

# Civic education, teaching and learning as catalysts to achieving effective citizenship for sustainable development in Nigeria by 2030

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## Abstract

*The spate of lawlessness has been on the rise in Nigeria State in recent times. Crime rates, level of indiscipline, waywardness among others are on the trajectory of unabated increase. Perhaps citizens of Nigeria have no or inadequate knowledge of their civic responsibilities to the state. This is traceable to ineffective civic education curriculum implementation at the basic and senior secondary education levels. However, no meaningful development could take place in a country bedeviled with anarchy. Therefore, the paper examines meaning, goals/objectives, methods of teaching and relevance of civic education in stemming the tide of societal ills. It recommends the inclusion of compulsory civic education in the curriculum and its teaching at all levels of education. This will produce effective citizens for sustainable development in Nigeria by 2030.*

**Keywords:** Civic education, Civic responsibilities, Citizenship, Teaching, Learning, Sustainable Development

## Introduction

Prior independence, Nigerian pre-school children were adequately bonded to the family and cultured. Socialization with respect to greetings, respect for elders and people in the position of authority, acceptable mode of dressing, obedience, eating habits, honesty, hard work among others was effective. In the present day, decadence in the society is on the increase. Perhaps, this is due to economic hardship which made parents to abandon duties of teaching children basic morals. Against this background, civic education is taught to help the beneficiaries to acquire knowledge, understanding and utilize societal values and morals towards producing right citizenship for sustainable development. This is to ensure smooth integration into the societal life at a later age.

It is obvious that children nowadays have no respect for elders. Disobedience, unfaithfulness, selfishness, greed, lack of love and other social vices are the order of the day. Law enforcement agents such as police, Nigerian customs service, federal road safety and even road worthiness officers are in the act of collecting illegal fees from the motorists without caution. The political office holders are not left out of the indiscipline that has taken over the land. The political office holders have constituted themselves to “rulers” as opposed to “leaders”. They forced their ambitions, wishes and actions on the masses, notwithstanding the consequences. The “sit-tight” syndrome, corruption, embezzlement of public fund, favouritism and other forms of indiscipline are so common with Nigeria political leaders. Little wonder, Umukoro (2012) in his essay on the anatomy of corruption in Nigeria recorded that “patriots are terribly in short supply in Nigeria simply because it is largely a nation without

nationalities, a sheer collection of cities without citizens”. Hence, civic education becomes a tool for achieving the right citizenship for sustainable development in Nigeria.

Oyetade and Olaniran (2012) note that the concept of sustainable development has been an age long discourse in all education as a human development process, and therefore, school has a major role to play as one of the societal institutions in helping children and youths to learn, live and work in their nation. The call is on the teachers to make the teaching and learning exercise interesting, interactive and accommodative when this is done, it goes a long way in building up the self confidence in the learners. The teaching of civic education therefore has to be interactive, student centered, interdisciplinary and empowering.

## Sustainable Development Goals

Sustainable development refers to a kind of development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (<https://www.iisd.org>). It is a kind of development that can project into the future and plan adequately for the success of both the present and the future generations. Sustainable development is achievable through the impartation of civic education which brings about a desired transformation in the recipient to the benefit of the state.

“The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to end poverty, hunger and inequality, tackle climate change and build resilient infrastructures, all to be achieved between now and 2030. In particular, efforts will be deployed to reduce maternal mortality to below 70 per 100,000 live births, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other tropical diseases; ensure quality education and gender equality; achieve universal access to safe drinking water and energy; address

climate change and achieve at least a 7% global economic growth among other major goals. It is belief that meeting the 169 targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will transform the world” (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) Summit, 2015).

To make the MDGs 2030 achievable, the goals of civic education must be upheld. All forms of indiscipline (the unacceptable patterns of behavior in the society such as hatred, greed, fraud, abuse of office vandalism, stealing and the likes) must stop and give way to practices of orderliness, tolerance, achievement of goals among other positive behaviours.

Civic education is a veritable tool for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people in order to address environment and development issues (Ajibola, Lukman and Habiba, 2014). It is an important means of teaching the populace about individual rights and what duties and responsibilities the governed and leaders should do. Falade (2001) in Oluwagbohunmi (2013) opined that the search for the means of instilling good norms and attitudes in the citizens through the formal school system has led to the inclusion of various subjects (e.g. civics, citizenship education, social studies among others) in the curriculum.

The introduction of civic education into the Nigerian school curriculum took place in September 2008. The teaching of the subject was to emphasize and further deepen democratic culture and encourage qualitative participation of the average Nigerian in the governance process (Ajibola, Lukman and Habiba, 2014).

### **What is Citizenship?**

Citizenship as a concept refers to an act of being a legal member of a state having been vested with the rights, privileges and duties of a citizen. Adejumobi (2006) in Omole 2013 defines citizenship as the rights, benefits, privilege and duties of an individual as a member of a political community, usually a state. It is also defined as the character of an individual viewed as a member of society behavior in terms of the duties, obligations and functions of a citizen (<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/citizenship>).

### **Concept of Civic Education**

Civic education is a discipline which belongs to the classes of Arts and Social sciences; like every other concepts, civic education has so many definitions as defined by different authors based on the perspective

and view of the authors. It is taught at almost all the levels of education in Nigeria with the aim to inculcate into individual the right values, consciousness and attitudes towards having well informed, responsible citizens and active members of the state in ensuring the right citizenship for Sustainable development.

Adeyinka, Adetoro and Nwosu (1992) in Olabiwonninu (2013) mentioned that attitudes and values are needed by an individual to be responsible as they provide him with the opportunity to contribute his own quota to the growth of the society of which he is a member. It becomes necessary that the needs and values of the society be included in whatever form of education that is given to the children in the society to make them responsible to the state.

Meneke and Nwedbo, 2013 saw civic education as a subject that teaches us the way the government of a country works. In other words, it entails the responsibilities on the parts of the citizens as well as of the government. Similarly, civic education is the totality of training or education given to a person to enable him or her becomes a good citizen of a country. Adie (2015) in (Enu, Unimina and Odidi, 2017) posits that civic education prepares people for citizenship roles, and democratic behaviours and attitudinal change necessary for peaceful co-existence in the society. Crittenden and Levine, (2013) defined civic education as all the processes that affect a people’s beliefs, commitment capabilities and actions as members of community .A citizen who is knowledgeable can make decision and take responsibilities his/her community as civic education has political, social, economic and cultural undertones which when combine together produce an all round personality (Osinbajo (2016) in Enu, Unimma and Odidi, (2017).

### **Goals of Civic Education**

The main goal of civic education can be considered as follow; the formation of

- (a) Civil qualities on the basis of the new basis knowledge;
- (b) Skills and values that help individuals to;
  - i. Solve emerging problems
  - ii. Adapt to changing socio-economic and political conditions
  - iii. Respect and protect their rights and interest
  - iv. Respecting the interests and rights of others (<https://googleweblight.com>)

The goals of civic education could be achieved through its objectives which aim at creating a civic

culture of learning in our schools where teachers and all personnel lead the joint effort to study, discuss and enact educational and institutional policies that celebrate timeless civic norms like justice civility, truth, engagement and virtue (). This will go a long way to help the citizenry becoming well reformed responsible and right thinking people. It will therefore assist to produce effective leadership for national development.

### **Essence of Teaching and Learning Civic Education**

The objectives of civil education address issues on developing young people into responsible citizens. Thus, the following values need to be inculcated into the recipient of civic education towards a sustainable development in Nigeria.

- (a) Tolerance and contentment
  - (b) Togetherness and love
  - (c) Equity and farness
  - (d) Probity and honesty
  - (e) Patriotic spirit and loyalty
- Brahm, (2014). states the following as the major functions of civic education hence, the need for its teaching and learning;
- (i) Instill in the learners civic characters such as the support for human rights, equal rights, the importance of active political participation and working to promote the common good.
  - (ii) Developing civic knowledge through the understanding of the principles and practice of democracy on aspects of representative democracy the rule of law, human right, citizenship and civil society.
  - (iii) Providing civic skills in the learners such as working together with others collaborative deliberation and decision.
  - (iv) Developing cognitive civic skills to enable student fuse information of political and civic life with public issues.
  - (v) Foster national discipline, national ethics and values all of which promote national interest, peaceful co-existence, unity and national development.
  - (vi) Teachers citizens current and emerging issues which equips them to avoid actions capable of endangering their lives.

The teaching and learning of civic education in our institutions of learning is imperative because it will offer education and proper information capable of

equipping learners of their rights, duties and obligations towards becoming a responsible well informed and knowledgeable citizen.

### **Conclusion**

The inclusion of civic education in the school curriculum was a perfect idea, especially in an heterogeneous country like Nigeria. The teaching and learning of civic education among our children and youths will enable them to acquire the right citizenship for sustainable development in Nigeria towards 2030 .There is a saying as “catch them young” whatever knowledge is imparted into a child at a tender age becomes permanent. Hence, it is proper to instill into the learners early enough, the necessary tools for character building, skills development, knowledge and empowerment to carry out day to day actions like patriotism, co-operation, tolerance, honesty, equity and fairness, punctuality at work place, payment of tax and the likes. This assist to bring out the right citizenship for a sustainable development in Nigeria by 2030 .As oppose to high rate of indiscipline, lawless corruption etc. which serve as treats to existence of sustainable development and poses a serious concern to all and sundry in the state.

### **Recommendation**

The paper recommends that the teaching and learning of civic education should not be limited to the four walls of the classroom but also public enlightenment should be made on the acceptable national ethics on our duties, roles, obligations and our civic responsibilities through the national oriental agency. The act of indiscipline should be eradicated starting from the law enforcement agents, political leaders and other dignitaries in the state and replace with good conducts to have sustainable development in Nigeria by 2030.

The political office holders should be more responsible in their duties and render. Stewardship service to the electorate who place them in the position of authority. Civic education should be taught more effectively at all levels of education in Nigeria as a tool towards a sustainable development in 2030. Only the expert in civic education should be allowed to teach the subject.

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