

ACHIEVING EFFECTIVE CITIZENSHIP AND NATIONAL REBIRTH IN COVID-19 ERA: IMPLEMENTATION OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

BY

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Abstract

It is no longer news that the situation in Nigeria is calling for positive transformation in every dimension such as security, discipline, followers and leadership of the country at all levels. Citizen are no longer performing their duties at the desired level likewise leadership at all level have not been fully effective in discharging their constitutional duties towards the state. Negative impact of Covid -19 was also discussed. Various strategies such as national youth service corp, quota system, citizenship education, social studies and civic education put in place to ensure unity, better society yields little or no positive results. Therefore, this position paper highlights meaning of effective citizenship as one who is able to promote and develop positive attitude to her country while highlight measures put in place by various government at one time or the other to make peaceful co-existence yielded little or no result. Some of suggestions offered are as follows :government should appoint guidance counsellors at public primary school setting to fully enhance effective citizenship; youth should be empowered the more and this may reduce crime rate in the country and so on.

Keywords: *Effective citizenship, National rebirth, Covid-19, Guidance and counselling and Schools settings*

Introduction

The situation in Nigeria has becomes a source of concern to every Nigerian. Security of life and properties is ineffective despite the security architecture provided by the government. Olawale (2021), observes that it is no longer news that crimes such as militancy, kidnapping, ritual killing, armed robbery, assassination, religious fundamentalism, ethno-religious crisis, insurgency, arson, killings and other heinous crimes has become the other of the day. These may account for reasons why peaceful co-existence is becoming elusive on daily basis despite many strategies put in place for effective citizenship (Citizenship Education, Civics, Social Studies, National Youth Service, Quota System and Partial Inclusion of Modern Guidance and Counselling). Observations shows that most citizens no longer abides with rules and regulation both in private and public places, participating low on any form of community development, while the government at the centre seems to be sectional in their operations, this and others precipitating continuing secessionist agitation across the geo-political zones in Nigeria.

Nnamdi Kanu from south eastern part of the country and Adeyemo Sunday popularly known as Sunday Igboho from south western part to mention a few. The issue of armed robbery in the contemporary society is on the astronomical increase. This day paper reported Robbery attack which occurred in Osun State, where two commercial banks were robbed and during the incident, a policeman was killed and a resident as well as catch away an undisclosed amount of cash in the process (This day, August 6 2021). This shows the level of deviant behaviour among some Nigerian citizen; perhaps, this may be the adverse effect of high rate of unemployment which was a result of downsizing, reengineering and sudden closure of major industries in Nigeria. The emergence of Covid-19 has led some educational and industrial institutions to close down for months.

However, the developed countries quickly shift to online programmes through technological devices whereas, Nigeria being a developing country is slow in that regards and many students that were supposed to be in school persistently roamed about the street. As Adage says an Idle hand is devil's workshop. According to World Bank(2015) in west Africa, the Ebola virus epidemic which killed over 11 thousand people, kept at least 5 million children out of school. Educational activities were disrupted in Nigeria and other part of the world due to out break of Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, school were closed, and about 1.2 billion learners were out of school and 36,400,000 primary and secondary school learners across Nigeria, including those in internally displaced camps United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO,2020). As said earlier, this may have negative impact on moral behaviour which may affect the whole nation if full counselling programmes are not taking its rightful place. Effective

citizen will not do anything that is harmful to her country but will do everything in line with constitution. No doubt, every sector of the country needs total rebirth, so as to make the system to work.

Adeniran (2020), opined that there is an obvious linkage between the failure of Nigeria to develop as a nation and the moral decadence that is prevalent in almost all facets of societal life in the country. He goes further by saying that the level of moral bankruptcy in youths and adults reaches its highest crescendo especially during this period of corona virus Covid-19 pandemic with hardly a day passing without report of one heinous crime or the other being committed against humanity. However, it maybe concluded that citizenship education, civics, social studies entrenched in the school curriculum are yet to yield the desired results and also both quota system and national youth service corp. (NYSC) established by decree 24, on may 22 1973 are yet to achieve fully her objective. This is because entire members of the country do not see themselves as indivisible member of the country perhaps, due to the failure of the government at all levels: to provide the effective security to the entire nation; continuous increase on high rate of youth unemployment, corruption in every place and the likes. Victor, Lawrence and Manasseh(2016), revealed in their study conducted that prior to the commencement of Obasanjo's administration in 1999, Nigerian civic/public service was plagued by moral decadence, inefficiency and poor attitude to work and in the same vein, studies also found that civil service that was supposed to be the engine room of the system was not spared as vices such as corruption, indiscipline and other related parochial considerations became prevalent in place of meritocracy, diligence and accountability. Above problem is still persisting and call for urgent solution.

It is certain that national rebirth must take place and that will only happen when we are able to have effective citizenship and no doubt, every successive government has taken one step or the other to have both effective citizenship and national rebirth, but yet to achieve the objective. Therefore, researcher is advocating for total implementation of guidance and counselling in schools with concentration on public primary school setting because it is the first formal education sector and pupils there in are at their formative years.

Effective Citizenship

Citizen is one who is born in a country by parent who also is a bonafide member of that country and paying or showing allegiance to such country. However, anyone could be a citizen of country through other various means aside the place of birth and these are marriage or register (application to become a citizen of a particular country having certified a prescribed of certain criteria laid down by such country. A citizen is a participatory member of a political community. Citizenship therefore is gained by meeting the legal requirement of a national, state or a local government. Any individual who is citizen of any country is expected to be patriotic and do everything for the positive development of such country. According to European commission definition in 1998 as cited by Irem and Huseyin, (2019), the effective citizenship is seen when the citizens speak out for the association that they are member of, or for communities that share their ideas, and thus feel a sense of identity, have a clear set of value and improve their social solidarity. Hosikins and Mascherini (2009), defined effective citizenship as a way of empowering the citizens to speak out for their sense of belonging, their interests, democratic values, equality and the ability to understand different cultures and idea. While wood (2010), opines that effective citizenship is associated with membership, responsibility and having mastery over small dimensions of politics. It is also associated with participation in social life and learning. Without mincing words, it is crystally clear that citizen is member of a country and have right to participate in the affairs of her country. Moral decadences may be reduced through continuous application of behavior modification strategies in schools. For the nation to achieve effective Citizenship adequacy, focus should be on the implementation of full guidance and counselling programs in schools particularly, at primary school setting.

Guidance counsellors are fully trained well versed with developmental challenges of every stages of human existence and if appointed to function across all educational system, most especially at primary school axis and other sectors such as local government, state government and other public and private sectors, they would be able to put in place counselling strategies that would promote effective citizenship that would eventually give birth to new Nigeria as it contained in the National Policy on education (An egalitarian society, a land full of opportunities to all). Among interventions that can be put in place by counselling psychologist are as follows: Reinforcement Strategy (encourage positive behaviour through motivation) Cognitive Restructuring Strategy (Replacing Illogical Thought with Rational One) Stimulus

Control, Shaping (shaping is an operant technique by which a desired behaviour is evoked by reinforcing successive response approximations of that behaviour (Akinade & Adedipe, 2004). This technique is better in the sense that learners encouragement to exhibit desired behaviour may not exhibit negative behaviour capable of promoting bad deeds in the society.), Self Management Technique, Response Cost (This is another variant of the punishment procedure which is used as a device to deter people from engaging in some socially inappropriate behaviour. It is a technique in which a primary reinforcer e.g. food, money etc is eliminated contingent on the manifestation of excess behaviour), Timeout (this can be used to reduce excessive behaviour of children. It is a technique in which individual is removed from an environment where he/she can get any form of reinforcement for a specified period of time say 1 – 15 minutes depending on the severity of wither the child's behaviour or the type of non-compliance observed. It is thus, a technique that is used to eliminate or decrease an undesirable behaviour (Oyediran, 2008).

Over Correction (is also another forms of behaviour modification strategy which like the punishment techniques, it is used where the intension of the professional is to eliminate a socially inappropriate behaviour in a given client. The technique is more effective with younger children; adolescents can find it irritating for patronizing and consequently resists its use.) And so on. All these are forms of behaviour modification that can be put in place to enhance positive behaviour and at the end, citizenship maybe enhanced. However, it must be stated clearly here that there are many variables associated with whatever behaviour an individual is exhibiting. It may be Biological (Inherited Behaviour). Environment (Forces within the environment) Peer Pressure, Social Media, and drug abuse. All these invariably influence intra personal and inter personal relationship. Leadership Posture may also influence citizenship either negatively or positively, hence, timely disposition of government to the yearning and aspiration of masses may also promote effective citizenship.

Theoretical Framework

Many theories could be associated to why of behaviour. However, the paper is anchored on two prominent theories that are even interwoven, interconnected. They are social learning theory of Bandura and Socio-Cultural theory (Vygotsky). The power of models to modify behaviour is crucial to Albert Bandura Social Learning. It emphasizes that we learn from the example of others as well as from direct experience with rewards and punishment. This mean that an individuals may continue to exhibits negative behaviour provided such behaviour is attached with reinforce. The proponent of this theory is of the view that model, observation and imitation formed the basis of human behaviour. According to him, model refer to the one who an individual is looking at and whatever observed on model, he likely to rehearse and eventually form part of the observer regardless of whether such behaviour is contrary or in tandem to the expectation of a given society or not. Model, observation and imitation are interconnected. It is obvious that in Nigeria, there is astronomical increase of kidnappers due to the ransom taken before the victim could be released. An individual exhibit a behaviour that is constantly rewarding such behaviour will be repeatedly exhibited. For instance, various antisocial behaviour that is rampant in Nigeria society could be attributed to benefit attached to such behaviour.

Therefore, there is need to reduce such behaviour through full implementation of guidance and coueslling programs in every sector and that justice and fair play should be exhibited by people in the hems of affairs in the country. Likewise, social-cultural theory of Vygostky is of the few that the more experience a child has, the richer his/her world becomes. Developmental advancements, dependent upon the people and the cultural tools provided to the child. Hence, it can be inferred that the environment play major role on the Childs behaviour. Vygostky theory suggests that there are three ways in which learning is pass along to an individual. Imitative learning is the first, where the child simply copies another person. Second is instructed learning, where a child recalls direction given by a teacher and then put it into play and the third is collaborative learning which happens when a peer group cooperates to learn or achieve a specific goal while working to understand one another. (Abiola, 2008) This means that to have effective citizen, all hand must be on deck for the provision or bring sanity to the environment. Through guidance and counselling program in various sector positive behaviour that will engender various development in the society would be achieved.

Concept of National Rebirth

Rebirth is the regeneration of something that is destroyed regeneration of something that has died or has been destroyed. It is obvious that among the third world countries where things function rather irregularly,

Nigeria is highly perceived to be included (Malik, 2017). Nigeria economy is dwindling as a result of corrupt practices in various sectors, educational sectors also moribund, incessant strike action embark upon by various union such as ASUU due to non- implementation of agreement reached and the likes. Families life are been threatened due to economy and other social issues and all these invariably contributes to national decaying. The general perception is that significant proportion of Nigeria population no longer pays attention to fundamental human values such as honesty, hardworking commitment to official duty (Malik, 2017). Everyone has to pay cash to get anything done, whether it is going through customs at the airports, getting a room in Lagos, hotels or having an official paper stamped in government (Aguda, 1974, p7). Above therefore, indicates birth of a new Nigeria. Place where things work well, where national philosophy work be achieved and guarantee peaceful-coexistence. The economy of the country which presently seems to be comatose needs be addressed because economic development describes job and wealth creation as well as improvement of quality of life. The international economic development states that the main goal of economic development entails improving the economic well-being of a community through job creation. Olawale (2021) stated that tax base enhancement and quality of life. It is not overstatement that the economy of Nigeria is dead due to continuous rise in international dept and high inflation with his attendance effect on the quality of life of the citizenry. Most graduates churning out of various institution of learning are roam about without gainful employment opportunities. This is not too good for the country.

Other areas that are not operating the way they should include: Ministry of Water and Natural Resources. Ministry of Works and Housing, Citizen does not enjoy pipe borne water adequately. Most roads are death traps and all these invariably affect the quality of life and the system needs to be transformed. For meaningful national rebirth to come up, government has her major role to play without any form of discrimination and also the followers (citizen) needs to be re-oriented through full implementation of guidance and counselling at all levels and full introduction of Guidance and Counselling at Public Primary School setting needs to be taken and handle seriously.

Attainment of Effective Citizenship and National Rebirth: Implementation of Guidance and Counseling in Schools

Guidance and counseling is a field that is very unique in making an individual to have self-understanding through some intervention and at the end making an individual to be useful to his/her self as well as contributing meaningfully towards the development of the society (Oyediran, Ogunlade and Ayorinde (2020). It is a professional field which has a broad range of activities, programmes and services geared towards assisting individual to understand themselves, their problem, their school environment and their world and also to develop adequate capacity for making wise choice on their career. In the same vein, Akinade (2012) noted that guidance and counselling is a process of helping an individual become fully aware of his/her self and ways in which he is responding to the influence of his/her environment.

Teaching civics, social studies and citizenship education alone without implementation of full guidance and counselling programmes in schools may not produce effective citizen. Guidance and counselling programmes functions as behavior modifiers, students' adjustment to life, relationship, career choice, facilitate self understanding and the likes. Ebizie, Enajeu and Nkechi (2016) observes that the school counsellor is concerned with facilitating the optimum development of students. Counselling programmes also develop a balanced personality and a complete personality through intellectual growth, spiritual upliftment, moral stability and social reference. To have national rebirth, peoples' view and opinion, orientations, perceptions needs to be changed. Behaviour modification strategies like reinforcement strategies, cognitive restructuring modeling, satiation and the likes. All these could be best handled by professional trained guidance counsellors and presenting the bill for professionalization of this helping profession has not been fully seeing the light of the day. Schools are still operational with little or no guidance counsellor. Sadly enough, primary education which is the bedrock of all other educational system, guidance counsellor do not exists not to talk of operating/functioning across Nigeria and one should understand that at that level, children are at their formative years and needs to be fully assisted to be a well balanced and adjusted citizen with the help of guidance counsellors.

Conclusion

Meaning of effective citizenship and national rebirth has been extensively discussed the highlight of strategies already put in place by both past and present administrations in Nigeria which seems yielded

little or no effect on the realization of national rebirth, negative effect of Covid-19 which include among other: closure of educational institutions with its attendance result on students and society at large was discussed this justified why full implementation of guidance counselling programmes be introduced along with other educational programmes in the school setting with more emphasis on primary school setting.

Suggestions

- (1) Government should appoint guidance counsellors at public primary school setting to fully enhance effective citizenship.
- (2) Youth should be empowered the more and this would reduce the rate of crime in the country
- (3) Government at all level should avoid been sectional, tribalistics, favouristics and so on when perform their constitutional roles
- (4) Government agencies (judiciary, securities operatives and the likes be allowed to perform their official duties in line with the constitution
- (5) Government should pay attention to the voice of majority and takes timely decision for the good of all.

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