Review

Generating socio-economic values and skills in learners through geography, civic and environmental education

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Nigeria is a cultural mosaic. Ethnicity, language, region and religion interactively form Nigeria's matrix of cultural pluralism. More than this, there is a vast environmental degradation caused, in the main, by man's struggle for existence, urbanization and population explosion. Here lies the relevance of geography, civic and environmental education as a strategy for social engineering in Nigeria's socio-political equation by generating in learners socio-economic values and skills. Geography education, for instance, exposes learners to map-making, map-reading and Environmental Impact Assessment. Civic education teaches learners their rights and duties as citizens of Nigeria, the need for dignity of honest labour and personal discipline while environmental education (EE) enables learners to gain the knowledge, skills and values needed to make decisions to take actions that will sustain rather than deplete the planet. It encourages the development of the necessary skills and expertise needed to address the challenges and foster attitude, motivations and commitments to make informed decisions and take responsible action. Learners can use the skills acquired to investigate environmental problems and to contribute to the resolution of these problems. These subjects should therefore be taught in all tiers of Nigeria's educational system.

Keywords: Cultural pluralism, environmental degradation, learners, objectives, socio-economic values.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is culturally pluralistic. The country has more than 400 ethnic groups (Suberu in Fabode, 2012). Ethnicity, language, region and religion interactively form Nigeria's matrix of cultural pluralism (Young, 1993). This phenomenon is sustained by the various ethnic groups holding unto their strong ethnic sentiments and symbols to promote their systematic pluralism and exclusiveness

of cultural boundaries. Under such condition of multiculturalism, a phenomenon of ethnicity is used as an instrument of struggle for privileges and opportunities. Ethnicity, Nnoli (2008) avers, is a very sensitive and emotional issue in African national life, particularly politics. Ethnicity like any other social phenomenon is not immutable; it alters its form, its place and role in the life of a society. Otite (2002) describes ethnicity as a personal or group exploitation of a collective consciousness of difference, identity and exclusiveness, strengthened by

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symbols, with inherent phenomena of conflict and discrimination against non-members in situations of social crises and competition over commonly valued political and economic resources. Besides, the social life in Nigeria is replete with moral faults like examination malpractice, prostitution, ritual killings, etc. Indeed, naked greed, dishonesty and corruption have become "virtues" in our society (Uduigwomen, 2006). Abu and Dangwong in Fan (2004) submit that there are thirty three cult groups in our schools.

Religion is a form of service, adoration or reference given to a Supreme Being by man (Fan, 2014). Religion promotes social solidarity by dealing with situations of emotional stress that threaten the solidarity of society. Furthermore, religion is a source of personal morality; a socialising and a stabilising agent as it helps individuals to grapple with emotional crises by placing them in eternal perspective. There are three religions in Nigeria: Traditional African Religion (TAR), Islam and Christianity. Nigeria's religious life is characterized by intolerance and conflict. Olu-Adeyemi in Fabode (2012) avers that about forty ethno-religious clashes happened between May 1999 and September, 2000, thus signalling an average of one bloody clash per month since the return of democracy. More than this, there is a vast environmental degradation in Nigeria caused, in the main, by man's struggle for existence, urbanization and population explosion. Here lies the relevance of geography civic and environmental education as a strategy for social engineering in Nigeria's socio-political equation by generating in learners socio-economic values and skills.

Socio-economic Skills in Geography Education

Values as a concept means the worth or importance which is attached to something. Sociologists speak of values as assumptions both conscious and unconscious of what is right and important. Socio-economic values as cooperation, cooperation, responsibility and respect for public property are very crucial factors in nation-building (Fan, 2009).

Geography describes and maps the world. All human beings share basic fundamental things which have been endowed by nature regardless of which part of the earth one lives on. This means that people differ but should be able to learn from each other's cultures, background, exposures or the lack of it, without prejudice. Gregory (2000) posits that physical geography/physiography focuses upon the character of, and processes shaping the land-surface of the Earth and its envelope, emphasizes the special variations that occur and the temporal changes necessary to understand the contemporary environments of the Earth. Its purpose is to understand how Earth's physical environment is the basis

for, and is affected by, human activity. Physical geography was conventionally subdivided into geomorphology, hydrology, biogeography, but is now more holistic in systems analysis of recent environmental and Quaternary change. It uses expertise in mathematical and statistical modelling and in remote sensing, develops research to inform environmental management and environmental design, and benefits from collaborative links with many other disciplines such as biological (especially ecology), geology and engineering.

Human beings are at the centre of physical geography. This is a result of the leading role that humans now play in the shaping and running of environmental systems. Modern humans deeply influence the form and function of the ecosphere. Like all organisms, humans interact with their environment. Unlike other species, they have acquired the ability to alter the environment in novel ways, putting, land under crops, building towns and cities, their fondness of building over bigger cities, extracting minerals and fuels and constructing factories. The exponential growth of the human population, coupled with advances in agricultural and industrial technology, transport and the desire of western civilization to occupy new lands, led to a dramatic, global-change in the land-cover of the planet known as the Great Transformation (Huggert, Lindley, Gavin and Richardson, 2004).

Humanity fixes more atmospheric nitrogen than is fixed by all natural nitrogen-fixing processes. Humans use more than one half of all accessible surface fresh water. Human-induced habitat destruction, habitat fragmentation and the introduction of exotic species have driven around a quarter of the bird species on Earth to extinction. Humans affect global biogeochemical cycles, including the carbon, nitrogen and sulphur cycles; they mobilize such metals as arsenic and mercury; they alter the water cycle and they reduce biodivers. They have caused accelerated erosion of soils in many parts of the world and have nearly exhausted some non-renewable resources and placed some renewable resources in jeopardy.

Geography education exposes learners to map-making, map-reading and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which is a process of evaluating the likely environmental impact of a proposed project or development, taking into account inter-related socio-economic, cultural and human-health impact, both beneficial and adverse. EIA as a tool to identify the environmental, socio-cum-economic impact of a project prior to decision-making. It aims to predict environmental impact at an early stage in project planning and design, find ways and means to reduce adverse impact, shape project to suit the local environment and present the prediction and option to decision-makers. By using EIA, both environmental and economic benefits can be

achieved, such as reduced cost and time of project implementation and design, avoided treatment/clean-up costs and impact of laws and regulations.

Civic education and social engineering in Nigeria

Civic education and social engineering are Siamese twins. Ololobou (2007) describes social engineering as the enrichment of the people with knowledge and understanding of the environment; assisting them to acquire functional skills and cultivating in them values and attitudes such as cooperation, creativity, productivity, peaceful co-existence, resource conservation, etc. so that the cumulative impact on society is the enhancement of its quality. The focus is the upliftment of the quality of life in society; contribution to the growth and development of the Nigerian society. Civic education is therefore the study of the process through which people acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and positive disposition (norms) that are needed for effective democratic citizenship. It is the study of the national ideals, values and principles of state with the aim of making the individual become an effective citizen of such a democratic state; it is the study of what Nigeria wants her citizens to become in order to participate effectively within the Nigerian and global democracy. In doing so, civic education tries to equip the students with the knowledge, skills, aspirations, attitudes, norms and values that will help them to live peacefully with others and contribute effectively to the development of the Nigerian state. For example, when a student acquires the knowledge of the fact that "Nigeria is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious country" he should develop values and imbibe attitudes that can help him live peacefully with people of other ethnic and religious groups. In order to do this, the individual would be expected to have attitudes like tolerance and respect for others.

Osuagwu and Ogbonnaya in Okam (2011) describe civic education as the process of imparting knowledge, virtues, norms, values, attitudes and acceptable manner of conduct and behaviour into the citizens of a community or nation aimed at building a strong community or nation. Indeed, civic education is a boon for producing Nigerian youths for citizenship through the Nigerian school system.

The general objectives of civic education are

❖   Educating Nigerians to realize that democracy is an indispensable precondition for rapid national development;

❖   Educating Nigerians about the rights and duties as citizens of Nigeria. ;

❖   Educating Nigerians about the dangers of apathy and political silence;

❖   Promoting the formation of revitalisation of popular organisations at all levels of our society to ensure transparent democracy and social justice;

❖   Raising the consciousness of the Nigerian masses to realize that their poverty derives from exploitation , domination and lack of good democracy in the nation;

❖   Educating Nigerians through popular organisations such as Labour Unions, Cooperatives, Women Associations, Farmers' Associations, Community Development Association, etc to take democratic decisions of public issues affecting their lives;

❖   Educating and mobilising masses to realise that they (and they alone) are the best defenders of democracy and social justice;

❖   Educating Nigerians to view government as their agency, and government officials as Public Servants, and not 'Masters' and that is their own national duty to intervene and correct such officials when they go wrong or abuse their offices or positions;

❖   Removing institutional obstacles to popular participation of the masses in public and private affairs and development process;

❖   Educating and mobilising Nigerians against ethnic religious and sectional intolerance and manipulations;

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❖   Educating and mobilising Nigerians to identify, expose and reject corruption in all ramifications in the nation;

❖   Educating and equipping Nigerians the right to vote for the right candidate of their choice;

❖   Educating and mobilising Nigerians to identify with the Nigerian Nation and to reject any manipulation of acts which threatens the unity and integrity of the nation;

❖   Educating and mobilising Nigerians to identifying with just and democratic struggles of Africans and other oppressed peoples in any part of the world;

❖   The attainment of a national democratic society where the masses are conscious, vigilant and organised and in which social justice, poverty and foreign denomination of economy are totally eliminated (MAMSER in Philip – Ogoh, 2011).

Socio-economic values inculcated through civic education

Values are those objects we cherish, appreciate, desire, want or need. They may be social, religious, moral, spiritual, aesthetic, political, economic, technological or

material. Uduigwomen (2006) scholarly opines that survey reveals that Nigerians commonly cherish the following values: recognition by others, a happy home, honesty, good character, faith in the Supreme Being, friendship, mature love, success in career, procreation as a major goal of marriage, sufficient education to achieve good things in life, equality of opportunities, kindness, helping others with one's good turn, a sense of accomplishment, loyalty, truthfulness, industry, respect for elders and for other people's rights and property and being humane. Civic education intends to inculcate in students the following values: tolerance, modesty, selflessness, vivacity, patriotism, honesty, contentment, respect for elders and constituted authority, merit, pride in Nigeria's culture, courage, hard work, unity in diversity, compassion, enterprise and industry, social justice, care for the weak (orphans, elderly, refugees and destitute), cooperation, dignity of honest labour and personal discipline/self control.

Socio-economic values and skills in Environmental Education (E.E)

Several environmental issues arise both globally and locally by increased urbanization in all countries of the world. The influx of population from rural areas into cities has accelerated housing scarcity, increased inefficient waste disposal, scarcity of potable water supply and has led to breakdown of conventional health system. The main issue is how to channel and control man's activities (production and consumption) within the ecosystem in order to ensure an increasing output, maximizing his welfare and minimizing environmental problems. It has been that man now faces a 'paradox". On one hand, man must apply his knowledge and technology for developmental purpose to enhance his welfare. On the other hand, as he aims to produce maximum welfare to cities, expand and modernize agriculture, some unintended negative consequences are produced. The unintended consequences are what we call environmental problem.

Environmental issues are real. They are first, ecological problems which are politicized and transferred into controversial issues. They have become persistent, and they are increasing through increasing variables like population, organization, industrialization and poverty. The school must not shy away from them. This is because men with values, attitudes and belief are the primary actors in the environmental system. Men make production decision and policies, adopt particular technological orientation and in their quest for profit maximization unsustainably produce environmental problems.

The following environmental issues are what occupy the attention of environmentalists, governments, economists, and many non-government organizations worldwide (Goldfarb, 1997):

1. Should environmental regulations be replaced by market-based strategies?
2. Does wilderness have intrinsic value?
3. Are laws made to protect endangered species fundamentally sound?
4. Should environmental policy be redesigned to provide for human welfare?
5. Is limiting population growth a key factor in protecting the global environment?
6. Should property owners be compensated when environmental restrictions limited development?
7. Should the industrial use of chlorine be phased out?
8. Should industries aim at "zero" discharge in clean water policy?
9. Should electric cars replace gas-based car in reducing air pollution?
10. Can expansion in agriculture be based on chemical based agriculture?
11. Should recycling of waste be encouraged in spite of cost?
12. Can economic-based pricing save tropical rain forests?
13. Do the projected consequences of ozone depletion justify phasing out chlorofluorocarbons?
14. Are aggressive international efforts needed to slow global warming?
15. Are major changes needed to avert a global environmental crisis?

With regard to these issues, Goldfard writes: people who regard themselves as environmentalists can be found on both side of all the issues. But the participants in these debates, nonetheless, strongly disagree due to differences in personal values, political beliefs, and what they perceived as their own self-interest on the best way to prevent environment degradation. Understanding the general issues raised is a useful preparation for examining the more specific controversies. In the face of mounting environmental problems and issues, the school must not sit down and watch. Even if the problems are politically turned into issues, the school must insist that there is a *global risk* involved, and must therefore take action based on the *new uncertainty principle:* when an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause effect relationships are net fully established scientifically (Appell, 2001:)

What is Environmental Education (EE)?

Environmental education is a process aimed at developing a world population that is aware of and concerned about the total environment and its associated problems, and which has the knowledge, attitude, skills, motivation, and commitment to work individually and collectively towards solutions to current problems and the prevention of new ones (Asodike, 2010). It is a programme of instruction that leads to an understanding, awareness and action with respect to the quality of environment (Jarolimick in Onyenze 1993). It is the process of recognising values and clarifying concepts in order to develop the skills and attitudes that are necessary to understand and appreciate the interactions among man, his culture and his biophysical surroundings. As an important environmental objective, we do not want only to use the environment wisely, but also to enjoy it. When we use the environment wisely, we avoid wastage of resources and also preserve the environment for the benefit of all now and in the future. For instance, if we dispose our refuse wisely, we have developed good attitude for environmental cleanliness and good sanitation and we reap the fruits of good health. If we learn to plant two trees for only one we fell, we have cultivated good attitude of preserving and conserving our environment. If we learn to avoid environmental pollution, we have preserved both our health and our environment.

Environmental education, therefore, involves the development of understanding of how the environment functions, how it is inter-related with man, how man affects his environment and the consequences of his actions on the environment. Students also learn about the seasons of the year and how they influence human activities such as planting and harvesting of crops, how physical environment influences what they eat, wear and their means of transport or occupation, i.e. farming, fishing, pottery, trading, mining. They learn the causes of natural disasters including flooding, erosion, fire disaster and epidemics as a result of poor environmental sanitation and management. Students are taught how to care for our environment such as cleaning our compound, sanitation of the environment, how to check erosion, careful disposal of refuse, obeying traffic rules and protecting the environment. It also teaches students the consequences of a careless use of our environment. If we preserve the environment, it will preserve us, but if we destroy it, it will also destroy us directly or indirectly. Through cleaning the environment, the children learn to keep the environment clean, get involved in environmental sanitation, cleaning of the streams in the village, and so become aware of the dangers of environmental pollution in their community.

Curriculum Objectives

According to Michaelis in Fan (2014) schools must seek to achieve the following objectives in the teaching of environmental issues:

1.   Awareness of environmental problems and conditions, causes and consequences of deterioration, corrective measure currently under way and needed in the future and actions that individuals and groups may take.

2.   Understanding and appreciation of the impact of energy use on the environment and the economy, of the need of alternative energy sources, and of the consequences of energy shortages.

3.   Thinking and decision-making processes by analyzing problems, taking and defending a position on issues and evaluating proposals related to energy use, conservation of resources and energy, and improvement of the environment.

4.   Skill involved in studying environmental problems, such as reading, interviewing, and working with other in action projects.

5.   Attitudes, values and appreciation are related to quality of life, commitment to improve the human and physical environment, and the need for individual group and worldwide cooperative action.

This view is corroborated by Oko-Jaya(2010) who posited that environmental education concentrates on:

-    Helping people acquire necessary knowledge about the environment.

-    The relationship between man and his environment.

-    Creating awareness on environmental challenges.

-    Developing the attitude, skills and expertise needed to manage the environment and cope with the challenges.

-    Fostering attitudes geared towards making commitments and acting positively in order to live sustainably.

-    The education is a process and it involves an organized effort. This can be achieved as shown in the table below.

The Need for Attitudinal Changes

One of the major ways of effecting environmental education is to try and change people's attitude towards some of the innovative tracts.

Typical among the traditional practices which are harmful to the environment are:

a.   Bush-burning: This destroys flora and fauna in

Table Environmental problems, concepts teaching and learning outcome

S/No	Environmental problems	Concepts to be covered	Methods	Learning outcomes
1.	Air pollution	1. Knowledge of air Pollution 2. Comprehensive description for air pollution 3. names of air Pollutants 4. Diseases caused by air pollution and its remedies 5. Sources of air Pollutants.	Reading lecture and Discussion Prepare a list Demonstration through charts Make a survey	Motor skills Application Practical utility
2.	Soil and water conservation	1. Reason of floods and droughts 2. Causes of water and energy shortage 3. Siltation of tanks and reservoirs 4. Reason of soil erosion	Discussion Demonstration Problem solving method	Knowledge Comprehensive Application
3.	Ozone pollution	1. Knowledge of Atmospheric Chemistry 2. Negative effects of ozone on health 3. Ozone pollution and agriculture 4. Effects of ozone depletion on industry	Discussion Lecture-demonstration method (use of audio-visual aids)	Knowledge Interrelationship Explain Conclusion
4.	Noise pollution	1. Difference from other forms of air pollution 2. Sources of noise pollution 3. Deleterious effects of noise pollution 4. Noise pollution and urban life 5. Noise level in Metropolitan Cities 6. Measures of controlling noise pollution	Lecturer demonstration method	Comparison Classification Comprehension Relationship Evaluation Application
5.	Water pollution	1. Chemistry of water pollution in acid rain 2. Source of water Pollution 3. Biological Pollutants 4. Several human infections occur due to polluted water 5. Remedial measures	Project method	Analysis Classification
6.	Pollution through pesticides	1. Effects of pesticides on soil and water 2. Pesticides hazards 3. Biological pest Control technique 4. Use of genetic engineering and tissue culture	Lecture demonstration method	Knowledge Comprehension Knowledge Application
7.	Deforestation	1. Depletion and degradation of forest 2. Harmful effects 3. A joint programme of forest resources assessment (efforts of NGO's and UNEP)	Discussion Demonstration Prepare a list of programme	Knowledge Comprehension Skill
8.	Problem of urbanization	1. Physico-geographic aspect, ecological-geographic aspect and economico-geographic aspect of urbanization 2. Changing hydro-geological conditions within cities 3. Theoretical foundations of an anthropogenic geomorphology of large cities 4. The prospects of urbanization: systems of urban settlements	Lecture and discussion Lecture-demonstration method Lecture demonstration method Group discussion	Observation Comparison Analysis of relationships Application
9.	Problem of illiteracy	1. Causes of illiteracy 2. Male and female illiteracy 3. The challenges of universal literacy 4. Government efforts and NGO's engaged in this direction 5. Launching of various programmes in universities	Discussion Project method	Comprehension Knowledge+ comprehension Knowledge of various organizations Awareness
10.	Demographic problem	1. The existing demographic scene 2. Causes of high risk of maternal deaths 3. National family Welfare 4. Population education for students	Presentation of data with the help projector Discussion Descriptive way of explanation Project method	Knowledge Evaluation Application Commitment

Source Nasrin, D. (2008)

addition to other soil nutrient.

b.   Careless and wrong farming practices that promotes soil erosion, rapid depletion of fertility through over cropping and overgrazing.

c.   Indiscriminate destruction of trees and vegetation which encourage wind and soil erosion.

d.   Exploitative hunting of wild life and fishing almost to extinction.

e.   Miscellaneous reckless human activities such as fire-wood collection for domestic fuel, lumbering merciless felling of trees for timber and a relentless cutting of edible leaves for vegetable soups. All these practices encourage deforestation.

f.   Land-hunger usually makes people over crop since they lack land to practice shifting cultivation. It is often difficult to convince such farmers either to practice crop rotation or fertilize their otherwise over cultivated piece of land.

Thus attitudinal change is crucial to environment preservation of protection. The people must first see the need to change from the status quo.

a.   The importance of waste management should be stressed through mass education in formal and non-formal means. This can be carried out through such means as public rallies where vital environmental issues are discussed as well as the use of bill boards where environmental graphics and messages are illustrated. In addition, the provision of garbage bins in sufficient quantity in public places within rural and urban areas would help raise the much desired environmental consciousness of the people.

b.   There is also need to enforce all environmentally related legislations through sanctions and education.

c.   The environmental day – "June 5" should be celebrated and marked more meaningfully to involve all relevant groups: family, schools, industries and government agencies through such means as film shows, guided tours to zoos, wildlife parks, gardens and industrial locations among others, where benefits of unpolluted environment as well as the consequences of defiled environment are illustrated.

d.   Government should legislate on the integration of horticultural facilities and culture in architectural designs of public and private property.

e.   Environmental Education should be intensified in the rural areas to modify attitude on consumption of "Bush meat" and wood through film shows.

f.   Special levy should be imposed on hunting to discourage destruction of wildlife.

g.   Government should demonstrate sincere commitment towards environmental programme and problems – in terms of time and resources rather than the traditional life – service orientation.

h.   Public/private organizations should be made to demonstrate their social responsibilities with different environmental projects in schools and communities in which they operate.

2.   The activities of such bodies as Nigeria Conservation Foundation (NCF) and Chevron among others should be highlighted and recommended for emulation especially in their contributions towards positive environmental development in Nigeria. In this regard, the inputs of NCF in the formulation of bold conservative policy in Nigeria and that of the establishment of Lekki Conservative Centre for the promotion of environmental education and research by Chevron should be noted and stressed.

CONCLUSION

The major conclusion forwarded by this work is that Geography, Civic and Environmental Education (EE) play vital roles in developing vital skills and values among learners. Schools act to preserve tradition and heritage, and they carry out decisions about what to teach based on the customs and traditions of the past schools alter programmes in response to social change in response to social change. Readjustment requires continuous change in responses to social changes. Schools are expected to assume the major responsibility for guiding the future and to remedy the moral and social ills of the past and present.

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