



## ABSTRACT

*This paper examines citizenship education in Nigeria problems and the way forward and the importance of citizenship Education in Nigeria. It examines the critical issues and problems that need to be resolved in order to achieve a comprehensive and functional citizenship education in our tertiary institutions. The*

# THE PLACE OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN ACHIEVING NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND COHESION IN NIGERIA.

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## INTRODUCTION

Citizenship education can be defined as educating youth or citizens or nations to have clear thinking and enlightened citizens who participate in decisions concerning society. Society is here understood in the special sense of a nation with circumscribed territory which is recognized as a state. To be good citizens, people should study and learn some key concept. First, they should understand why citizenship is so important to making our democracies work. Then, they need to understand the goals of citizenship and the importance of meeting those goals through hard work and dedication, by knowing and applying all these goals. Many civil skills are involved in working for a sustainable future. These include: A willingness to investigate issues in the local, social and wider community. A readiness to recognize social, economic, ecological and political dimensions of issues needed to resolve them. Developing these skills is the realm of citizenship education. Indeed,



*role of citizenship education as a vehicle for national transformation has been highlighted. The paper also resolved that laxity on the part of the nation's education managers at all levels of government has affected the teaching of citizenship education which has contributed to the rise in social vices in the society. It is recommended that government at all levels should give priority to the teaching and development of citizenship education in order to make Nigeria a better place for all of its inhabitants.*

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active democratic citizenship is one of the defining features of a sustainable society.

The form and content of the concept of citizenship particularly varies with respect, the question about the extent to which norms that are at issue for a democratic manner of living must be adopted by individual citizens. (Westheimer & Kahne 2004), for example, distinguish the personally responsible citizen, and the social-justice citizens. (Bassel 2006). All human beings are both individuals and citizens of the society to which they belong. Therefore, human rights and citizens' rights are interdependent. Men, women and children all over the world as individual human being. We are equal in right and dignity, to all other human being, when citizenship education has the purpose of educating future citizens, it must necessarily address children, young people and adults, who are living beings, having the status of human being endowed with conscience and reason. It cannot, therefore, exclude consideration of individuals as subjects, each with individual characteristics. Moreover, human right include civil and political right, the latter obviously relating to the rights and obligations of citizens. Thus, a comprehensive human right education takes account of citizenship, and considers that good citizenship is connected with human rights as a whole (Gimba 2014).

## **THE CONCEPT OF CITIZENSHIP**

In their review of contemporary discourse on citizenship Knight, Abowitz & Harnish (2006) have convincingly argued that in western democracies



multiple sets of meanings of citizenship occur in relation to varying discourse: from civic republic and liberal discourses (e.g feminist, values queer). Accordingly, citizenship is considered as essentially contested concept (Van Gunsten, 1998). Nevertheless, Enslin (2000), cited in Knight and Harnish (2006) provides penalized definition by stating that citizenship in a democracy Societies gives membership status to individuals within a political unit; confers an identity on individuals ; constitutes a set of values usually interpreted as a commitment to the common good of a particular political unit: It involves practicing a degree of participation in the process of political life: and entails actualization of an understanding of laws ,documents structures, and processes of governance and the use of this knowledge .Depending upon the particular discourse , thus, the concept of citizenship is given specific form and content. The form and content of the concept of citizenship particularly varies with respect to the question about the extent to which norms that are at issue for a democratic manner of living must be adopted by individual citizens, the participatory citizen, and the social –justice citizen.

The personally responsible citizen is one who acts responsible in the community, helps those in need, works, and pays his taxes. The participatory citizen is one who is actively involved in community organizations, helps organize community efforts to care for those in need, and knows how government agencies work. The social –justice citizen is one who critically assesses economic structures, knows about social movements, detect and addressees domains of injustice, and tries to be fair and promote equal opportunities.( Westheimer& Kahne 2005) actually plea for a conceptualization of citizenship that goes beyond nice consideration of others, helping of others, carting for each other , and so forth (Leendersand& Veugelers,2006) in a democratic and multiple form of society , citizens must be prepared to make their own critical contributions (Wardekker,2001) .Good citizenship thus implies that citizens are willing and able to critically evaluate different perspectives, explore strategies for change, and reflect upon issues of justice , equality /inequality , and democratic engagement (Westheimer,2008). A capacity to function in a



socially accepted and responsible manner within a community is nevertheless, according to Westheimer, also part of good citizenship

### **CIVIC LEARNING AND CITIZENSHIP**

To have a fulfilling education it's important to develop the skills, values, and knowledge for active and concern citizenship. Teaching students about citizenship requires learning that involves: interaction, relevance, participation and collaboration in the classroom, In order to educate their students, teachers should focus on lessons involving problem solving, leadership, communication, and persuasive writing. The key to educate students about informed citizenry rather than just instructing basic subjects, like Math's, English and Science.

### **EDUCATION MAKES INFORMED CITIZENS.**

Because education is so important to citizenry, some countries, like England, find that there should be a National Curriculum devoted to citizenship education .The basis for this curriculum is to train students to make decisions while assuming responsibility for their lives and communities. As a result of this teaching philosophy, civic learners are able to build self-confidence, develop their own voice and make positive contributions to the society. Employing a knowledge model, citizenship education is defined as the education of young learners for growth as informed citizens who participate in decisions about society. Students learn knowledge of their nation's institutions and rules of law as they apply to social and human relationship. Overall, citizenship education trains good citizens and requires them to exhibit ethical and moral characteristics.

### **OBJECTIVES OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN TERTIARY INSTITUTION**

Gerry.J and Una (2004) stresses some objectives of citizenship education in tertiary institution as follows. According to the authors citizenship education is one of the basic concept of social studies education in Nigeria schools and it holds a remarkable remark towards the effective



dissemination of the social studies content. Citizenship education as a concept of Social Studies has the following objectives.

- To transmit cultural values and ethics, patriotic attitudes and attributes that pose as necessities for societal growth and development to individual student.
- To develop an understanding of the nature and scope of educating for active citizenship.
- To provide examples of some school initiatives in active citizenship and to develop skills for planning across the curriculum learning experiences in citizenship education in schools
- To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient Students at all levels of learning.
- To encourage students to further the spirit of enquiring and creativity during and after their graduation.

If children and men become accustomed to discussing their differences in rational ways in the primary, secondary years, they are more likely to accept it as normal in their adolescence. Citizenship education gives the youth the knowledge of his immediate and remote environment and enables him to understand the international and external implications of the national and international system. It also makes him /her aware of the outside world and hostile forces which influence his life for the better or worse. Citizenship education will enable Nigerians to adjust, adopt and face the challenges of the times. It will explore his talents and attitudes and equip him to fit into and contribute his quota towards the peace and progress of society.

### **THE MEANING OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION**

The term “citizenship Education” has been conceptualized in different ways by different scholars across the globe. According to Osakwu (1993), citizenship education conveys to the learners the body of knowledge, set of values and behavioral orientation that are considered vital and necessary for the sustenance and well-being of the people. To Iyamu (1999), he views



that citizenship education is the conscious effort to inculcate in the youth, a set of values and attitude contingent on the need and problems of the society. It is a set of practices and activities aimed at making young people and adult better equipped to participate actively in democratic life by assuming and exercising their rights and responsibilities in the society. Citizenship education otherwise called civic education encourages 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. Citizenship education programmes often promote active citizenship as a way of building social capital and social solidarity and thereby providing the grounds by which divisions especially within plural societies can be healed. The scope of citizenship education encompasses citizenship, civics, social society's social studies, life skills and moral education. It also incorporates curriculum subjects and options like history, geography, economics, law politics, environmental studies, values education, religious studies, languages, human rights and sciences.

Citizenship education is very topical in many countries; thus its importance to the growth and development of any nation cannot be overemphasized. It essentially focuses on the preparation of young people for the challenges and uncertainties of life in a rapidly changing world. The aims of citizenship education are formulated in a variety of ways from one country to another, in accordance with the national context, traditions and cultural background. The precise aim also varies from one level of education to the next. Some of the specific roles of citizenship education include:

- (i) Understanding of the distinctive nature of human society, the state and its institutions.
- (ii) The ability to approach public issues critically, rationally and democratically.
- (iii) An informed involvement in public affairs;
- (iv) Respect for human rights and democratic ideas and principles;
- (v) Commitment to freedom, equality and social justice;
- (vi) The ability to work through conflicts and contradictions that can arise among citizens;
- (vii) Civility and tolerance for dissension and disagreement;



- (viii) Willingness to balance the pursuit of private interest with concern for the public good;
- (ix) Balancing regional and cultural diversity with national unity;
- (x) Eliminating inequalities relating to race, gender, age, class and ethnicity.
- (xi) Ensuring the successful functioning of the economy.

Vandima (1999) argues that citizenship education provides the people with essentials civil facts and such fundamental civil principles are as follows:

- Pity and respect for parents
- Civil honesty, loyalty and pride
- Respect for human rights
- Social solidarity and the common good of society.
- The maintenance of public orders and peace
- Respect for constituted authority
- Civil responsibility and public spirit tenderness.

### **PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN NIGERIA.**

Gerry and Una (2008) cited in Okogun and Umudjere (2015) Posited that Nigeria is a pluralistic society in which different ethics, values, norms and ideologies are allowed to exist in teaching desirable values and attitudes in citizenship education. This poses as a problem facing the dissemination and comprehension of citizenship education in schools. The diverse nature of Nigeria religions and culture provided by the country's constitution elicit a variety of diverse views geared towards the comprehension of the individual students which pose as a constraint in the effective teaching of citizenship education.

They further stressed that the nature of parental background also affects the teaching of citizenship education as some parental neglect or grave sufferings, they experienced from the government of the past like in the case of the Biafra civil war, thus antagonizing their beliefs and views of the Nigerian state. It posits continuation of problems. Yar- Ali (1998) posits that the view that it does not require a research understanding to say that citizenship education is today facing crisis which may be deeper and more



functional than three decades ago. Not only is the project grossly underfunded, poorly staffed, lacking educational infrastructure, but the curriculum itself has failed to live to its expectations as there are thousands of secondary and tertiary institutions leavers who are misfit, because they cannot justify their years of studies. Some secondary schools and Departments of General Studies in tertiary institution have only become glorified institutions by modern standards, but they have become potential institutions for breeding deviants or citizens with positive attitudes to life and value system of the society. This situation requires the teaching of citizenship education to examine its content to enable Nigerian youth build a viable and ensuring nation.

Citizenship education therefore needs to address very strongly the following areas:

1. Human rights and human right abuses.
2. Political stability and democratic government.
3. National Unity.
4. Religious and political tolerance.
5. Indiscipline.
6. Dishonesty.

These social problems include cultism, rising cost of living, conflicts among neighboring communities, confrontation between aggrieved citizens and law enforcement agents materialism, corruption, examination malpractices. If the emerging social problems are left unresolved, they may undermined our national efforts towards building “a free democratic society” a just and egalitaration society” a united strong and self-reliant nation” “a great and dynamic economy” and a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

It is not only a policy problems, it is indicated in serious terms that we have yet fully liberated ourselves from the legacies of colonial education. Thus we are not prepared to face the challenges of indigenous development strategies. Lastly, there is the problem, of lack of attending seminars and conferences by teachers. There is no doubt that, on the issues of workshop,





seminars, and conferences, bodies like. (NERDC) national education Research and development center. (CESAC) Comparative Education studies and Adoption Centre, social studies Teachers Association of Nigeria (SOSTAN) Federal ministry of education and state ministries of education have tried. However, the fact that Nigeria is a vast country with considerable number of primary schools, secondary and tertiary institutions it could not be adequately covered. Measures whereby whatever a child is taught in schools is modified by his or her parents at home, the parents change such concepts to favour their own initial motives and beliefs. This act poses as a challenge to the effective teaching of citizenship education in schools. Furthermore the authors concluded by saying that the following also pose as a challenge facing citizenship education in schools.

- The incessant syllables change.
- The lime challenge.
- The turn-over challenge
- The cross-circular challenge
- The community challenge.

### **WHY STUDY CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION**

Sarah (2013) postulated that in order to inspire social action from these young people we must first all educate them on how the country works. In this increasing political world in which we live the importance of children understanding things such as the rule of high court maintaining a democracy is vital for a society to move forward. Citizenship studies aids teenagers to better understanding what is going on in the world around them, and thus assist in developing minds that can make their own opinions and be able to argue them effectively. It also supports young people in developing the skills to tackle difficult situation open-minded and intelligently through debate surrounding real life events and political happenings.

### **NATIONAL INTEGRATION**

National integration is the awareness of a common identity amongst the citizen of a country. It means that though we belong to different caste,



religions and regions and speak different languages we recognize the fact that we are all one. This kind of integration is very important in the building of a strong and prosperous nation. For the progress and development of Nigeria, National integrity is paramount. Nigeria is a nation filled with diverse cultures and religions however, we all have to see ourselves as just one. National integration is essential for any national with social-cultural, religions linguistics and geographical diversity. And for a country like ours, it is still more necessary. As we know, Nigeria is a very large country. We are the most populous black nation on the continent. A unique feature of our country is that the major religious on the world are practiced here such as which include Christianity and Islam. There are more than three hundred languages that people of Nigeria speak. There are also great varieties in costume, food habits, and social customs. Geographically, our land is diverse and there are amazing differences in climate. (Ndubuisi 2010) .The author further argued that despite all these differences Nigeria is one political entity. We have to co-exist with each other peacefully, respect the culture and religion of our fellow Nigerians. This is possible only when national integration is realized in true sense of the term.

#### **NEED FOR NATIONAL INTEGRATION**

- To keep our freedom secure.
- To make the nation solid and united.
- To break the walls of provincialism.
- To avoid internal strife.
- To face foreign aggression.

#### **IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION**

The term national integration has two words nation and integration. A nation is a country with a unified socio-economic and political structure it denotes a body of people who have a feeling of oneness, built on the basis of common history, society, culture and values. This feeling of oneness bind people together in a nation. In general term, it is this feeling which is known as national integration. National integration is the awareness of a common



identity amongst the citizens of a country. It means that though the individuals belong to different communities, caste, religions, cultures and religions and speak different languages all of them recognize the fact that they are one. This integration is very important in building of a strong and prosperous nation. (Ndubuisi 2010)

### **ROLE OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN ACHIEVING NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND COHESION.**

The degree of integration in general and among individuals and groups vary and are affected by historical, religious, economic, and political factors above all, the level of social awareness or consciousness and socialization processes.( Ndubuisi 2010), posits that many Nigerians are ignorant about the consequences of their action.. Self-interest has led to the failure of many government all economic and social establishments. All other industries are ruined through embezzlement by officials in collaboration with few private individuals social services of water, electricity and communication and health are made inefficient in the same way. He further stated that the contract and “contract culture” which followed oil ‘boom’ and “doom” has given the average Nigerian the false sense of wealth acquisition by what may be described as legalized robbery of the masses by government officials and few private individuals. Thus, despite the colossal amount we have realized from the exploitation of oil and which are supposedly invested in industries, building of roads, telecommunication systems agriculture, we have still become one of the “beggars” nation depending on international loans for development. Huge amounts of money have been invested in our so-called “power sector” roads all in vain. The trafficking of currencies by well-placed officials and protected individuals have led to the persistent difficulties of the balance of payment in the country. Yet, we have witnessed the situation where individuals imported “mud” and “sand dusts” in pretense of importing “raw materials” for industrial consumption or fertilizer, thereby stocking wealth in foreign banks. The problems of youth restiveness and the Niger Delta crises the Boko Haram insurgent, kidnapping, cattle rustlers are still issues of great concern for the nation.