
ENGENDERING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA
THROUGH EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
VALUE EDUCATION CURRICULUM

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Abstract

Government as an institution of the state exists to promote the welfare and security of people and education for national development and social change. However, Nigeria is experiencing deterioration in governance, developmental failure, erosion of internal security, worsening social and inter-communal cohesion, corruption and unethical practices that have made the country to be grouped in the low human development category and at 158 position out of 189 countries in 2019. The Fund for Peace positioned the country as the 14th most fragile state in the world out of 178 countries surveyed in 2019. The study therefore investigated how good governance can be engendered in Nigeria through effective implementation of Value Education Curriculum. The study adopted both event and content analyses in extant documents relating to good governance and value education curriculum implementation in Nigeria. The study discovered among other things that National Value Education is only taught and learnt at Basic Education level and learning experiences are not too learner-centered, practical and activity based in schools. It was recommended among other things that there should be urgent review of the National Values

curriculum to meet the needs of the Nigerian society and to incorporate the elements essential for good governance and Value Education inculcation should be a life-long and pervasive affair in the country.

Key words: Governance, Value education, Curriculum, Implementation, Effective

Introduction

Government as an institution of the state exists to promote the welfare and security of people and governance of a state can either be good or bad depending on how power or authority is exercised for the welfare of people in a group or society or country. Good governance according to the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) means that 'public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the realization of human rights in a manner essentially free from abuse and corruption, and with due regards for the rule of law' (OHCHR, 2020). On the other hand, bad or weak or poor governance is characterized by political instability, arbitrary policy making, unaccountable bureaucracies, unenforced and or unjust legal systems, the abuse of power, a civil society unengaged in public life, and widespread corruption. Adegbami and Adepoju (2017) opined that governance in 'Nigeria is not good'. This position is premised on developmental failure, erosion of internal security, gigantic debt, poverty crisis, corruption and unethical practices, government ineptitude, poor and unreliable infrastructure and utilities. However, it is believed that education is an instrument for national development and social change, and an agent of social reproduction and transformation (Enu & Esu, 2011; FRN, 2013).

Globally, curriculum is conceived as a means of preserving, transforming and transmitting the cherished values, beliefs and aspirations of a society from generation to generation. Although various opinions exist on the elements of curriculum development, its typologies and models, it is incontrovertible, that the elements of curriculum should at least include aims, goals and objectives of

learning, means of organizing learning experiences or teaching objectives and its evaluation.

The aims of the curriculum are general statements that provide direction or intent to educational action. Goals are statements of educational intention which are more specific than aims. The objectives are usually specific statements of educational intention which delineate either general or specific outcomes (Wilson, 2014). In other words, goals are proximate and limited to a period while objectives are immediate, specific and limited to a given course of instruction or lesson (Kolawole, 2006). The subject matter or content refers to the totality of what is to be taught and this includes knowledge, skills and attitudes learners are to be exposed to. The learning experience refers to any interaction, course, program, or other experience in which learning takes place (ed.glossary, 2013) and teaching strategies also known as instructional strategies, refer to methods used to help students learn the desired course contents (Sarode, 2018).

It is important to ensure that the curriculum when implemented achieve the desired effects. Through the process of evaluation, all stakeholders in the process of curriculum planning, design and implementation are able to determine the success or otherwise of the planned programme. Curriculum evaluation can be formative or summative. Formative evaluation is a method of judging the worth of a programme while the programme activities are forming (in progress) (Clark, 2015).

The need for development and improvement in the welfare of people and safety of life and property has made the instrumentality of education important. Education is so vital for social change in that it brings about improvement in the prospects and attitude of man and advancement of institutions. This consideration has influenced massive investments in education in Nigeria since independence in 1960 and several curriculum innovations. However, the quality of governance in the country is regarded as poor and the educational curriculum has largely failed to achieve the nation's philosophy and goals of education. It is in this respect that the government in 2010 in her desire to restore the education quality and make it effective in meeting its goals convened the Presidential

Summit on “Restoration of Education Quality”. Part of its recommendations was to reduce the number of subjects offered at the Basic education Level (primary 1 – 6 and Junior Secondary 1-3), without reducing the quality, depth and appropriateness of the curricula. The implementation of this recommendation led to the introduction of Religion and National Values Curriculum which later became National Values Curriculum in 2017. All these efforts are still being subjected to a lot of controversies and therefore, the intention of this work was to investigate the possibility of engendering good governance in Nigeria through effective implementation of the Value education Curriculum.

Specifically, this work through both event and content analyses in extant documents look at value education, good governance and their state in Nigeria. It also looks at the challenges and possibilities of using the instrumentality of the value education curriculum to promote desired national development and social change, and prevent the predicted failure of the country attributed to poor governance and fragility.

Conceptual Framework

Value education has no universal definition and contents. It is often a product of societal needs and cultural milieu. Eskew (2004) defines value education as the process by which American society instils specific desirable principles regarding moral behaviour and civic responsibility into the citizenry, particularly, the children. He identified its major learning contents as multicultural education, ethnocentrism, cultural pluralism, multiculturalism, and traditionalism. In the United Kingdom, value education runs through all subjects and it is aimed at the development of the whole child as a reflective learner within a calm, caring, happy and purposeful atmosphere. Its contents focus on the inculcation of the British values of tolerance, respect, individual liberty, rule of law and democracy; Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development, Personal, Social and Health (PSHE) Education (Ledbury, 2020). In Slovenia, value education is regarded as moral education and primary schools are given the autonomy to develop the principles, norms, rules, activities, procedures, measures, presentation of values and so on

that support the specific actions of teachers, students, school leadership and parents in the field of moral education (Krek, Hodnik & Vogrinc, 2019). In Ghana, value education is not a stand-alone curriculum but its contents are taught in Social Studies, Religion and Moral Education and Civics Curriculum at pre-tertiary schools. The objectives of Social Studies that teaches value education in Ghana is to prepare the individual by equipping him or her with knowledge about the culture and ways of life of their society, its problems, its values and its hopes for the future (CRDD, 2007).

Value education is often associated with moral or character education. This influenced the Nigerian Educational Research Development Council (NERDC) acting on the need to attain the Education for All (EFA) goals, National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the desire to reduce the number of subjects offered at the Basic Education level to between 6 and 13 subjects, had to group related subjects of Islamic Studies, Christian Religious Studies, Social studies, Civic Education that focus primarily on values (societal, moral, inter-personal) to form a new Universal Basic Education subject called Religion and National Values (Obioma, 2012).

In the new curriculum of Religion and National Values (RNV) the contents of Social Studies, Civic Education and Christian Religious Studies (CRS) / Islamic Studies (IS) was arranged into themes and a new theme called Security Education was added. However, there was intense public disagreement on the inclusion of both Christian Religious Studies (CRS) / Islamic Studies (IS) in the same curriculum. NERDC had to excise both Christian Religious Studies (CRS) / Islamic Studies (IS) from the then RNV in 2017 and the extant curriculum was renamed National Values.

Good governance is defined as the process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the realization of human rights in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption, and with due regard for the rule of law (OHCHR, 2020). Good governance has 8 major characteristics. These are participation, consensus orientation, accountability,

transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, equity and inclusiveness and rule of law.

Participation means people should take active part in the decision-making process either directly or through their representatives. Informed and effective participation is promoted by freedom of association and expression and an organized civil society.

Consensus orientation for good governance is achieved when different interests in a society agree on what is in the best interest of the whole community.

Accountability is important for good governance. An organization or institution has an obligation to report and explain decisions or actions taken to the public and other stakeholders. Accountability is ensured through adherence to transparency and rule of law.

Transparency promotes good governance when decisions taken and their enforcement are clear to all and follows stipulated rules and regulations. It is also reflected in free and easy access to information in easily understandable forms and media.

Responsiveness is key to good governance as organizations and institutions should serve the public in timely, appropriate and reasonable manner.

Effectiveness and efficiency are important for the realization of good governance. Good governance means that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal (Sheng, 2020).

Equity and inclusiveness means that good governance must ensure that all members of the society must have a sense of belonging and must not be excluded or marginalized in the decision making process.

Rule of law is essential for good governance as it implies that decisions and actions must be consistent with the legal frameworks and impartial enforcement of laws.

Good Governance and Nigeria's Performance

The Mo Ibrahim Foundation defines governance as the provision of the political, social and economic public goods and services that

every citizen has the right to expect from their state, and that a state has the responsibility to deliver to its citizens. The Foundation thus established the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) that is premised on the ideals of safety and rule of law (rule of law, transparency and accountability, personal safety and national safety), participation and human rights (participation, rights and gender), sustainable economic opportunity (public management, business environment, infrastructure and rural sector) and human development (welfare, education and health). The 2018 Ibrahim Index of African Governance rated Nigeria at 33 out of 54 countries in Africa with a score of 47.9 which is lower than the African average of 49.9 and the West African average of 54.3. The report shows that the country received its highest score in Participation at 62.7 and lowest in Transparency and accountability scoring 34.5 (punchng.com, 2018).

Major statistics show that the state of governance in Nigeria is poor. The Human Development Index (HDI) which measures countries long term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long healthy life, access to knowledge and decent standard of living in its 2019 report rated Nigeria's HDI value for 2018 as 0.534 – which put the country in the low human development category and at 158 position out of 189 countries surveyed (UNDP, 2019). The implications of this position according to the report include the weakening of social cohesion and people's trust in government and institutions. It also hurts the economy and wastefully prevent people from reaching their full potentials at work and in life. This perhaps largely explains the cause and aftermath of the 2020 '#EndSARS' protest in the country.

Transparency International – the global coalition against corruption, in its 2019 report ranked Nigeria at 146 position out of 180 countries surveyed with a .26 score (transparency.org, 2020). The Mo Ibrahim Foundation in 2018 also claims that in Nigeria, roughly 82.3 million bribes were paid in 2016, equivalent to 39% of the combined federal and state education budget. Bassey, Abia, Attah and Bassey (2013) opine that the consequences of corruption in Nigeria include capacity underutilization, personnel inefficiency and

ineffectiveness, capital wastage, policy distortion, organizational and system decay.

The Fund for Peace in its 2019 Fragile State Index ranked Nigeria as the 14th most fragile state in the world out of 178 countries and the ninth in Africa (Uso & Egbunike, 2020) Out of the 12 indicators of the risks and vulnerabilities faced by individual nations, 11 were dire in Nigeria. The indicators are demographic pressures occasioned by high population density relative to food supply and other life-sustaining resources; massive movement of refugees and internally displaced peoples. Nigeria now has the seventh-largest number of IDPs in the world (Nwaze, 2020).

Other indicators are legacy of vengeance-seeking group grievance; chronic and sustained human flight and brain drain, uneven economic development along group lines and poverty and sharp and/or severe economic decline; criminalization of the state legitimacy; public services; human rights and rule of law; security apparatus and factionalized elites.

The concern should be that Nigeria must not fail because the danger such portends will not only be much for Nigerians to handle but also to her immediate neighbours and the international community. A striking case is post – Ghadaffi Libya, in which nine years after the fall of Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi, Libya remains trapped in a spiral of violence involving armed groups, sectarianism, ethnic groups and external interference that have led the country into absolute chaos (Baspineiro,2020). In Nigeria, the massive killings and colossal destruction and looting of public and private properties following the October 20 #EndSARS protests is a glimpse to the chaos and anarchy that exists when a state fails.

Good Governance and Value Education

The main national goals of Nigeria are the building of a free and democratic society; a just and egalitarian society; united, strong and self-reliant nation, a great and dynamic economy, and a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens (FRN, 2013). It is from these lofty goals that the educational goals of the country are drawn. These include the development of the individual into a morally sound, patriotic and effective citizen, total integration of the

individual into the immediate community, inculcation of national consciousness, values and national unity and the development of appropriate skills, mental, physical and social abilities and competencies to empower the individual to live in and contribute positively to the society (FRN, 2013). All these goals are the major learning contents of the Social Studies and Civic Education curricula within the school system and this influenced their being made core curricula at the Basic Education prior to the introduction of National Values Curriculum. However, National Values is only taught at the Basic Education and not at the Senior Secondary.

A content analysis of the National Values Curriculum reveals that at the Upper Basic Education (JSS1-3), the contents of Civic Education in the National Values Curriculum are arranged into the following sub-themes and topics:

JSS 1

- i) Our values – National values; types of values – honesty, cooperation, self-reliance;
- ii) Citizenship – Meaning, types, process of becoming a citizen;
- iii) National consciousness and Identity - Objects of National Consciousness

JSS 2

- i) Our values – National values; types of values – Integrity, contentment, discipline, courage
- ii) Citizenship - Meaning, types, process of becoming a citizen;
- iii) Governance - Nigeria as a Federation; Relationship between Federal, State and Local Governments.
- iv) Human Rights and the Rule of Law - The Rule of Law; Protection of Human Rights and the Rule of Law, Consumer Rights and Responsibilities
- v) Democracy – Democracy, Pillars of Democracy, Election and Voter Responsibilities, Electoral Malpractices National consciousness and Identity - Objects of National Consciousness

JSS 3

- i) Citizenship - The Constitution, Supremacy of the Constitution
- ii) Our values - National values: right attitude to work, negative behaviour.

- iii) Democracy - Election and electoral bodies in Nigeria (FME, 2012)

The contents of Social Studies theme in the National Values Curriculum are arranged to address the issues of values re-orientation, poverty eradication, peace and dialogue, family life/HIV and AIDS education, critical thinking and life coping skills. The objectives of Social Studies education as reflected in its contents should make the learners to: develop the ability to adapt to a changing environment; develop national consciousness and spirit of national unity; develop ethics of good citizenship and the willingness to contribute to the development of the society; acquire the right types of values and attitudes.

Juxtaposing the National Values curriculum to the pillars of good government which includes participation, consensus orientation, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, equity and inclusiveness and rule of law, the following observations are made from schools visited: value education is essential in promoting and sustaining desirable and cherished values, moral behaviour and civic responsibility among the citizenry; National Value Education Curriculum is only taught and learnt at Basic Education level; The pillars of good government are not fully reflected in the contents of National Values Curriculum; Learning experiences are not too learner centered, practical and activity based in schools; and Teaching strategies are not experiential and Information Technology supported.

Conclusion

Studies and events have shown that the current situation of Nigeria represents an existential danger (Aliyu & Paki, 2020). This is why the former President, Olusegun Obasanjo warned that, "Today, Nigeria is fast drifting to a failed and badly divided state" (Sahara Reporters, 2020). The communique of a meeting involving the leaders of the five ethnic groups of Afenifere, Northern Elders Forum, Ohaneze Ndigbo, Pan Niger Development Forum (PANDEF) and Middle Belt Forum (MBF) held in September 2020 noted the grave dangers Nigeria is facing especially in the areas of deterioration of

governance, the economy, security, political intolerance, worsening social and inter-communal cohesion, the poor performance of democratic and electoral structures, declining faith in leadership, and those charged with leadership at all levels which have combined to push Nigeria to the brinks (Aliyu & Paki, 2020). It is this concern that has made both good governance and value education intervention strategies necessary to check the drift of Nigeria into a failed state.

The Way Forward

In order to engender good governance through the Value Education curriculum the following are suggested:

Urgent review of the National Values curriculum to meet the needs of the Nigerian society and to incorporate the essential elements for good governance. The curriculum should be robust to develop essential private traits of moral responsibility, self-discipline, and respect for the worth and human dignity and public traits of public spiritedness, civility, respect for the rule of law, critical mindedness, and willingness to listen, negotiate, and compromise among Nigerians.

There is also the necessity to make Value Education a life-long and pervasive affair. Teaching and learning of Value Education should be a continuous lifelong activity and made available to all people in the society irrespective of age, gender, belief, background and ability. This will ensure that leaders and the led in the country become morally sound and effective citizens.

Education should also be well funded and schools well equipped with necessary resources that would enhance practical and experiential learning on values attributes. Curriculum fidelity should be maintained and sustained through effective quality assurance, staff development and supervision of the Value Education curriculum implementation processes. Establishment and sustenance of strong institutions that would ensure good governance in the country and promotion of informed, active and responsible participation in the political process and in civil society are necessary.

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