, to get this in the right perspective, the family which is the unit of the society should be given adequate attention by those responsible for its upkeep. Family's socio-cultural values must be respected and enhanced by every member of the family. Thus, by this singular gesture nation building begins from that micro level of the family. Since it is from the family that the child learns social habits and socio-cultural values which are acceptable by the society, the family should continue to act as the custodian of socio-cultural values, traditional and religious values by keeping the beliefs and customs of the ancestors and passing them to the children (Maduike & Njoku, 2013).

In another development, the society must learn how to avoid celebrating negative values. This starts from appreciating good or positive values like honesty, truthfulness, fairness, justice, love, respect and hard work. Nigerians who have distinguished themselves in their endeavours should always be rewarded by the Nigerian government. Politicization of the National award should be stopped. The quest for get rich quick syndrome is a manifestation of weak value system by citizens. This has led many into social vices that have brought the image of this country to disrepute. It is worthy to state that for any meaningful development to take place in the society, the citizens must imbibe socio-cultural values that are transmitted through citizenship education. A life of moderation and absence of deceit must be embraced by the Nigerian citizens. Discouraging the spirit of get-rich-quick syndrome among the people is one of the ways of promoting the teaching of socio-cultural values to children (Maduike & Njoku, 2013).

Effective leadership is an essential ingredient for promoting socio-cultural values in the society. Leadership by example is a panacea for nation building. Consequently, leaders at different levels of position of authority must be seen as role models in character and value appreciation. Leadership must be honest, transparent, and accountable to all. The educational system of a country defines the extent of nation building. This is because it involves the inculcation of socio-cultural values that transform the individuals who now contribute to the development of the society.

Conclusion

Suffice it to state that Nigeria is seriously in need of citizens who are ready to sacrifice and give the best for the development of the country. However, this cannot be made manifest if the people are bankrupt of socio-cultural values. These are the value system that drives every nation. It is a reality that the challenges such as leadership crises, corruption, insecurity, ethnicity, and weak followership etc that Nigeria is confronted with is as a result of the absence or lack of these socio-cultural values. Therefore, to build a nation like Nigeria all hands must be on deck to actualize the dream of the founding fathers. It is expedient to mention that these values (honesty, integrity, fairness, loyalty, patriotism and respect) are essential ingredients for nation building. All the institutions saddled with this responsibility must ensure that citizens are reoriented on socio-cultural values through the instrumentality of citizenship education, and then Nigeria will be a prosperous and happy nation.

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