UNIJERP
Unizik Journal of Educational Research and Policy Studies VOL.5; https://unijerps.org

2021 Impact Factor: 5.641; 2020 Impact Factor: 5.355 *January-June, 2021*
Indexing and Impact Factor URL: http://sjifactor.com/passport.php?id=21363

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RESOLVING THE INCREASING TREND OF AGITATIONS THROUGH FUNCTIONAL CIVIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

ALAUBI, STANLEY C.
UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE
&
AMAECHINA, UCHE. O. (Ph.D)
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND POLICY
FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (TECHNICAL), UMUNZE
E-mail: dramaechina@yahoo.com
08035537958

ABSTRACT
Civic education is aimed at educating the citizens both young and old on their rights and civic obligations as well as inculcates in them a culture and respect for human rights. This paper focused onresolving the increasing trend of agitations through functional civic education in Nigeria. It highlighted the concept of civic education, democratic culture and citizenship education, resolving agitations through civic education and challenges towards achieving citizenship education. The paper concludes that, various forms of youth restiveness that are economically, politically, or religiously motivated have existed for a long time but civic education remains an important means of teaching the populace about individual rights, in addition, imbibe discipline and make the youth focused and law-abiding. Recommendations were also made which include: Government should ensure that civic education is taught in schools to redefine our national priority and also enlighten the populace more on the need to understand their individual rights.

Key word: Trend, agitation, functional, civic, education.

Introduction
Education reforms in Nigeria since independence focused on how to promote social understanding and integration of the various socio-cultural groups in the country as well as scientific and technological development. Educational institutions also contribute to civil society by

offering individuals a chance to better their lives. The inclusion of social studies into the school curriculum was strongly aided by the National Policy on Education that made it a mandatory subject at primary and secondary arm of education. The curriculum was designed to offer an integrated, unique and innovative instrument for making teaching and learning exercise more functional in schools and colleges, particularly in the training of students to groom them into effective citizens. The National Commission for colleges of education (NCCE) in Nigeria established and adopted a minimum standard syllabus which stated the major objectives and aims for social studies education. It necessitated on the need to produce professionally trained social studies teachers for primary and junior secondary schools to inculcate in their pupils and students attitudes, values and skills necessary for developing social studies citizenship attributes.

Citizenship Education is that learning that educates students to be active and informed citizens with an understanding and appreciation of civic life (Ajibola & Audu, 2014). It is one of the Social Studies contents aimed at inculcating certain values, habits, skills and attitudes which the society considers desirable and essential for its survival. It involves the study of government rights, duties and obligations of citizens in a given country (Aluyor, 2006). Therefore, the ultimate purpose and aims of citizenship education is to educate the citizens both young and old on the rights and civic obligations as well as inculcate in them a culture and respect for human rights of Nigerian citizens. An individual can boldly claim and challenge his rights when one understands his/her country. For no nation can forge ahead if the citizens fail to understand the basic democratic principles and social-political institutions in the country. The classroom dispensation of Social Studies is to be measured in terms of the extent it has instilled the norms of citizenship in the minds of the students.

The students of colleges of education are the teachers of the students in the junior secondary and primary schools, thus they need to be properly imparted and groomed so that they can pass on what they have learnt to the student/pupils. A situation where the student-teachers in these colleges of education are not properly exposed to the curriculum components of Social Studies or acquire the necessary attributes, values, attitudes, skills that

make for effective citizenship, it will be difficult to impact on their students/pupils properly (Ajibola & Audu, 2014). The increasing participation of these students in cultism, thuggery, murder, kidnapping, theft, ballot box snatching, election rigging and malpractices, gangsterism, sexual abuse, examination malpractices, terrorism and other social vices cast a doubt as to the acquisition of citizenship traits by these students. To become responsible and effective citizens, students must have access not only to content, knowledge and core citizenship values, but also to opportunities to learn citizenship skills and apply them to problems and needs in the community beyond the classroom (Okobiah, 2005).

Concept of Civic Education

Civic education means all the processes that affect people's beliefs, commitments, capabilities, and actions as members or prospective members of communities (Pinson, 2007). It may not be beneficial but sometimes people are civically educated in ways that disempowered them or impart harmful values and goals. It is certainly not limited to schooling and the education of children and youth. However, families, governments, religions, and mass media are just some of the institutions involved in civic education, understood as a lifelong process. Yahaya (2013) stated that, civic education is a continual and long-term process and is usually embedded in education curriculum and others programs. Civic education (often referred to as civic and citizenship education) deals with broader concepts underpinning a democratic society such as the respective roles and responsibilities of citizens, government, political and special interests, the mass media, and the business and non-profit sectors, as well as the significance of periodic and competitive elections. It emphasizes not only citizen awareness but citizen participation in all aspects of democratic society (Zakaria, 2006).

Civic education may be carried out through the school and university system, through civil society organizations, and perhaps by some state agencies, although not necessarily the election authority. Civic education helps people get involved in their political system by informing people about how their government works, what government officials' responsibilities are, what areas of the political process are most open to citizen involvement and what kinds of things

citizens can do to affect political outcomes. Citizenship education can be defined as educating children, from early childhood, to become clear-thinking and enlightened citizens who participate in decisions concerning society (Sears & Hughes, 2016). 'Society' is here understood in the special sense of a nation with a circumscribed territory which is recognized as a state. Knowledge of the nation's institutions and also an awareness that the rule of law applies to social and human relationships obviously form part of any citizenship education course. All human beings are both individuals and citizens of the society to which they belong. Therefore, human rights and citizen rights are interdependent (Azebanwan, 2010).

Men, women and children all come into the world as individual human beings. Thanks to the immense historical conquest of human rights, we are equal, in rights and dignity, to all other human beings. Aluyor (2006) noted that, 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 beings endowed with conscience and reason. It cannot, therefore, exclude consideration of individuals as subjects, each with individual characteristics. Moreover, human rights include civil and political rights, the latter obviously relating to the rights and obligations of citizens. Thus a comprehensive human rights education takes account of citizenship, and considers that good citizenship is connected with human rights as a whole.

Democratic Culture and Citizenship Education

If there is one idea inherent in civics education, because it concerns politics and institutions, it is the idea of democracy. Comprehensive citizenship education cannot dispense with this concept or with knowledge of the institutions that enable a country to function democratically (Oldfield, 2009).Rather than confining ourselves to noting and describing institutions, we should explain how the operation of the machinery of state respects government of the people by the people and makes it accountable to citizens. However, this way of tackling democracy may seem remote and foreign to the world of school and of children. It is therefore desirable to imbue the whole of school life with a culture of democracy. Educational practice is of equal value

with knowledge when we come to tackle civics education (Pinson, 2007). One of the major flaws in civics instruction has been that it fails to bring democracy to life in schools, and remains at the stage of merely enunciating principles and describing institutions.

When the organization of a school does not lead to a democratic mode of operating on which pupils can give their opinions, children and adolescents lose interest in citizenship and see only the mismatch between what adults say and what they do, between knowledge and action, a mismatch which they usually call hypocrisy. Schools should therefore set up governing board with representatives of pupils and staff, and other bodies in which pupils express their views and in which decisions are taken in consultation with everyone, both young people and adults (Rolston, 2014). The representation of pupils in these various bodies can and should be achieved by an open election system which has the same qualities of transparency as in any democracy worthy of the name.If we are to develop a credible civics education, respect for others – pupils and teachers, administrators and minor employees – and non-violence in attitudes and behaviour must be the rule in schools. Respect for others, and their dignity, in the same way as the self-respect of a free autonomous individual, springs from each individual's personal ethic, the will to 'live together, with and for others in just institutions'.

These qualities, whether described as 'moral' or 'ethical', are required of all human beings and all citizens. They form part of both civic 'virtues' and individual 'virtues'. They enable each individual to live as a 'good' citizen (Okobia, 2005).In other words, in citizenship education, respect for the 'Other', regarded as one's equal, with his or her individual differences and distinctive physical, intellectual and cultural features, is to be explained and above all experienced in daily life in all schools. Based on these principles of equal dignity and respect for others, citizenship education has the task of combating all forms of negative discrimination and racism, sexism and religious fanaticism. Thus citizenship education can be regarded as an ethical (or moral) education as well as education in citizenship. To understand the role civic education plays in democracy, we must first understand what democracy is (Elegbeleye, 2005). Ajibloa and Audu (2014) observed that, ideally, democracy is a form of

government, which ensures: equality, political tolerance, accountability, transparency, economic freedom and the rule of law.

Equality: Democratic societies emphasize the principle that all people are equal. Equality means that all individuals are valued equally, have equal opportunities and may not be discriminated against because of their race, religion, ethnic group, caste, gender or sexual preference. In a democracy, individuals and groups still maintain their right to have different cultures, personalities, languages and beliefs.

Political Tolerance: Democratic societies are politically tolerant. This means that while the majority of people rule in a democracy, the rights of the minority must be protected. People who are not in power must be allowed to organize and speak out. Minorities are sometimes referred to as the opposition because they may have ideas that are different from the majority. Individual citizens must also learn to be tolerant of each other. A democratic society is often composed of people from different cultures, racial, religious, and ethnic and caste groups. A democratic society is enriched by diversity. If the majority deny rights to, and destroy their opposition, then they also destroy democracy. One goal of democracy is to make the best possible decisions for everyone in society. To achieve this, respect for all people and their points of view is needed.

Accountability: In a democracy, elected and appointed officials have to be accountable to the people. This means that officials must make decisions and perform their duties according to the will and wishes of the people, not for themselves. They are responsible for their actions.

Transparency: For government to be accountable the people must be aware of what is happening in the country. This is referred to as transparency in government. A transparent government holds public meetings and allows citizens to attend. In a democracy, the press and the people are able to get information about what decisions are being made, by whom and why.

Economic Freedom: People in a democracy must have some form of economic freedom. This means that the government allows some private ownership of property and businesses,

and that the people are allowed to choose their own work and join labor unions. The role the government should play in the economy is debatable, but it is generally accepted that markets should exist in a democracy and the state should not totally control the economy. However, market economies do create some inequalities and a balance needs to be achieved between the good and bad aspects of such an economy. Some argue that the state should play a stronger role in countries where great inequality of wealth exists due to past discrimination or other unfair practices.

The Rule of Law: In a democracy, no one is above the law, not even an elected Prime Minister. This is called the rule of law. It means that everyone must obey the law and be held accountable if they violate it. Democracy also insists that the law be equally, fairly and consistently enforced. This is sometimes referred to as "due process of law.

Resolving Agitations through Civic Education

Youth restiveness in Nigeria has been a prominent issue in recent times. There has been an increase in the occurrence of acts of violence and lawlessness, including things like hostage-taking of prominent citizens and expatriate oil workers, as well as oil bunkering, arms insurgence, cultism, etc., especially in the Niger Delta region. Nevertheless, youth restiveness is not a recent phenomenon. Various forms of youth restiveness that are economically, politically, or religiously motivated have existed for a long time. Elegbeleye (2005) vividly captures the landmark cases of youth restiveness in Nigeria. Young people all over the world are a vital and important segment of the society in which they live. A disciplined, focused, and law-abiding youth can create a bright future for any nation. Conversely, a lawless, indulgent, and violent youth is a great threat to a nation's peace and security. Good governance is required for the growth and development of any nation. Unfortunately, in Nigeria bad governance is more common than good, resulting in disjointed development. Experts believe that the number of jobless youth is twice as high as official estimate. Zakaria (2006) believes that the rising tide of unemployment and the fear of a bleak future among the youth in African countries have made them vulnerable to the manipulations of

agents. These include aggrieved politicians, religious demagogues and greedy multinationals that employ these youths to achieve their selfish ambitions. Zakaria strongly believes that the absence of basic infrastructure, educational opportunities, resources and job opportunities in developing countries is responsible for youth restiveness with disastrous consequences.

Civic education remains an important means of teaching the populace about individual rights and what duties and responsibilities the governed and leaders should do. The introduction of Civic Education as a subject to be taught in primary and secondary schools in Nigeria is expected to further deepen democratic culture and encourage qualitative participation of the average Nigerian in the governance process. The Civic Education curriculum according to Yahaya (2013) addresses young Nigerians in the formative educational years. The contents address issues that are important to developing young Nigerian people into responsible citizens. In other words, the curriculum enables our young people imbibe the values, norms, knowledge, actions and activities for sustaining development. While sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development could also be construed as a global responsibility and solidarity between generations, between women and men and between different cultures and countries. It is about safeguarding and efficient use of existing natural resources.

Investment in management of human, social and physiological resources is also crucial parts of sustainable development. However, civic education is said to be a veritable tool for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address environment and development issues (Schultz, 2012). Civic education is concerned with three different elements: civic knowledge, civic skills and civic disposition. Civic knowledge refers to citizens' understanding of the workings of the political system and of their own political and civic rights and responsibilities (e.g. the rights to freedom of expression and to vote and run for public office, and the responsibilities to respect the rule of law and the rights and interests of others).

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Civic skills refer to citizens' ability to analyze, evaluate, take and defend positions on public issues, and to use their knowledge to participate in civic and political processes (e.g. to monitor government performance, or mobilize other citizens around particular issues) (Dynneson & Gross, 2009). Civic dispositions are defined as the citizen traits necessary for a democracy (e.g. tolerance, public spiritedness, civility, critical mindedness and willingness to listen, negotiate, and compromise). Azebanwan (2010) noted that, elements of civic education are real because they actually affect peoples' lives. They are topical, current today and relevant. The issues are moral, because they relate to making responsible citizen. Responsible citizenship is the hallmark of every promising society. Indeed this is a basic requirement for sustainable national development and nationhood.

Challenges towards achieving of citizenship education

The Philosophy which introduced social studies education as a functional and qualitative curriculum design in all primary, secondary schools and Teacher Training Colleges in Nigeria stressed that an acquisition of its ideals, virtues and values by the young school learner must not be a chance affair. These virtues of human development, according to the FRN (2004), have to be learnt and cultivated by way of classroom instructions and interactions which derive from the social studies curriculum. The policy on education endorses the need for social studies education to be geared towards equipping the individual with the necessary wherewithal not only for cultivating civil responsibility but also for creating avenues and opportunities germane and compatible with human and social development. Thus, according to Okobiah (2005), the success of the philosophy behind the teaching and learning of the social studies curriculum in schools and colleges must be measured in terms of its positive contributions at mobilizing and enabling learners cultivate an awareness and understanding of norms and values which are relevant to the fundamental principles of democracy. It was considered that this development would usher in the curriculum paradigm necessary for engendering meaningful human co-existence within the framework of Nigeria as a young democracy.

Although the National Policy on Education accepted social studies

education as a curriculum design for inculcating norms and values of active citizenship amongst young learners in our schools, most of the empirical studies and data available in this direction have demonstrated that we are yet to achieve the virtues and assets intrinsic in the subject area (Oldfield, 2009, Pinson, 2007 and Kazi 2004). The results and data established in these empirical studies are considered in three dimensions in terms of the extent classroom dispensation of the social studies curriculum has been successfully used in grooming young learners in the acquisition of desirable norms and values of citizenship education. On the question of the content areas of social studies, Rolston (2014) and Okam (1992) criticized the faulty classroom emphases in the subject which are not related to the societal needs of Nigeria as a young democratic nation. These critics revealed that the prevailing traditional approach to pedagogy in social studies in many school settings in Nigeria largely educated the young learner out of context in relationship to the environment in which he is to function as a citizen.

The central issues of citizenship education largely hinge on a cultivation of excellent human relations by the individual or citizen. Thus, because of its interdisciplinary emphases, classroom work in the social studies must move to a new synthesis by bringing component parts of the curriculum into some coherent shape so that various kinds of disciplined thought and enquiry which bear upon the practical activity of education could be brought to a new focus in order that new kinds of understandings be generated (Okam, 2008). The innovation arising from this move and arrangement has to de-emphasize the structure of the individual social science disciplines, to a very large extent in favour of attention to more urgent issues, problems and life itself.

Conclusion

Various forms of youth restiveness that are economically, politically, or religiously motivated have existed for a long time. Young people all over the world are a vital and important segment of the society in which they live. Civic education remains an important means of teaching the populace about individual rights and what duties and responsibilities the governed and leaders should do. Civic education can imbibe discipline and make the youth focused

and law-abiding. However, civic education is a continual and long-term process and is usually embedded in education curriculum and others programs. It represents educators' pedagogical paradigm shift that enhances thinking about what is expected to mould future citizens who are endowed with self sustaining skills and talent of engaging in productive activities that will contribute to sustainable development and reduce agitations among youths. Consequently, no nation can forge ahead if the citizens fail to understand the basic democratic principles and social-political institutions in the country.

Recommendations

1. Government should ensure that civic education is taught in schools to redefine our national priority.
2. Teachers should create the awareness on the need to understand the norms and values of our people which are relevant to the fundamental principles of democracy.
3. Government should enlighten the populace more on the need to understand their individual rights.

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