

## **THE INSTRUCTION MENTALITY OF CIVIC EDUCATION IN MOULDING THE YOUTHS: A CASE STUDY OF COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDENTS IN OYO TOWN, NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*The study was designed to find out the extent to which civic education can be used to instill certain values into the lives of Nigerian Youths in order to mould them for leadership position for nation building in the future. Four hundred youths were randomly selected from the department of social studies Emmanuel Alayande college of Education, Oyo (A structured questionnaire containing 10 items bordering on values to be instilled into learners through civic education was developed. The data collected were analysed using tables, frequency counts and simple percentages. The paper also suggest the following: reawakening of campaign on value orientation, Introduction of youth oriented programmes, encouragement of positive attitudes and values to be developed by youth as a means of moulding the lives of Nigeria youths.*

### **Introduction**

Education, all over the world is perceived as a life transforming activity, which empowers its receivers to make concrete contributions to the development of a society. The transforming potential of education has informed the adoption of various policies by government in its planning and delivery patterns. In most developing countries, Basic Education has been adopted so as to make sure that educational services are provided to as many that are willing and ready to consume it. The reason is to make sure that skills and knowledge are provided for young people for their personal development and their societies. Thus the paramount goals of government and non government agencies in developing countries is nation building and nation cannot be built if the lives of her youths who are leaders of tomorrow lack those values and traits of good and effective citizenship. Therefore, in order to create a society where there is unity, tolerance, honesty, cooperation, respect for human dignity and patriotism, there is the need to inculcate in the citizens those traits and values of effective citizenship. Civic education is a panacea for moulding the youths for leadership position of this nation.

It is difficult according to Falade (2008) to build a nation when the citizens who are the builder of such nation are not having the traits of good citizenship. A veritable tool for citizenship training is education. Hence education should aim at preparing the youths, for mature life, ruled by reasons. School subjects should therefore concentrate on truth and justice for this according to Omotseye (1999) will help to build in the child right from early age, honesty dedication and responsible attitude towards work. Ogundare (2000) opined further that emphasis should be laid on the teaching of civic education in our schools.

The nation objectives which serve as the foundation for the objectives of Nigerian National Policy on Education include:

- (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.

Erezene (1999) reiterated that to achieve the first objective will require a training on democratic etiquettes, respect for others and the like. To attain a just and egalitarian society the training of the citizens should enable them to realize the equality of all, irrespective of language locality of origin or culture. The major aim of these objectives is making the individual a good and effective citizen of the country. The building/making of a civil society is a great challenge which need effective civic education. It was observed by Falade (2001) that absence of required citizenship traits on the life of the Nigerian citizens has directly or indirectly been responsible for some to think of disintegration, disunity and conflict in the country. Moulding the youths for leadership position of tomorrow can not be toiled with.

Falade (2006) further noticed that no form of a nation building is said to have come about without the great contributions of the citizen of such nation. Contemporary problems and events in Nigeria like other nations of the world call for moulding the life of our youths who are the leaders of tomorrow. This will help to create a civil society where there is unity. This can be achieved by preparing our youths for effective citizenship through school programmes. This write up therefore focus on civic education as a means of moulding our youths who are the leaders of tomorrow. The paper also intends to highlight the formal and informal ways that could be used to teach civic education concepts in the basic education curriculum.

### Conceptual Discourse on Youths and Civic Education

Aibangbe, (2006) opines that the way in which a nation defines her youths is related to the objective conditions and realities that exist on the ground. That is why nations use different parameters and variables in defining their youths. In Nigeria, youth according to Mofoluwawo (2010) comprises all young persons of ages 17 to 30 who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This category represent the most active, volatile and yet the most vulnerable segment of the population socially, economically and emotionally. The youths can also be referred to as the younger generation in any society that are in the period of adolescence and one below the age of 40 years. They are full of energy, exuberance and curiosity about life and the environment they find themselves. These attributes make them at that stage to be very vulnerable to social ills and vices, because, it is a period of uncertainty, doubts and exploration and even period of self-exploration and identification.

Again Ajoma (2006) defines a youth as that person who is aged between 17s and 30 years. Alimba, et al (2010) see a youth as somebody, who is within the age bracket of 15 and 34 years. These definitions was proposed by them because at the age 15 years, one is preparing to transit from secondary education to the society and at age 34 years, one is fully inducted into the society, since 30 years is the terminal point for being involved in National Youth Service Corp (NYSC )programme. Therefore, the youthful age is a promising age in which a young man has the energy, will, courage and strength to be actively involved in adventures. Hence, Ajoma (2006) once remarked that youths are the trustees of any nation. In Indonesia, they are described as the “hope of the future” in Libya, “future partners” and in Nigeria, “leaders of tomorrow.” From the above discussion it is crystal clear that in the business of building this country, the youths are the major stakeholder. Their composition when compare with other groups in the country is a pointer to this fact. The 1996 population profile of the country and the Restructured Age Distribution is presented below to justify the position of this paper.

**Table 1: Nigeria’s Population Profile 1996**

S/N	INDICATOR	QUANTITY
1	Size of population	102,519,082
2	% below the age of 15 years	45
3	% between 15 years and 64 years	52
4	% above 64 years	03

**Source:** Phillips (1997)

Table 1 shows the total population of the country in 1996 and its age structure. The population is structured into three age groups namely: 0-14 years, 15-64 years and above 64 years.

**Table 2: Restructured Age Distribution**

Age Group (Years)	% of Population
0 – 14	44.9
15 – 34	33.9
35 – 64	17.8
65+	3.3
Total	100.0

**Source:** Adapted from table 2 of Phillip (1997)

Table 2 shows the contraction of age distribution into four groups. The table reveals that the youths constitute the second largest group after the children's group. It can also be observed that the group that make the youth (15-34 years) are more than half of the other groups combined. This is an indication that youth cannot be ignored in the scheme of things. Therefore they should be given serious attention because they are the most active part of the population. The task of building the country rests on their shoulder, if given the right types of values, skills, knowledge, motivation and the opportunity. This paper therefore intends to state reasons why much emphasis should be placed on the teaching of civic values in Nigerian schools so as to produce youths with a vivid sense of citizenship.

### **Civic Education**

Civic is a social science subject dealing with the rights and duties of citizens and the way of government. It can also be described as the school subject which studies the way government works and deals with the rights and duties that one has as a citizen in a particular society. Education means training or teaching of mind and character. Civic education is therefore the teaching/training of the mind and character of citizens (students) their rights and duties of citizens, the way of government etc. (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary 2006). It can also be defined as a concept that deals with socialization or trains the mind of citizens in respect to their daily relations with the government and other citizens. Civic education according to Oladele (2009) is the type of education given to the citizens of a particular country in order to make them to be active and functional citizens. Civic education can further be defined as a subject which exposes the individual to the need for imbibing positive attitude such as patriotism, peaceful co-existence, hardwork, diligence, honesty, mutual respect, love, tolerance and self discipline.

In the same vein, Agu (2009) opined civic education as capable of preparing people of a country especially the youths to carry out their roles as citizens hence, it is political education which entails the cultivation of virtues, knowledge and necessary for political participation, until youths are empowered and true citizenship entrenched into our National Polity where a Nigerian can live freely as an indigene in any part of the country where he resides, as practiced in western European countries, civic education and democratic principles will remain mere theories. In a country with a population of over one hundred and fifty million and with a high scourge of unemployment, youth entrepreneurship programmes and youth empowerment appears a more realistic way of introducing civic education if democracy will survive in Nigeria. It also means teaching, societal norms and values, rights, duties and obligations of citizens. Civic Education is the right remedy to correct the youth out of their present condition. At this juncture, it is pertinent to discuss the condition of Nigerian youths.

### **Condition of Nigerian Youths**

The increasing rates of poverty and unemployment in the country has placed the youths on a scale of impoverishment which has affected their capacity to reason critically as young people in the business of developing the country (Alimba, et al 2010). This was further worsened by the nature of the education that is being provided for them. There is also the problem of parental ineffectiveness in the education and moral upbringing of the youths as a result of unfavourable economic environment caused by poverty (Mofoluwawo 2010). Many youths because of family problems find it difficult to procure their basic needs like food, clothing, education etc. that can ensure their healthy living and development. Youths' inability to have these basic needs has pushed some of them to join the gang of armed robbers, hired assassins, political thugs, drug pushers and the like to endanger themselves. Youths in their bid to pass examination or get employment by all means have turned to professional prostitutes and many of them have contracted HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases like syphilis, gonorrhoea. (Mofoluwawo 2010).

Many Nigerian youths who suppose to be leaders of tomorrow have died prematurely while many of them become useless instead of becoming useful to themselves and the nation at large. Nigeria youths have been demoralized, incapacitated and render unproductive. The ineffectiveness of the educational system and the bashing and deflating power of the society have impacted negatively on the youths to the extent that they are aimless (Alimba et al 2010). Youths have been involved in many things regardless of the nature of the task. That is, they are available to as many that are willing to give them “chop money” to sustain themselves even at the detriment to their lives.

It is quite pathetic today that those with in age bracket of 25-39 years have travelled oversea in search of greener pasture. The reason is because the government neither given them needed attention nor care for them to be effective and efficient in contributing actively to the building of the nation. The conditions of the youths in the country are so bad and frustrating to the extent that our leaders feel nothing is wrong since their children are not involved. The idea is that the bad state of the youths is associated with a crucial factor in the socio-political affairs of the country and that is the leadership factor. (Alimba et al 2010). Airahuobhor 2006) reiterated further that he regretted that Nigeria does not have leaders as yet, instead, it has rulers whom he described as thieves and scoundrels. A ruler, he says is a killer of consciousness and sows negative consciousness. He opined further that the politicians (i.e. our leaders) don't think beyond their pockets and have no vision. They do not understand the value of human being. This position is a pointer to the fact that the roles played by our leaders impoverish the state of the youths in this country.

The average Nigerian does not have that instinctive sense of social cohesion which prevail in certain nation states of the world such as England, Germany, France just to mention a few. (Okam, 2001). Nigerian youths are no longer upholding societal values like honesty, hardwork, respect for elders and dignity of labour, cooperation, self reliance, decent dressing etc. The reason is because not much emphasis is placed on the teaching of civic education in Nigeria schools. Hence 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 (Falade 2008). An attempt to correct all these problems made curriculum planner incorporated civic education into the school curriculum. Civic education just like social studies is a school subject that has man as its central focus is therefore out to correct all these social issues and problems. Through civic education, Nigerian youth who are leaders of tomorrow could be caught young and mould so that Nigeria will have a set of re-branding leaders in the future. Civic education aims at developing in the citizens the spirit of effective citizenship and loyalty to the nation.

### **The Need for Civic Education**

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 (Falade 2008). Two categories of citizens can be found in every society. The good and bad citizen. A good citizen is a person who does not just vote but considers that action as a serious matter and casts his/her 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 (Ogundare 2000). To produce a good civil society requires effective civic education. Civic education is a programme that teaches about the rights, duties and obligation of every member of a political system. Civic education is out to develop in the leaders those values and skills that will make them responsible citizens. Developing in citizens the spirit of effective citizenship and loyalty to the nation is the major aim of civic education. The alarming rate of moral decadence among Nigerian youths calls for conscious and concerted efforts towards the cultivation of a civil society.

Civil education makes the citizens of new democracies to gain the skills, values and behaviour that are thought to be necessary for a stable and effective democracy. It introduces citizen to the basic rules and institutional features of democratic political system and to provide them with knowledge about democratic rights and practices.

According to Falade (2008), the increasing level of lawlessness and undemocratic practices constitute serious setback to the attainment and sustainability of democratic culture in Nigeria. Many Nigerians demonstrates intolerance and disrespect to the rule of law while some have little or no concern for civil society. Civic duties are neglect by some citizens. In a scale that determined the extent to which the citizen abide by the rule of law, Nigeria scored less than 5% (Akinjide 2006). Our police and other law enforcement agents practice bribery, extortion, denial of human rights, extra-judicial killing and all sort of corruption.

It is remarkable to note that some basic values of civic responsibilities are neglected by Nigerian. Some of these basic values include tolerance, obedience, integrity, patriotism, honesty, morality, discipline and so on. A lot of religious and socio-economic problems in Nigeria is caused by indiscipline and intolerance. An apt example of indiscipline is what happen on the day Nigeria was celebrating her golden jubilee i.e. 50<sup>th</sup> years of independent anniversary that some disgruntled citizen of Nigeria threw bomb in Abuja killing many innocent citizens (The Nation, Saturday October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2010). Ogundare (2000) pointed out that some specific citizenship responsibilities have been abandoned by Nigerian political leaders while the followers have thrown most of their social responsibilities to the swine. Hence the spate of economic and political ills in the nation is the result of the abandonment of the sacred citizenship responsibilities by our leaders and the followers. Nwosu (2004) quoting Achebe said:

“The trouble with Nigeria is simple and squarely a failure of leadership, since the leader is a reflection of the follower. Thus an armed robber who kill people to dispossess them of their possessions, an importer who imports fake and expired drugs that kills and destroys innocent lives, a public officers who siphons money meant to provide infrastructure etc, 419 fraudster who dupes fellow citizens, a politician who offers human sacrifice to win election, a police who extorts money and kills people he was meant to protect, a lecturer who intimidates and sexually harasses female students etc. The problems can be ‘ad infintum’. The above list goes to portray that we are all involved. However, we all need to re-think over our values and responsibilities (Nwosu 2004:75)”.

Civic education has become a fundamental machinery for moulding Nigerian youths for better tomorrow. Nigeria education system need to consciously and carefully develop in the citizens those values and skills that will enable them to have more concern for public life. For Nigeria to produce good leaders of tomorrow there is the need for the citizens to participate and contribute positively to the political process. This was also corroborated by Omotseye (1999) that every society need to exhibits certain fundamental attitudes such as truth, respect for persons and feeling of fraternity for others etc. Every individual ought to imbibe right attitudes and beliefs so as to conform with societal norms.

### Statement of the Problem

The study was designed to determine the extent to which civic education concept can be used to instill certain values into the lives of Nigerian youths in order to mould them for leadership position for nation building in the future. Hence the following research questions are hereby raised for the study.

### Research Questions

1. To what extent can self-reliance reduce unemployment rate in Nigeria?
2. To what extent do Nigerian Youths value honesty?
3. To what extent can cooperation leads to progress and development of the society.

### Methodology

This study used descriptive survey research design.

The sample of this study comprised four hundred (400) social studies students selected by simple random sampling technique from department of social studies Emmanuel Alayande college of Education, Oyo. They were chosen because they would be in the best position to teach civic education in our secondary schools. The instrument used to collect data was a structured questionnaire items constructed by the researcher. The questionnaire was validated by experts in the test and measurement of Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher personally. The data collected from the respondents were analysed using simple percentage.

### Results and Discussion of Findings

**Table 1: Analysis of Respondents by Sex and Age**

Sex				Age		
Male		Female				
Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	
250	62.5	150	37.5	17-20	170	42.5
				21-25	200	50.0
				26-30	30	7.5

From the above table, it was revealed that 250 male respondents with 62.5 percent responded to the instrument while 150 female respondents with 37.5 percent responded to the instrument. It also revealed that most of the respondents fall between age bracket 21-25 as against the other age-bracket.

**Table II: Analysis of the impact of self-reliance on employment**

S/N	ITEMS	Frequency			
		Agreed	%	Disagree	%
1.	Self-reliance will make people to be confident of themselves in whatever they do	380	95.5	20	5.0
2.	Self-reliance will reduce unemployment rate among Nigerian youths	400	100.0	-	-
3.	Self-reliance will encourage independent thinking ability .	380	95.0	20	5.0
4.	Crime rate in Nigeria can be reduced through self-reliance.	400	100.0	-	-

The study in table II revealed that self-reliance is akin to unemployment. It also showed that the respondents agree e mass on self-reliance.

**Table III: Analysis of the impact of Honesty among Nigerian Youths**

S/N	ITEMS	Frequency			
		Agreed	%	Disagree	%
1.	Mutual trust among members will encourage true honesty	387	96.75	13	3.25
2.	Ethical values like justice, fairness and loyalty can be encourage through honesty	394	98.5	6	1.5
3.	Honesty encourages respect for one another in a group or society	350	87.5	50	12.5

Table III indicate that the maximum of 394 respondents agreed with the items on research question III as against minimum of 6 respondents who disagreed with items 2 of the same research question. In short great number of respondents agreed with the items raised in table III.

**Table IV: Analysis of the impact of cooperation to the progress and development of the society**

S/N	ITEMS	Frequency			
		Agreed	%	Disagree	%
1.	I believe in working with others on common task	377	94.25	23	5.75
2.	Cooperation will encourage attainment of stated goals	200	100	-	-
3.	Cooperation will lead to the progress and development of the society	200	100	-	-

Table IV also reveals 377 respondents agreed with item one of research question 3 as against 23 who disagreed with item one. Respondents responded e mass to item 2 and 3 of the same research question.

### **Conclusion**

From the foregoing analysis, it is crystal clear that lack of civic values has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigerians society and the only panacea to correct this problem is to instill certain values back into the lives of incoming generation of leaders of tomorrow through the teaching of civic education. Civic education is out to eradicate the low level of civic responsibilities in Nigeria. Its emphasis in our schools will enable the Nigerian citizens to acquire civic values like honesty, tolerance, self-reliance, discipline, cooperation, hard work, respect for rule of law etc. The manifestation of these civic values is crucial for producing reliable youths that would become leaders of tomorrow.

### **Recommendations**

From the foregoing, it is pertinent to note that a successful process of moulding our youths to become good leaders of tomorrow requires effective civic education in our schools. There is urgent need for the development of good citizenship in Nigeria through formal and informal civic education programmes. The civil society should therefore consider the following:

The teaching of civic education in our schools. This will be able to instill the sense of self-awareness in pupils and inculcate self-discipline self-reliance, honesty, selfless service, which would in turn develop a sound mind in a sound body capable of dealing with stress and strains of life. Moreover, value and cultural enlightenments will bring back those cherished values that were abandoned such as honesty, transparency, cooperation, accountability and discipline into circulation. This will go along way to prevent corruption and embezzlement of public funds. Values mentioned above can only be impacted into the lives of our youths through the teaching of civic education in our schools.

- Also, youths oriented programmes should be embarked upon to reawaken and re-direct their minds to be actively involved in community activities. That is, they should be given opportunity to participate in governance so as to make them become responsible in the society. Training for effective citizenship should not be restricted to the formal school curriculum. Informal school programmes such as civic club activities are important means of inculcating in the citizens those attitudes and skills for effective citizenship (Falade 2006)
- Radio and Television programme that would emphasize values like honesty dignity of labour, respect for elders and authority, self-reliance, accountability and good traits of a citizen should equally be encouraged to mould the lives of Nigeria youths.
- Other process of moulding the lives of our youth through the teaching of civic education in our school is the encouragement of positive attitudes which include open-mindedness, concern for others respect for others and property, loyalty, discipline, civic responsibility, cooperation, love of learning etc.
- Encouragement of values to be developed by youth such as orals aesthetic and spiritual, the pursuit of happiness for all, an appreciation of democratic principles and desire to be good citizen.
- Also the government should create more civic and leadership training for a Non-Governmental Agencies so as to involve them in civic and leadership training particularly outside the school system. Stable civic programme is equally needed for people in various segments of the community. Members of security, armed forces, politicians, civil servants etc. should be educated through informal civic education programme. Also teachers who are implementers of civic curriculum should adopt child centred methods so as to equip the students with needed values in such methods.
- As rightly posits by Obasi (2006), it cost nothing to change ones mind towards something good. There should be a re-thinking, re-orientation over family values, attitudes and roles couple with the one receive in school through civics education will go along way to curb many social ills common among Nigerian youths.

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