

Civic Education as a Tool for Nation
Building in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examines the need for civic education in Nigeria, and discusses civic education as a tool for nation building. The paper also highlights the factors that impede effective nation building in Nigeria, as well as the need for civic training as a means of achieving national integration and nation building in Nigeria. The methods and materials that could be used to teach some identified civic education concepts within and outside the formal school system such as the use of collaborative and participatory approaches in the teaching of civic concepts in Nigerian schools, and the needs to create formal and non-formal civic and leadership training forum are some of the suggestions raised in the paper.

Introduction

In this 21st century one of the important goals of governments and non-governmental agencies (NGO) in developing countries is nation building. This is to create a society where there is unity, tolerance, honesty, respect for human dignity and patriotism. To do this, there is the need to inculcate in the citizens those values and traits of effective citizenship. Civic education is commonly employed for nation building. It is difficult to build a nation when the nation builders (the citizens) are not manifesting the traits of good citizenship.

Education is increasingly being seen as an important factor in nation building (Nnamani, 2001). Education is a veritable tool for citizenship training. Education should aim at preparing the young for a mature life, ruled by reasons. Hence subjects in the school should concentrate on truth and justice. This helps to build in the child, right from an early age, dedication and responsible attitude towards work (Omotseye, 1999). Therefore, to produce good citizens there is the need for the educational system to lay emphasis on civic training (Ogundare, 2000).

In the light of this, the national objectives which serve as the foundation for the objectives of the Nigerian National Policy on Education are: (i) To build a free and democratic society; (ii) To build a just and egalitarian society; (iii) To build a united and self-reliant nation; (iv) To build a great and dynamic economy; (v) To build a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

Commenting on the national objectives, Erezewe (1999) pointed out that to achieve the first objective (i.e. to build a free and democratic society) will require a training on democratic etiquettes, respect for others. Also to attain a just and egalitarian society, the training of the citizens should make them to realise that all are equal irrespective of language, culture or locality of origin. Generally these objective, from where our national philosophy for education and other aspects of life are a derived, clearly aim at making the individual a good and effective citizen of the country.

The creation of a civil society is a great task that requires effective civic training. Falade (2001) observed that, to a large extent, lack of the required citizenship traits in the life of the Nigerian citizens has directly or indirectly been responsible for some to think of distintegration, disunity and conflicts in the country. Nation building is not just a form of item that can be borrowed or bought. No form of nation building is known to have come about without the contribution of the citizens of that nation (Mbamalu, 2001).

Contemporary events and problems in Nigeria and other parts of the world call for nation building so as to create a civil society where there is unity. This can be accomplished by preparing the younger generation for effective citizenship through our school programmes. The objective of this paper is to address the need for

civic education as a means of promoting nation building in Nigeria. The paper also intends to highlight the informal approaches that could be used to teach civic education concepts in the 9-years Basic Education Curriculum.

The Challenge of Nation Building in Nigeria

The term Nation Building has been interpreted in various ways. In this paper, nation building is seen as all efforts made towards national integration, cohesion and national unity. According to Akorede (1997), nation building involves the arduous task of bringing together into a harmonious political unit the diverse sub nations within that political unit. Nation building is a process of integrating diverse autonomous political entities within a state. It is a process whereby the various political entities transfer their loyalty and commitment from tribal or village community group to the larger nation unit (Ajayi, 1995).

Nigeria as a nation emerged from diverse socio-cultural entities. In 1914, the varied societies north and south of the latitude of Lokoja were declared by the British government to be members of a single state called Nigeria. Since then, various efforts have been undertaken to integrate the diverse political entities to ensure national cohesion and unity. Some of the efforts that have been made towards nation building in Nigeria are: the use of the national symbols; the organization of National Sports Festival; the teaching of the three major languages in schools; the introduction of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC); and the Policy of Federal Character.

Nigeria as it is today, cannot be said to have had a satisfactory nation building process. This is evident by the ethnic polarization, tension and hostility in the country. Many Nigerians are loyal to their ethnic groups at the expense of the good of the nation. Klineberg and Zavalloni cited in Okam, (2001) revealed that in Nigeria there prevails a low level of national identity amongst many of her inhabitants including students. In the comparative study conducted by Klineberg and Zavalloni amongst students in African countries, they discovered that ethnic identity is higher, rather than national identity amongst Nigerian students than other students (Okam, 2001). The recent emergence of ethnic militias like Oodua Peoples

Congress (OPC), the Arewa Peoples Congress (APC), the Egbesu Boys and the militants in the Niger Delta further reveals the problem of nation building in Nigeria. Ajayi (1995) pointed out that a nation cannot be said to have experienced a satisfactory process of nation building if it cannot command the loyalty of its citizen from the entire smaller unit. Other problems of nation building in Nigeria include leadership, low level of civic responsibility and political apathy. Eregha, Ewhro and Isitoah (2001) argued that political apathy is a consequent of bad leadership, abuse of human rights, domination of government by few despots, that assumed power by coups or rigged elections and rule the state in their own interest. This in turn leads to economic backwardness, poverty, mass illiteracy, intimidation, assassination, tension and conflict. Certainly, the greatest danger from which Nigeria suffers at the present time is the absence of any vivid sense of citizenship on the part of a large proportion of her inhabitants. The average Nigerian does not have that instinctive sense of social cohesion, which prevails in certain nation-states of the world such as England, France, and Germany (Okam, 2001).

Moreover, not much emphasis is placed on the teaching of civic values in the Nigeria schools. Instead of producing thinking and objective human beings, the educational system produces many fearful and uncritical citizenry that are also selfish and indifferent to public affairs (Bello Imam and Obadan, 2004). This calls for a critical examination of the school curriculum.

The Need for Civic Training in Nigeria

Civic refers to the citizen or people living in a place. Citizenship does not only mean membership of a given state, but it also connotes that such a citizen or member is vested with some rights and duties. Two categories of citizens can be found in every society: The bad and the good citizen (Falade,2008). McLendon (1982) cited in Ogundare (2000) explained that a good citizen is a person who does not just vote but considers that action as a serious matter and casts his ballot thoughtfully: who does not abuse the freedoms he has, nor interferes with the rights of others. A good citizen is law abiding, loyal to the nation, he participates and contributes positively to the progress of the political system.

The building of a civil society requires effective civic training. Civic training is a programme that teaches about the political system. It lays emphasis on the rights, duties and obligations of every member of a political system. The purpose of civic training is to develop in the learner those values and skills that will make them responsible citizens. Civic education aims at developing in the citizens the spirit of effective citizenship and loyalty to the nation.

The present state of our nation calls for conscious and concerted effort towards the cultivation of a civil society. The increasing level of lawlessness and undemocratic practices constitute serious setback to the attainment and sustainability of democratic culture in Nigeria. Some Nigerians have little or no concern for the civil society. There is neglect of civil duties by some of the citizens. Some Nigeria citizens demonstrates intolerance and disrespect to the rule of law. Akinjide (2006) reported a world bank finding that Nigeria scored less than 5% in a scale that determined the extent to which the citizen abide by the rule of law.

Public officers and political leaders in Nigeria are: be of corruption, disregard to public opinion, selfishness etc. Our police and other law enforcement agents practice extra-judicial killing, extortion, bribery and denial of human rights. There are some basic values of civic responsibilities that are not displayed among Nigerians. Some of these values are patriotism, obedience, tolerance, honesty, morality and discipline. Indiscipline and intolerance have caused a lot of socio-economic and religious problems in Nigeria. For instance, in 2004 it was reported that in the House of Senate Senator Isah Mohammed slapped senator Anisulowo for allegedly withdrawing ₦1.2 million from a committee's account without the consent of other members of the committee (The Guardian, 2004).

Mansaray and Adeyemi (2002) stated that global issues in the past few decades have brought into sharp focus the critical question of how to ensure a sustainable future for humankind. Prominent among these issues are the continuing denial of true democracy, violations of human rights and the rise of ethnic and religious conflict and violence. Ogundare (2000) pointed out that some specific citizenship responsibilities have been abandoned by Nigerian political leaders while the followers have also thrown most of their social

responsibilities to the swine. He further argued that the abandonment of the sacred citizenship responsibilities by our leader and the follower are responsible for the spate of economic and political ills in the nation.

Civic training has become fundamental machinery for nation building and the creation of a civil society in various parts of the world. There is the need to consciously and carefully develop in the citizens those values and skills that will enable them to have concern for public life. There is the need for the citizens to participate and contribute positively to the political process. According to Omotseye (1999)

... There are certain fundamental attitudes expected of all in society. These include truth, respect for persons and feeling of fraternity for others as persons ...

Every individual ought to imbibe right attitudes and beliefs.

So as to conform with societal norm (P. 68).

Means of Achieving Effective Civic Training

A successful process of nation building requires effective civic training. There is an urgent need for the development of good citizenship in Nigeria. This can be attained through the formal and non-formal civic education programme. The tables below show the methods and materials that can be used to teach some civic education concepts through formal and non-formal programme.

Table 1: Plausible Civic Education Programme for the Upper Basic Education (JSS 1)

Theme	Topic	Contents	Objectives	Method	Material	Evaluation Guide
Civic Education	Meaning and Importance of Civic education	i. Meaning of civic education ii. Importance of civic education	Students should be able to: 1. explain the meaning of civic education 2. Describe the importance of civic education	1. Inquiry method 2. Discussion method	1. Social studies/civic education text 2. Magazine 3. Internet 4. Dictionary	Students to: 1. Explain the meaning of civic education 2. Describe the importance of civic education.
Obedience	Meaning of obedience Rules and regulations	i. Meaning and reasons for obedience ii. Importance of rules and regulations.	Students should be able to: 1. explain the meaning of obedience. 2. Identify the reasons for obedience. 3. State the importance of rules and regulations	1. Discussion method 2. Informal method i.e. participatory civic club.	1. Magazine 2. Social Studies/ civic education text book 3. Constitution of the participatory civic club.	Students to: 1. Explain the reasons for obedience 2. List the importance of rules and regulations.
Tolerance	Meaning of Tolerance Aspects of tolerance	i. Meaning and importance of tolerance ii. Religious and political tolerance	Students should be able to: 1. explain the meaning of tolerance. 2. state the importance of tolerance. 3. describe how tolerance can be practical matters	1. Dramatization method 2. Role play method 3. Informal method i.e. participatory civic club	1. Customs 2. Constitution of the participatory civic club	Students to: 1. explain the meaning of tolerance. 2. identify the importance of tolerance. 3. describe how tolerance can be practiced in religious and political matters.
Patriotism	Meaning of patriotism Aspects	i. Meaning and reasons for patriotism	Students should be able to: 1. say what patriotism is 2. mention areas where	1. Inquiry method 2. Observation	1. Social studies/civic education.	Students to 1. give the meaning of patriotism.

Theme	Topic	Contents	Objectives	Method	Material	Evaluation Guide
Democracy	Features of a democratic government Examples of democratic governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Meaning of democracy ii. Features of a democratic government iii. Examples of democratic government 	<p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. give the meaning of democracy 2. state the features of democracy 3. mention some examples of democracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inquiry method 2. Discussion method 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Documentaries 2. Video clips 3. Pictures of electoral process 	<p>Student to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify the purpose of democracy 2. explain means of ensuring free and fair election 3. state the functions of INEC
Levels of government	Federal, State and local government Relationship between the three levels of government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Function of the Federal government ii. Functions of the state government iii. Function of the Local government 	<p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify the three levels of government 2. give the function of the Federal State and Local government 3. explain the relationship among them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Problem solving method 2. Discussion method 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Text books 2. Newspaper 3. Magazine 	<p>Students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. outline the levels of government 2. give the functions of each level of government 3. explain the relationship among the levels of government
Arms of Government	The executive arm of government The Legislative arm of government The Judiciary arm of government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Functions of the executive arm ii. Functions of the Legislative arm iii. Functions of the Judiciary arm 	<p>Students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. list the function of the executive 2. mention the functions of the legislative arm 3. explain the function of the judiciary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussion method 2. Observation method 3. Field trip to a court 4. Resources method 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pictures 2. Photographs 3. Resource method 	<p>Students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. list the function of the executive 2. mention the function of the legislative arm 3. state the functions of the judiciary

TABLE 2: Informal and Non-Formal Civic Education Programme

Topic	Contents	Method	Material
Devotion to Duty	Legitimate and illegitimate work Important of hard-work and devotion to duty	1. Mass media 2. Public lecture 3. Community resource centres	1. Pictures 2. Posters 3. notice boards 4. Radio and Television programme
Cooperation and conflict	Importance of cooperation to socio-political and economic development Causes of conflict peaceful resolution of conflict	1. Participatory youth organization 2. Adult education programme 3. Organized community self- help projects	1. Participants involvement in club activities 2. Radio and television programme 3. Learning materials and pictures 4. Community leaders
Tolerance	Aspects of tolerance Dangers of intolerance	1. Religious Organization 2. Public lecture 3. Mass media	1. Religious leaders 2. Community leaders 3. Posters 4. Pamphlets

Junior Secondary School Two (JSS2)

Theme	Topic	Contents	Objective	Method	Material	EvaluationGuide
Citizenship	Meaning of citizenship Citizenship acquisition	i. Meaning of citizenship ii. Means of becoming the citizens of Nigeria iii. Qualities of a good citizen	Student should be able to: 1. say the meaning of Citizenship 2. explain the means of becoming the citizen of Nigeria 3. state the qualities of a good citizens	1. Discussion method 2. Problem solving method 3. Video show	1. Social student civic education text book 2. Internet 3. Documentary 4. Video clips	Student to: 1. say the meaning of citizenship 2. explain the means of becoming the citizens of Nigeria 3. state the qualities of good citizens

Fundamental Human Rights	Types of human right Limitation to human right	i. Meaning and types of human right ii. Factors that can limit human right iii. Unlawful denial of human right iv. Means of protecting human right	Student should be able to: 1. outline the various types of human right 2. state the factors that limit human right 3. cite cases of human right abuse 4. explain the means of protecting human right	1. Resource method 2. Informal method i.e participatory civic club 3. Discussion method	1. Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 2. Constitution of the participatory civic club	Studentist to 1. outline the types of human right 2. state the factors that limit human right 3. cite cases of human right abuse 4. explain the means of protecting human right
Civic Responsibility	Types of civic responsibilities problems of non performance of civic responsibilities	i. Meaning and types of civic responsibilities Reason why citizens should perform their civic responsibilities iii. Effects of non-performances of civic responsibilities	Student should be able to 1. identify the types of civic responsibilities 2. enumerate why citizens should perform their civic responsibilities 3. point out the effects of non-performance of civic responsibilities	1. Inquiry method 2. Role-Play method	1. Civic education text book 2. Pictures 3. Customs	Students to: 1. identify the types of civic responsibilities 2. list the reason for the performances of civic responsibilities
Leadership and Followership	Leadership as a concept Qualities of leaders Function of followers	i. Meaning and types of leaders ii. Qualities of a good leader iii. Qualities of a good follower iv. explain the function of followers	Students should be able to 1. define the concept of leadership 2. mention types of leaders 3. state the qualities of good leaders and followers 4. explain the function of followers	i. Role play/Dramatic representation 2. Informal method i.e participatory civic club	1. Customs 2. Picture of an organizational structure	Students to 1. define leadership 2. mention types of leaders 3. state the qualities of good leaders and followers 4. explain the function of followers

It could be seen from the tables above that there it is possible to adopt effective informal means of civic training and formal means in Nigeria schools. Training for effective citizenship should not be restricted to the formal school curriculum. Informal school programmes such as school club activities are important means of inculcating in the citizens those attitudes and skills for effective citizenship (Falade, 2006). Collaborative and participatory methods should be adopted in the teaching of civic concepts in Nigerians schools. Since civic training is meant to help the students to have national consciousness and acquire the traits of good citizenship, they should be encouraged to form civic clubs in the school. This could be made part of the school structure as an informal way of giving the youths opportunity to serve the community. It will enable them to work together with others in achieving common goals and acquire the inherent values of civic responsibilities.

Again the effective training of social studies teachers is paramount for civic training in Nigeria. Social studies training programmes in our colleges of education and other teacher training institutions should be designed to enable student teachers to acquire necessary skills that can help them to promote civic training at the elementary schools. Teacher trainers in Nigerian higher institutions should endeavor to adopt child-centered methods so as to equip the student teachers with the inherent values in such methods.

Also civic and leadership training programmes should not be limited to the children and youth. The government should create more civic and leadership training for a Non-Governmental Agencies should be involved in civic and leadership training particularly outside the school system. There is the need for stable civic training programme for people in various segments of the community. Public office holders, members of the security and armed forces, politicians, civil servants and other members of Nigerian society should be educated through informal civic education programme.

Conclusion

This paper revealed the need for civic training as a way of achieving nation building in Nigeria. Civic training is paramount for eradicating the low level of civic responsibilities in Nigeria. This will

enable the Nigerian citizens to acquire civic values like honesty, tolerance, patience, discipline, cooperation, hard work etc. The manifestation of these civic values is fundamental for building the civil society.

It is also suggested in this paper that both formal and informal civic education methods can be adopted in Nigeria as to equip the learners and the entire citizenry with the necessary civic values and traits. This is to enable them to contribute positively to the creation of the civil society.

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