
CIVIC EDUCATION AND THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL VALUES IN SECONDARY SCHOOL

YUSUF, Taofik Olalekan

Department of Social Studies

Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo, Oyo State

&

ADIKA, Christianah Adedoyin

Bashorun Ogunmola High School,

Ring-Road, Ibadan, Oyo State

Abstract

Obviously, Nigeria is faced with a lot of challenges, which include economic, social, political, cultural; with their dire consequences. These challenges are as a result of negative attitudes towards social and cultural values of the populace, especially the young ones. Thus, this paper examines the potency of civic education in promoting social cultural values in learners in secondary schools. It also examines the concept of social values, goals of civic education and instructional techniques appropriate in imparting civic duties and values and dispositions in students. It, therefore, recommends that traditional rote-learning should be discarded in teaching and replaced with trainee-centred mode of instruction, while establishment of Civic Education Centres should be encouraged to educate the young ones towards their civic rights and responsibilities.

Introduction

Youths, of any nation, like Nigeria are seen as a pivot of any meaningful development effort, but it is disheartening to note that the nation is presently grappling with a lot of untold challenges which impinge on her developmental policies and programmes. Such

challenges of economic, political, social, cultural bastardisation, just to mention a few, are perpetrated by Nigerian youths, either singly or in group for personal intentions or politically motivated by some politicians. These social vices are committed by the youths because of their negative disposition to socio-cultural values.

Social-cultural values, civility and civic virtues have faded away among the learners and as such, they imbibe and exhibit all forms of immorality with impunity, with its resultant effects on the Nigerian society at large. It is absurd, these days, to see individuals doing things at variance with laid-down norms and mores. Thus, the behavioural disposition of students in schools today is contrary to the desired values expected of responsible citizens in the nearest future.

In the words of Falade and Adelekan (2010), the rate of cultism indecent dressing, examination misconduct and moral decadence among the young ones are on the increase. Civic values and traits are not being displayed by the majority of Nigerian students and this is probably why youths (students) in the country today are violent and restless. It is against this background that the paper examines and discusses the concept of civic education, social values and its examples and instructional modes in handling civic education in the promotion of social and cultural values among secondary school students.

Conceptual Clarification

Some concepts were explained to enhance proper understanding of the subject matter. Such terms include civic education and socio-cultural values:

Civic Education

Civic education is the education that is concerned with the study of rights and duties of the citizen in a country. It aims at building an informed, responsible and morally-law abiding citizen as well as inculcating in the people a sense of commitment to the fundamental values and principles. Oyesiku (2010) sees civic education as a school subject which prepares people (students inclusive) of a country for their roles as citizens.

In the view of Okwenu and Anyacho (2005), civic education is a type of education that individuals in the state receive for the positive development of ideas, beliefs, habits and attitudes cherished by the society to enable them live as useful and effective members of the society. It equips the individuals with the knowledge, understanding and skills to play active roles in the society and enable informed citizens who are morally and socially responsible.

Corroborating this definition, Giddens and Sutton (2010) see civic education as the process of inculcating the basic ethics, ethos and mores into the learners to be good citizens that will exercise their rights and duties and respect others. In essence, civic education is a life-shaping form of education which aims at preparing and inculcating in individuals societal values and norms to be responsible citizens in the society.

Social Cultural Values

Marshall (1998) avers that society requires some degree of homogeneity and consistency in the values held by people, providing a common fund of shared values which shape social and political consensus. Social and cultural values are generalized standards and principles of what the individuals in a society consider good or desirable. They are products of the cultural life and so, are learnt like any other cultural trait. Social values are good manners and civilized behavior. It extends from self control to mediation and consolation. A society that is peaceful and caring will have members who pay attention to the feelings and thoughts of other members within the group.

Social and cultural values form an important part of the culture of the society. Values account for the stability of social order. Values are the criteria people use in assessing their daily lives, arrange their priorities and choose between alternative course of action. Values, such as fundamental rights, patriotism, respect for human dignity, rationality, sacrifice equality, democracy etc, guide one's behavior in many ways. In simple terms, social values are described as measures of goodness or desirability.

However, it saddens one's heart to hear and read in pages of newspapers that these leaders of tomorrow engage in all forms of

social evils in and around school settings and even engage one another in confrontations, fighting and bullying and parading dangerous weapons and charms to inflict injuries on their peers, destroying school properties and public utilities in towns and cities. Thus, it is pertinent to examine and discuss the probable mode of instruction suitable for the teaching of civic education to foster the desired social values in learners and become responsible persons in the nearest future.

Goals of Civic Education

The goals of civic education in Nigeria have their roots in the general philosophy of education of the country and the national educational goals, such as, the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity, inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes, training of the mind in the understanding of the world around and the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social ability for the development of the society, NPE, 2014 (Revised edition).

In specific terms, the goals of Civic Education according to NERDC 2007 in Nigeria include:

- i. To acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes that will prepare the young people to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives;
- ii. To create an awareness of the provision of Nigerian constitution and the need for democracy;
- iii. To create adequate and functional political literates among Nigerians;
- iv. To sensitize Nigerians to the functions and obligations of government;
- v. To inculcate in the child the spirit of self-discipline, hardwork, cooperation and respect for authority; and
- vi. To attain the Millennium development Goals (MDGs) and the need to implement critical elements of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS).

Civic Education and Promotion of Social Values

The Centre for Civic Education (1991) identified the elements of civic education to include civic knowledge, civic skills and civic disposition. Civic knowledge radiates on what the citizens are meant to know, such as, knowledge about patriotism, nationalism and one's voting rights, to mention a few. Civic skills are those skills that are adaptive to the needs of the people and the nation at large. Hence, civic education if properly imparted into the young ones from the elementary level to higher levels of educational institutions will arouse individuals' interest, capable of rebranding the image of the country.

However, in ensuring that civic education promotes social values among students in secondary schools, the mode of instruction needs to be changed from the traditional talk-and- chalk teacher-centred to student-oriented activities and technique of teaching, while evaluation strategies in civic education or learning should not focus solely on the cognitive domain of the learners.

Civic disposition is practically oriented, hence its teaching should involve the problem-solving technique. Problem-solving method of teaching, according to Oladiti and Ayoade (2009), involves the teacher giving a puzzle, challenge or problematic situation to learners in which the students are expected to proffer solutions to such, while the teacher only guides the learners in their efforts to solve the problem. In the civic education class, the teacher can ask such questions as why are judges in Nigeria corrupt, and what punishment should be given to them? Their responses are then collectively looked at by the teacher and learners. These responses of the students, guided by the teacher, could be a starting point for people to live a decent and respectful way of life, worthy of emulation.

Also, civic education can be properly taught to correct social malaise through simulation. This instructional mode involves the learners to prepare and present themselves for future responsibilities in the family, society and for recreation. A civic educator can ask the learners to pretend to be in certain situations or events and imitate some personalities emphasized in the lesson. For example, they can play the role of a cab operator, Muibi Shonubi, who returned

a huge sum of money forgotten in his taxi in the late 1970's, the spirit of patriotism displayed by former President Goodluck Jonathan who conceded defeat to the incumbent present in 2015 general election in Nigeria.

Similarly, civic skills, values and disposition can be thoroughly imparted in class discussion with discussion method as well. Ajiboye, Adu & Amosun (2005) stressed that the discussion method of teaching is student-centred and it is based on the philosophy that knowledge arises within the person and not from any external source. Discussion can be employed in problem solving, developing and changing attitudes, value clarification, development of communication skills and building sensitivity to other people's points. For instance, the issues of students' protest and riots, examination misconducts, cultism and their associated consequences could be discussed in the classroom. The point in using this strategy is to discourage the learners from taking law into their hands in expressing grievances against the school and government decisions, policies or actions. It also disabuses their minds from acquiring wealth or material things by hook or crook.

The Inquiry method of imparting knowledge is of good importance in teaching civic education. The method aims at conducting quests and searches into problems. While the students are investigating, the teacher should help them clarify the problems and order their thinking so as to arrive at logical conclusions. The aim of this mode of instruction is that learners see themselves as active and knowledgeable beings in the advancement of knowledge rather than the passive and retentive roles performed in the traditional classroom environment.

Another robust approach to promote social values among students in schools is value-clarification. This is designed to engage students and teachers in the active formulation and examination of values. Rather than presenting the learners with an already-made position, they are assisted by the teacher to re-examine their long-held value vis-à-vis new evidence. The teacher could pose a moral dilemma situation, subject or topic to explore values inherent in it, for instance, videos of pipelines vandalization, newspaper clips of commercial sex workers or deportees from other nations and

film strips of Nigerians in diaspora making meaningful impact on their father's land. This is a pointer to value-clarification.

To effectively use the value-clarification method, the following points should be taken into consideration.

- i. Participants have the right to “pass” on any activity or part of any activity;
- ii. It is satisfactory to disagree with someone but not to judge or put them down;
- iii. The teacher should be very attentive when one or two students express an unpopular or minority position and support their willingness to stand up for their values;
- iv. If a particular value position is not expressed, it is the teacher's role to present that position convincingly for the group;
- v. When expressing your own position (i.e. the teacher's position) on any value or question, make it clear that it is your personal value and not necessarily the “right” point of view.

(Adapted from CROSSROADS: A Teachers Guide to Activities in Family Life Education).

Concluding Remarks

It is evident that unfolding events in the country years back indicate that Nigeria is fast losing its recognition within and outside her shores, as a result of unprecedented corrupt practices, indecent dressing, drug trafficking, disrespect to rule of law and elders and all forms of social and cultural vices. There is a need for urgent and proactive action to address these ugly occurrences, especially through education which is considered an instrument for national and individual development. Thus, among the school subjects that are specifically designed to reintegrate and re-orientate individuals is civic education.

Thus, civic education is seen as a potent school subject capable of producing responsible citizens/students who will be conscious of the need for moral uprightness as an important element of societal and national development. However, to do this effectively in Nigerian schools, it is recommended that: the mode of instruction should be

shifted from rote-learning and trainer-centred to activity-oriented with trainee at the centre of the classroom activities and teaching. Civic education in classroom should emphasize practical or students' discovering facts on their own, rather than providing them all the facts.

Through civic education, national mores, ethics and standards could be set, enshrined into the country's constitution and complied with for the purpose of public obedience as obtained in America and Canada; while non-compliance should attract stiff and strict condemnation and punishment.

In the same vein, experts from the field of social studies and other allied disciplines should be allowed and motivated to write and produce quality civic education curriculum material which should also be reviewed constantly as situations and conditions in the country demand with the changing global factors. Social studies specialists need to be trained within and outside Nigeria to acquire more knowledge, skills and disposition towards civic education teaching.

Also, establishment of Civic Education Centres could go a long way in educating the young ones towards their civic rights and responsibilities, through participation in civic talks, seminars and conferences on regular basis. These will impart in their spirit of oneness, tolerance, accountability and responsiveness to societal issues or needs.

Lastly, since civic education is to promote responsible, ethical and community-minded individuals, then, how does one determine or assess these attributes? Evaluation of civic values, skills and disposition should be done mainly not on cognitive abilities/capabilities of learners but mainly on the affective. So, in assessing civic disposition in the classroom, teachers should adopt practical ways of doing this to ascertain how far learners have learnt and are capable of exhibiting such civic values. If all these are taken seriously and strictly adhered to, the plethora of social vices being experienced in Nigeria will be eradicated.

References

- Ajiboye, J. O., Adu, E. O. & Amosun, P.A. (2005). *Introduction to social studies. A basic text for tertiary institution students*. Ibadan: Educational Research & Study Group.
- Centre for Civic Education (1991). National council for civic and government. Calabasas, CA: Centre for Civic Education.
- Crossroads (2010). *A teacher's guide to activities in family life education*. Washington D.C: The Centre for Development and Population Activities.
- Falade, D.A. & Adelekan, A. T. (2010). Informal civic education programme for the Nigerian youth and national stability. In Babatolu, J.S. Ikuejube G. (eds). *Trends in African Development, Ondo*. pg. 48-61
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014). *National policy on education (NPE)*. Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information
- Giddens, A. & Sutton, P. (2010). *Sociology* New Delhi: Wiley and Sons Incorporated.
- Marshall, G. (1998). *Value-judgement. A dictionary of sociology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (2007). *The 9 year-basic education curriculum. Civic education for junior secondary schools*. Abuja: NERDC Press.
- Okwenu, O. & Anyacho, E. O. (2005). Effective citizenship education for moral regeneration in Nigeria. *Zaria Journal of Educational Studies (ZJES)*, 11(3), 102-105.
- Oladiti, A. A. & Ayode, W. E. (2009). *Social studies methods: An introductory text*. Ibadan: Isegun Publishing Company.
- Oyesiku, J.O. (2010). *Citizenship education for tertiary institution*. Oyo; Odumat Press.
- Schaffer, R. I. (2008). *Sociology: A brief introduction*. 7th edition. Germany: McGraw Hill.