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# **Citizenship Education and Insecurity: A Philosophical Appraisal of the Nigerian Situation**

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## **Abstract**

Today, the issue of insecurity has become a topic on the lips of every Nigerian. The deteriorating security situation in Nigeria is worrisome and is probably the cause of endemic penury, high rate of unemployment, low industrial output, high inflation rate, deteriorating exchange rate, rising external debt and so on. It is clear that these happenings have stifled the economic, socio-political, religious, scientific, ethnic-cultural and mental life of the average human in the country. This work therefore, attempts a critical examination of the relevance of citizenship education in addressing the issue of insecurity in the country using the descriptive qualitative research methodology. The study among others suggests that authorities of educational institutions should partner with the government and international organizations to engage citizens on real civic training outside the four walls of the classroom for the purpose of making them responsible citizens.

**Keywords:** Education, Citizenship, Citizenship Education, Insecurity.

## **Introduction**

At sixty-one, Nigeria is stricken with hunger, poverty, high-maternal mortality, unemployment, homelessness, sickness, victimization, diseases, favouritism, tribalism, God Fatherism, God motherism, and so on because our leaders believe that Nigeria is a country where anything goes. Udoh (2015) avowed that the past sixty years have witnessed numerous coups as well as regional, religious ethnic and secessionist violence in Nigeria. In the past few years, however, new forms of discord, distrust, have emerged in which religious extremists, armed militants and ethnic militia groups have threatened to bring about greater insecurity than those that preceded them. The older forms of militia groups have metamorphosed into armed groups and have intensified their activities. The deteriorating security situation in Nigeria is worrisome.

The state of insecurity in the country has not only threatened the very fabrics of national integration in the country and created the ecology of fear, disquiet and anxiety; it has also meted a deadly blow to national development. Corroborating the above, Ewetan (2013) declared that insecurity is the cause of developmental challenges such as endemic penury, high rate of

unemployment, inured corruption, low industrial output, unstable and deteriorating exchange rate, high inflation rate, inadequate physical and social infrastructure, large domestic debt and rising external debt profile. Many Nigerians are today living a difficult life with basic amenities such as food, water and electricity due to the problem of insecurity. From the above, it would not be out of place for one to state that the vision of the founding fathers to build a dynamic, strong and egalitarian nation has been frustrated and scuttled by insecurity challenges due to lack of citizen education (Nsirim & Elechi, 2010).

It is the position of this paper that in order to correct this anomaly in Nigeria, it is pertinent to educate Nigerians to consider the country first in whatever they are doing before their ethnic, religious or personal interests. This can be done through educating the younger generation and the nation at large on the importance and relevance of citizenship education.

### **Citizenship Education**

Citizenship education is the amalgamation of two terms citizenship and education; so we need to clarify them separately before defining citizenship education. Given that a citizen of a state is also a national of that state, it therefore follows that citizenship is the dynamic relationship between a citizen and his or her nation (Ejere, 2008). This comprises what the citizen can do for the state and what the state can do for the citizen.

Citizenship as a concept refers to the free and legitimate participation of individuals and groups in society. It is both an attribute of individuals and a concept that embraces collective actions. Citizenship is a status that recognizes the claims of individuals to agency. There is an expectation that citizenship carries with it the right to participate and a responsibility towards others. It is perhaps most easily understood as contrasting with other possible statuses such as slave, prisoner, subject of an absolute ruler, vassal etc. (Faulks, 2000).

Barbalet (1988) simply defined citizenship as those who are and those who are not members of a common society. Heywood in Olutobi (2006:26) described citizenship as “a relationship between the individual and the state in which the two are bound together by reciprocal rights and duties”. Citizenship involves what a citizen can do for his country such as voting and paying taxes and also the benefits or entitlements that they have right to demand from the government. From the above, citizenship involves a series of issues which could be subsumed into rights, corresponding duties and obligations of an individual by virtue of his or her membership of a nation-state. These rights, duties and obligations are shown in the citizen’s social behaviour, political behaviour, economic behaviour and his or her personal other commitments (Omolayo, 2006). Guiding people to understand citizenship entails constructing knowledge on rights and duties granted by the state, or other bodies as proof of membership. This indicates an existing bond between state and citizens. By this, the state confers civil, political and legal prerogatives to uphold identity and duty.

Education in the real and concrete sense encompasses the aspect of learning in which the knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits are inculcated into people through various means like storytelling, teaching, etc. It can also be seen as the process of cultural transmission and using culture to embrace the people’s art, music, literature, philosophy, religion, commerce, political organization, science and technology (Nduka, 1975). Fafunwa (1980), on his part,

defined education as the sum of all the processes by which an individual develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior of positive (and sometimes of negative) value in the society in which he/she lives.

Contributing to the definition of education, Akinpelu (1984) avowed that education refers to all planned and systematic process of human improvement or development, including the organizational modes in which these processes are promoted. Also, Ogbebor (1992) views education as a means of preserving the way of life in which the person believes. From the above, it becomes clear that education is not just about delivery of information but also the ability of the guardian to inculcate outstanding features like habits and values that prepare the people for the future membership of the society and their active participation in its maintenance or development. This can be achieved through citizenship education which is concerned with making the citizens to be good citizens of the state or country.

**What then is Citizenship Education?** Citizenship Education has been defined by different scholars. To Morrisett (2013) citizenship education is the conscious effort to educate youths about certain subject areas, mostly with strong value emphasis. Uche (2011) viewed citizenship education as the presentation of the child for social responsibility. On his part, Iyamu (2016) viewed citizenship education as that aspect of formal education which emphasizes the wellbeing and efficiency of individuals and society.

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that citizenship education is concerned about training the people to become responsible and good citizens in terms of ability to preserve cultural and national identity. It is concerned with the production of citizens who are aware of the human and political issues at stake in their country or nation and also aware of the inconsistencies in human ideals and their actual behaviour (Okam, 1998). It entails teaching human rights and developing individual consciousness and collective responsibilities and duties among learners.

For our purpose therefore, we adopt the definition of Anumba (2013) who viewed citizenship education as the education of an individual concerning himself and his state that will not only socialize but emancipate and transform him for functional roles in a dynamic society. This means that citizenship education will develop in individual skills, attitudes and values that will enable them to show concern for the wellbeing and dignity of others, respecting the worth of others and approaching civil decision in a rational manner.

### **Objectives of Citizenship Education**

The objectives of citizenship education as identified by Ibezim (2014) include:

- a. Preparing students to be able to identify and exercise their civic rights and responsibilities,
- b. Helping the students appreciate their economic, political, social, cultural and physical environment,
- c. Enabling the students develop the abilities to adapt to changing economic, cultural, political and physical environment,
- d. Inculcating in the students the ability to appreciate their economic, political, social, cultural and physical environment, and

- e. Inculcating in the students the desire to ask for information concerning the government of the day, its essence and offer useful suggestions on the success of good governance.

### **Insecurity**

Insecurity is the antithesis of security and has attracted such common descriptors as want of safety, danger, hazard, uncertainty, want of confidence, state of doubt, inadequately guarded or protected, instability, trouble, lack of protection and being unsafe and others (Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpor-Robaro, 2013). For them, it can be seen as the state of not knowing, a lack of control and the inability to take defensive action against forces that portend harm or danger to an individual or group or that make them vulnerable. Beland (2005) viewed it as the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection. Affirming the above, Ezemonye (2011) asserted that it is a state of being not secure and lacking in confidence. The above definitions reflect physical insecurity which is the most visible form of insecurity, and it feeds into many other forms of insecurity such as economic and social insecurity. In this paper however, insecurity is the state of being subject to danger or injury.

### **Causes of Insecurity**

Many factors according to Omede and Omede (2015) have been postulated as causing unrest in Nigeria. Some writers put their blames on the government while some others pass the bulk on parents. Other writers hold the youths as being responsible while others settle on the combination of these factors. Putting all these factors together will provide some of the following as responsible for the general state of insecurity in Nigeria - unemployment, bad governance, lack of quality education or training, lack of adequate basic infrastructure, corruption and corrupt practices of government officials, perceived victimization, arrant poverty in the midst of affluence, ethnic superiority, religious superiority, domination and exploitation, materialism and the display of it with impunity, etc.

### **Challenges of Insecurity in Nigeria**

Insecurity has a lot of disastrous consequences. One of the implications is economic sabotage. Insecurity encourages vandalism, burning and destruction of properties which can discourage investors especially foreign investors from further investments. For instance, during the reign of militancy in Niger-Delta, many oil pipes and installations were vandalized, while in North, the activities of Boko Haram has crippled the economy of that region as many foreign and local investors have fled the country because of threat to their investments and lives. Many traders and businessmen and women have abandoned their business interests in Kano, Kaduna, Yobe, Plateau, Borno, Bauchi, Kogi, Gombe and other Northern parts of Nigeria where the incessant kidnapping, bomb and suicide-bomb attacks have become everyday occurrence. Again, insecurity causes loss of manpower (that is resource person who were killed and those who left the country because of insecurity), high rate of unemployment and also reduces the productivity level of the nation where the youths account for the greater percentage of the population. , thereby reducing the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Osaat & Ekwe, 2012).

Violence or an insecure situation drives people into various religious groups not by reason of believing but for security purposes. In an environment where a particular religion commands majority, the residents would like to align with the popular religion for the sake of securing

their lives and that of their relations and possibly their business investments. Furthermore, it has been observed that insecurity is one of the reasons some parents prefer their children studying overseas. This trend is tantamount to cultural breakdown. These children are bound to imbibe new cultures which are alien to their ethnic group and mores, develop love, loyalty and a sense of patriotism for such countries over theirs (Udoh, 2015).

### **Citizenship Education and Insecurity**

Since her independence in 1960, Nigeria has not made much progress as expected despite all the abundant blessings of natural and human resources at her disposal. There is hardly any period of political transition that is not characterized with loss of lives and property. Insecurity appears to be a norm or order of the day. Patriotism is one of the values that have long disappeared from the country. Part of the reason for this vice and many other issues confronting the nation is not farfetched; it is due to the country's inability to make conscious effort to educate its citizens on the importance and relevance of citizenship education which is concerned with training the people to become responsible and good citizens in terms of ability to preserve cultural and national identity. This has resulted to breakdown in human relationship, lack of patriotism, socio-political and economic instability, high level of unemployment, ethnic bias, poverty, inequality, militancy, sabotaging of public utilities, internal theft, lack of social amenities, security challenges and individual irresponsibility to mention but a few. In the Nigerian perspective, citizenship education has been 'watered down' and trampled upon, it is more of a cliché than a practice. This outlook indeed has encouraged vice instead of virtue.

From the foregoing, it is evidently clear to a right thinking Nigerian that the problem of Nigeria has to do with poor training of its citizens on the importance and relevance of citizenship education in one way or another. Our efforts to revive a future society that has been truncated by insecurity will be short-lived or even futile if we do not tackle the problem from its root. In the midst of these, can anything be done to put an end to this problem? What is the way forward? Where do we go from here? What can we do to ameliorate the situation? How do we save Nigeria from becoming a national tragedy or should we just sit down in the comfort of our houses and cry wolf? Is there still hope for the future? These questions hold sway because this problem we are facing today most especially from the youths have crippled and disabled the belief of a better tomorrow.

Nevertheless, to remedy the challenges posed by insecurity, it is pertinent to educate Nigerians to consider the country first in whatever they are doing before their ethnic, religious or personal interests. This observation advances the need for a formal citizenship education programme. Citizenship education is necessary in developing countries like Nigeria. For instance, citizenship education has made it possible for countries like Switzerland to make changes in the pattern of nationality as a basis of national solidarity. Citizenship education is education geared towards correcting bad behaviour in order to achieve high level of societal sanity and orderliness. It has the ability to impart on the citizens especially the younger ones, their rights, duties, the rights of others and their duties as well as the general need for a stable nation absent of insecurity (Koku, 2017).

In most Nigerian societies, the role of the traditional extended family has been eroded by urbanization. Families have tended to be more nuclear making it impracticable for children to

be taught national ethics and cultural values at home. This further justifies a genuine call for a deliberate citizenship education programme in the country to teach such values in order to maintain the social fabric. An education that provides for a common status for the people which Nigeria needs in order to fight against the high rising problem of insecurity. An education that will inculcate in Nigerians humanitarian ideals based on the philosophy of equality of opportunities; develop desirable political orientation, patriotic attitudes and national consciousness which are essential ingredients in combating the social vice of insecurity (Sibanda, 2015).

Exposition to citizenship education according to Omede and Omede (2015) will equip the citizens of the country with the following virtues for effective socialization and mutual coexistence. They can be good citizens of the nation because

1. They will be disciplined and organized.
2. They will have their characters reformed.
3. They will have respect for human lives, protect and defend one another.
4. They will deal with people honestly and truthfully.
5. They will not be selfish as they place the interest of others above self.
6. They will tolerate people as they will make allowances for the faults of others.
7. They will learn to distribute material and financial resources equitably for the common good if they find themselves in such position.
8. They will respect elders as well as constituted authorities.
9. They will practice their own religion without hurting others of different religion.
10. They will learn of the benefits and opportunities the society promises and also what they stand to contribute towards the wellbeing of the society.

Where these virtues are in display, insecurity will disappear. A new Nigeria would have been birthed where love for one another, brotherliness and oneness will reign (Omede & Omede, 2015). This implies that citizenship education could act as a liberating force from the problem of insecurity that is still evident in Nigeria.

### **Conclusion**

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the importance and relevance of citizenship education cannot be over-emphasized especially in the Nigerian situation since it encourages and plays a vital role in the inculcation of right attitudes, values such as co-operation, coexistence, open-mindedness, honesty, respect, obedience, national consciousness and patriotism on the people. It aims to teach the citizenry some basic functional skills to be able to live a liberated and sustainable life for them to know their civic right and responsibilities and to contribute their quota to build a just, liberal and democratic society free from unrest, violence and social vices. This of course is necessary for peaceful coexistence among the citizens regardless of their religious, ethnic or biological differences.

### **Suggestions**

- Citizenship education should be taught at all levels of education in Nigeria.
- Political office holders should be exposed to training in citizenship education.

- Nigerians especially the youths should be conscientized to see the development of the country as a collective duty and not the duty of the leaders alone.
- Authorities of educational institutions should partner with the government and international organizations to engage citizens on real citizenship training outside the four walls of the classroom for the purpose of making them responsible citizens.

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