

Improving Quality Citizenship Education for Sustainable Growth, Security and Development in Africa

¹Edobor Sunday Ernest & ²Maliki Christopher Irekheafe

¹ & ²School of General Studies
Edo State Polytechnic Usen,
P.M.B. 1004, Benin City,
Edo State- Nigeria.

E-mail: ernestsunday306@yahoo.com
edoborsundayernest@edoply.edu.com

+2348036998967

²e-mail: chrismaliki@yahoo.com

+2347060703333

Abstract

Education is a veritable tool for individual, national and world development. However, education should meet the needs of the individuals and the immediate host. This underscores the rationale why education in Nigeria is seen as an instrument “per excellence” for effecting national development. Consequently, Nigeria government has it that for the benefit of all citizens, the country’s educational goals shall be clearly set out in terms of their relevance to the needs of the individual and those of the society, in consonance with the realities of our environment and modern world. Citizenship education is designed to expose students to their immediate society, constitutional provisions and structure of government that will make them better members of the society. With this, they will appreciate better the culture, values and national ethics of actualizing a virile Nigeria in particular and Africa in general. Citizenship education educates students about their civil responsibilities. This paper therefore examined improving quality citizenship education for sustainable growth, security and development in Africa, the challenges of citizenship education as well as possible solutions. The philosophy and objectives of citizenship education in Nigeria were looked at. The prospects and potentials of improving quality citizenships education for sustainable growth, security and development in Africa were also considered. The paper opines that citizenship education has the potential for maintaining sustainable growth, peaceful co- existence (security) and development in Africa.

Keywords: Citizens, Citizenship Education, Development, National Ethics and Security

Introduction

Citizenship education is an aspect of education which instills desirable and acceptable moral values, attitudes, skills and knowledge into individuals (citizens) to

enable them participate actively in the affairs of their groups and adjust functionally as good members of the society. It is a form of education given to citizens of a given geographical locality with a view to making the individuals responsible and committed to meaningful and sustainable growth, peaceful co- existence and development of their society.

All human beings are both individuals and citizens of the society they belong who enjoys certain rights and privileges. It is therefore expedient to state here that human rights and citizens are interdependent. Citizenship education has the mandate of educating future members of the society who will ensure that there is sustainable growth, security and development not only in their immediate society, continent (Africa) but also world-wide. Hence, citizenship education must address all categories of people who are living beings having the status of human beings endowed with conscience and reason excluding individual differences. Eze (2014) held that citizenship education is a discipline that is geared towards molding citizens to become good, acceptable and contributing members of their societies. Education is a veritable tool for individual national and world development. Hence, any form of education must meet the individual's needs and that of the society. This is why education in Nigeria is seen as an instrument "per excellence" for effecting national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). The reliance on education for national development vis – a – vis sustainable growth and security poses a great challenge not only to Nigeria but also to Africa and the entire world.

Education which simply refers to as the totality of process through which an individual acquire knowledge, values, attitude and all other forms that are of positive value to the society to which a person belongs or as the process of learning to live as a useful and acceptable member of the society. Education is important to the development of human resources, impartation of appropriate skills, knowledge and attitude, it is reasonable to use citizenship education as a tool for sustainable growth, security and development in Africa by improving its quality.

Conceptual Framework

Citizenship

Citizenship is simply defined as the status of being a citizen (Bryan, 2009). According to him, citizenship is a state of being vested with the rights, duties and privileges of being a citizen. According to Oniha and Edobor (2019), citizenship is the status of a person as recognized under the constitution of a country or a sovereign state as being a legal member of such country or state. It is the relationship between an individual and a state defined by the law of that state, with correspondence duties and right in that state. citizenship also denotes the status of a person recognized under the custom or laws as being a legal member of a sovereign state or belonging to a nation. It enables the person holding the citizenship access or opportunity to all the benefits and privileges as stated in

the constitution of such a country as long as the person remains lawful member of the state.

Education

Education is a common and a popular concept which means the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills and attitude for self-development and societal growth. It is the mechanism through which a society can attain sustainable growth, peaceful co- existence and overall development.

According to Ignatius (2016), “Education is a very popular concept and that no energy should be exerted on explaining such a familiar term, more so at a special conclave of a coterie of outstanding educated minds”. He further stated that: “Education is a companion who no misfortune can alienate and no disposition can enslave. At home a friend, abroad an introduction, in solitude a solace, and in society an ornament. It chastens vice, guides virtue, it gives at once grace and government to genuine. Without it what is man? .A splendid slave, reasoning savage”.

To him – Ignatius, (2016) education is a very strong weapon that liberates people from any form of slavery or bondage, promotes security and development. Education is a process for transmitting, preserving and improving the culture of a people. It is a process through which men became morally good members of their society. (Uju, 2015). Education can also be seen “as an instruction, especially at a school systematic university” (Oniha & Edobor, 2019). It also means the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits.

Citizenship education

Citizenship education is an aspect of education that bears different names at different time. It has been referred to as moral education, civil education, social studies, Education, political Science Education, or moral philosophy. However, there is a unique about citizenship Education which is the inculcation of moral values in the learner.

According to Eze et al (2014), “citizenship education acquaints the citizens on the democratic social morals and values of their country”. They added that citizenship education is fundamentally geared towards “social engineering”, a part of other social values that is naturally aimed at value orientation for individuals. “citizenship education is a type of education which instills desirable, values, attitude, skills and knowledge into individuals to enable them participate in the affairs of their group or adjust functionally as good citizens” (Oniha & Edobor, 2019). They posited that citizenship education is based on the distinction between the individual as a subject of ethics and laws, and the provisions of the constitution of the country. They were of the view that all human beings are both individuals and citizens of the society they belong; therefore, human rights and citizen are interdependent.

Quality citizenship education

According to Osahon and Osahon (2011), “quality is a qualifying term and it is generally used normatively to mean standard or excellence”. In other words, quality is a

distinguishing attribute of a thing. When we talk about distinguishing attributes of any given education such as citizenship education we are referring to the efficiency of its content, method and pattern which is adjusted as effective. Quality education can be referred to as contributions in value and moral orientation on individuals and ensuring peaceful co-existence that promote sustainable growth and development.

Growth and development

Growth simply means the process of increasing in size or weight. It is the process of developing physically, mentally or spiritually. It is also referred to as an improvement in status of anything. This implies that when we talk of growth, we are referring to a positive increase of the subject matter.

Development has been defined as growth plus change which involves materials, mental, psychological, physical, institutional and organizational development and its sustainability can only be attained when there is peace and security in the society.

Security

The concept of security has a wide range of analysis and applications. This ranges from political security, environment, ecological security, food and water security, social security, human security, job security, financial security etc. for the purpose of this paper, emphasis is on human security which recognizes and accommodates a lot of issues that constitute threat to human existence, education, growth and development in Africa and the world at large.

Security and/or insecurity is defined in relation to vulnerability, both internal and external, that threaten to have the potential for bringing down or weaken state structures both territorial institutions and governing regime. According to Christopher (2005), Omari (1995), human security is the absence of threat to human life, lifestyle and culture through life fulfillment of basic needs". The issue of security/insecurity has caused unprecedented attendant refugee flows not only in Nigeria states but also in Africa. With this trend, improving quality citizenship education for sustainable growth, security and development in Africa will continue to be a mirage.

The philosophy of citizenship education in Nigeria

"The philosophy of citizenship education can be traced to the glaring fact that no society or country can develop if the citizens fall short of the awareness of basic democratic values and socio-political institutions in the country" (Oniha& Edobor, 2019). Citizenship education is taught in schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities generally because the country need active and responsible citizens who are willing and able to take responsibilities for themselves and their communities for a nation to attain political stability or orderly development, the citizens must display unequivocal sense of patriotism and nationalism.

The philosophy of citizenship education in Nigeria is built on the following as stated in the national policy on education (2004):

- a. An awareness of and sensitization of Nigeria to the rules and regulations governing all Nigerians as contained in the Nigeria constitution.
- b. Awareness of the rights and obligations of citizens to government and society and the reciprocal government responsibilities.

Objectives of citizenship education in Nigeria

Arguugu (2012) identified six main objectives of citizenship education in Nigeria as follows:

1. To create an awareness of the provisions of the Nigerian constitution and the need for democracy in Nigerians.
2. To create adequate and functional political literacy among Nigerians.
3. To sensitive Nigerians to the functions and obligation of the government.
4. To make Nigerians fully aware of their rights and duties to respect the right of others.
5. To assist in the production of responsible Nigerian citizens.
6. To inculcate the right values and attitudes to the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society

Challenges of citizenship education

Several problems abound in improving quality citizenship education in Nigeria and beyond for sustainable growth, security and development some of the problems are as identified by Oniha and Edobor (2019) include:

- a. Gender bias as some parents train only the males.
 - b. Western influence leading to the neglect of our value systems.
 - c. Extreme poverty thereby ignoring education.
 - d. Scarcity of scholarship for training.
 - e. The incessant syllables change amounting to distortions.
 - f. Access to education as some communities lack schools.
- other challenges are:
- g. Heterogeneous nature of our society.
 - h. Parental background items of religious, economic and social perspective.
 - i. Irregular review of citizenship education curriculum.
 - j. Frequent and sudden educational policy somersault.
 - k. Absence of friendly environment such as working conditions.

Possible situation to the challenges

In spite of the numerous challenges face in improving quality citizenship education for sustainable growth, security and development in Nigeria and Africa, the challenges can be overcome. The following solutions are forwarded.

- a. Gender bias in children training should be eliminated as males and female are members of the society.
- b. African value systems should be promoted and preserved from generation to generation.

- c. Poverty which is threat to growth security and development should be tackled with all seriousness.
- d. There should be consistency and time frame syllabus implementation.
- e. Education should be made accessible and affordable to all African child.
- f. The multiplicity of our culture should be harnesses properly to be a blessing rather than a symbol of disunity.
- g. Government, companies as well as philanthropists should sponsor citizenship education programmed and also award scholarships.
- h. The work environment for the teaching and learning of citizenship education should be friendly and exciting.
- i. There should be adequate and timely funding of education. The 26% annual budget on education as recommended by UNESCO should be adhered to .
- j. Adequate instruction materials should be provided.
- k. Adequate and qualified man – power should be employed.
- l. Refresher courses should be organized regularly.

The prospect and potentials of citizenship education.

Improving quality citizenship education has a lot of prospect and potentials for growth security and development in Africa. Firstly, the security and welfare of the people which is the primary duty of government should be taken seriously. With this, citizens will be energized to contribute their quota towards national and continental development.

Secondly, citizenship education instills desirable values, moral, attitude, skills and knowledge into individuals which enable them participate actively in the affairs of their groups and make necessarily adjustment to function effectively as good members of the society.

Thirdly the increasing, rate of intolerance (religious, political ethnic, cultural), among citizens and nationals can be abated through proper and effective citizenship education which teaches all form of tolerance and self-fulfillment.

Fourthly, the continue mistrust and disobedience of government by the governed and blatant abuse of government/governmental powers as well as uncontrollable increase of political rascally among some unscrupulous politicians can be checked via quality citizenship education either during the schooling process or through refreshment courses.

Fifthly, citizenship education inculcates certain values habits, morals skills, attitudes and knowledge which the society considers desirable and essential for its survival as a unit and for a country's institutional knowledge as well as the rule of law that agitates social and human relationship needed for peaceful co- existence and development. Also, the national Technical committee on civic education (NTCCE) (2007), observed among others the prospects of citizenship education as follows:

1. Citizenship education is the concept that will help the people to understand their democratic and civic rights and responsibilities.

2. Citizens learn about system and institutions of government, democratic processes, political heritage, rights and responsibilities of citizens the judicial systems and public administration.
 3. Citizens acquire skills such as active citizenship, inquiry, cooperation and critical acquire, cooperation and critical reflection.
 4. Citizens become empowered to make informed choice and decisions, and taking action individually and as part of collective process. it also accords citizens the possibility of understanding why things are as they are:
 5. Citizens are educated on the multiple roles they have in society as producers and consumers of goods and services, as contributors to economic and cultural development as well as with various facets of each individual's personal, social and working life.
 6. Valuable opportunities both to enhance women's and youth's participation in democratic and development processes and to address issues of gender equality at the federal, state, local and grass root levels.
- Hence, improving quality citizenship education for sustainable growth, security and development in Africa, should be given its desired attention.

Conclusion

The need for improving quality citizenship education for growth, security and development in Africa considering the constitutional provision of government (Nigeria government) to provide security and welfare as its primary duty to her citizens has been stressed in this paper. Citizenship education is a discipline toll for growth, peaceful coexistence and development not alone in Africa but the world at large because citizenry is a universal phenomenon.

Recommendations

Considering the need for improving quality citizenship education in Africa, the following recommendations are being proffered.

1. Peaceful co- existence and continental security should be promoted.
2. National orientation Agency and other mass enlightenment agencies should be responsible and made effective.
3. Education across Africa should be well founded.
4. Citizenship education should be taught and made compulsory for all student and pupils at all levels.
5. Refreshers courses/programmes should be organized regularly for all citizens.
6. Incentives should be provided for citizenship educators and learners.
7. Our cultural heritage should be preserved and promoted.
8. eligious, political and socio-cultural tolerance should be promoted across Africa.

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