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Civic Education for Adult as Placebo for Deepening Democratic Practice in Nigeria

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Abstract- This paper examines the methodological challenges in the infusion of civic education curriculum in adult basic and post literacy education and other forms of adult learning both in-formal, non-formal and formal education. The paper sees civic education as citizenship, democratic and human right education necessary for deepening democratic in any society but argued that the content and manner of teaching and learning civic education in Nigeria cannot ensure the achievement of the avowed objectives of the subject. As placebo, and not a medicine, the civic education curriculum content and the pedagogical strategies create the false impression of enhancing citizens' participation in Nigeria's democratic project. Thus the paper proposed four pedagogical frameworks such as the pedagogy of human right, resistance, citizenship and peace.

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I. Introduction

Nigeria is currently considered as the biggest democracy in Africa. Its process of democratization for the fourth republic can be traced back to 1999 when the military handed over power to a democratically elected government with an established constitution to foster a liberal democratic, republican and constitutional government. Its acclaimed and self-ambitious biggest democracy perhaps may be attributed to its large population. Being big itself is an advantage and also problem in a democracy. It becomes a problem as the civic space becomes congested and protractedly contested. The civic space which is where the citizens come together to debate and decide about shared concerns and issues became open in Nigeria following the process of democratization. The civic space is also known as public sphere. It is the space between political system and the private individual. The public sphere is the place of the citizen engagement. Haberman cited in Torres and Reyes (2010) argue that the citizens should educate to defend the public sphere. Thus an enlightened and educated citizen is an asset and a political capital for engendering an enduring democracy.

Most African countries including Nigeria whose democracy is still nascent is characterized by the crisis of citizen engagement because of increasing political apathy, poverty, insecurity, lack of infrastructure, ethnic bigotry and religious intolerance. In Nigeria, there has been no election where 50 percent of the registered voters actually voted and where election is adjudged violent free and absolutely free, fair and credible. The issue of free and fair has been the ambition of the electoral commission for which it has always pledge to ensure but has failed. In Nigeria the civic space continues to narrow down to few political elites and as this continues to prevail, selfishness, privatization and lack of intellectual and political capacity to challenge the powers that be in their abuse of power will increase. This may in turn lead to downgrading of the civil society and democracy. Oyovbaire (2007) had pointed out several crisis of governance in Nigeria. This includes the crisis of penetration, crisis of participation, and crisis of integration. The crisis of penetration means the breadth and depth, or the absence of both in governance as it affects the various segments and classes of the country; the crisis of participation means the trouble involved in the people's quest to own and be acknowledged that authority derived from them; and that of the crisis of integration and identity means the degree of attachment to or of withdrawal, alienation and detachment from the state and to, or from one another as citizens of the state or community. These crises are manifestations of the near collapse of the public sphere and consequently a threat to democracy. While Haberman calls for the defense of the public sphere by the citizens, Abo-Witz (2008) called for the decolonization of the public sphere. This, the scholars also assert that will not be possible without education. But the question is what kind of education and what values do the people need to actively and enthusiastically participate in the polity. The answer may lie in adult civic education as a necessary prescription to be given to adults for their active and enthusiastic participation.

Shizha and Abdi (2013) argue that citizenship education is greatly needed to improve political literacy among the adult citizens. Because such civic education is designed to meet the political literacy needs of the adult citizens. It can be specifically referred to as adult education and belong to the branch of adult education called adult civic education. Adult civic education according to Shizha et al (2013) can be seen as a means by which adults acquire knowledge, skills, dispositions and attitudes that are vital for political participation and engagement. With the wave of democratization in Nigeria, citizenship initiatives and popular movements are needed. The adult citizens need

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to acquire adequate and sufficient civic education training and as democracy continue to evolve civic education would became part of the process of lifelong learning of the citizens. Civic education as a subject in primary and post primary levels of education was introduced and made compulsory recently in Nigeria. The curriculum was designed by the Nigerian Educational Research Council. The objectives of the curriculum are to:

1. Promote the understanding of interpersonal relationship between man and woman, the government and the society;
2. Highlight the structure of government, its functions and the responsibilities of government to the people and vice-versa;
3. Enhance the teaching and learning of emerging issues, and
4. Inculcate in learners their duties and responsibilities to the society.

This curriculum is also applied in the adult basic and post literacy education and in any form of education which the adult citizens engage in as part of the process of lifelong learning. The question is: Is the curriculum of civic education adequate in content and methodology in building the democratic capacity of the adult citizens or a placebo and not a medicine? This paper thus examines the content of civic education (Non-formal and informal) for adult and the relevance of adult civic education for political engagements and deepening democracy in Nigeria. In doing this, shortly after the introduction is the concept of civic education and citizenship and its relevance to adult civic education and training. This is followed by examination of the civic education programmes and best way of teaching adult civic education and lastly the concluding remarks.

II. The Concept of Civic Education and Citizenship

The term civic education has been used in different ways. It has different colorations and notations such as citizenship education, political education, political literacy education, and democracy education. Literally and essentially, it is education for good citizenship. As Van Deth (2013) pointed out that civic education is about education, training, awareness-raising, information, practices and activities which aim at equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behavior in order to empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to the promote and protect democracy and the rule of law. Thus civic education for the adults enables the adult citizens to acquire basic and essential political knowledge, skills, attitude, values, and norms and engage in democratic activities as full members of a state or democratic community.

There are two discernible dimensions of civic education in every democracy. These are: The general knowledge of the law as regards the rights and duties of the citizens as provided by the constitution and provision of basic information on the structure of government. Secondly, the development of civic virtues such as moral-ethical principles like self-disciple, respect, trustworthiness, compassion, solidarity, civility, tolerance, and social responsibility. But in recent time civic education has added a third dimension to it programmes. This is critical consciousness with focus on public policies, public dialogues, enlightened and democratic engagement and social action movement. Adult civic education programmes are geared towards fostering national identity, unity and the development of nationalism among adult citizens. Adult citizens learn and acquire national and democratic values such as interpersonal relation like honesty, equality, integrity, justice, patriotism, tolerance, respect and orderliness. These are important societal values that are gradually eroding the society due to emerging capitalist values like individualism, consumerism and profit orientations. These capitalist values may engender capitalist democracy but undermine the traditional and communal value system of the African society. Studies in civic education can promote a sense of agency among adult citizens. Some scholars have argued that civic education curriculum should focus on discussing current events and people should not shy away from discussing controversial topics. To this extent Niemi and Junn cited in Owen and Soule (2010) encouraged discussion of activities of political parties and interest groups in the governance instead of promoting a naive, idealistic view of government and democracy. It is argued that adults citizens through the civic education are in a better position to understand, appreciate, and participate in the political process. Discussing current events that involve social injustices can also compel adult citizens to take action in their community (Kahne and Middaugh, 2003). Hess (2009) suggests that these controversial issues should be carefully chosen and focused on public policy recommendations related to emerging issues.

In sum, citizenship education programmes focuses on the provision of general information about the law, the nurturing of civic virtues and the development of enlightened citizens. By these focus, civic education help to engender enduring democratic political culture and participatory democracy. However, civic education for the adult citizens constitutes a necessary but not sufficient condition for the realization of a truly democratic citizenship. This perhaps is because the curriculum may not sufficiently emphasize the nurturing of a consistent engagement in the political process, are not usually connected to the development

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of policies and practices of participatory democracy, and do not pay enough attention to informal democratic learning. Furthermore, there is one dimension that has generally been neglected by mainstream civic education theory and practice: they do not pay enough attention to issues of the power of citizen. This tends to undermine the citizens understanding of the fact that sovereignty lies with the people. Another major and most important challenge is the changing concept of citizenship.

The term citizenship here refers to membership of a state. The concept goes beyond being a member of a state. The term citizenship according to Lister (2003) is a contested concept and that the meaning varies according to the socio-cultural and historical relationship between the individual and the society. It is contested because even in the same country there is profound disagreement about what citizenship is. People have different perspectives on the criteria for citizenship and the qualities of a good citizenship. Similarly, Schugurensky (2011) sees citizenship as a dynamic, contextual and multidimensional concept. Its dynamism is as a result of the fact that its meaning changes over a given historic epoch, it is contextual because even in the same historical epoch it has different interpretations and applicability. This is why different countries have different criteria to determine who is a citizen, who can become or not be a citizen. As a multidimensional concept, citizenship has four different dimensions. The dimensions are status, identity, civic virtues, and agency. Status here refers to being a full member of a state or community and is endowed with certain privileges, rights and duties. It is a status enjoyed by people by birth (*jus soli*) by descent (*jus sanguinis)* or by naturalization. Identity dimension here implies having a sense of belonging, sharing some common historical ties, language, religion, values, tradition and culture. Civic virtues refer to the values, attitudes and behaviours that are expected of a good citizen.

In this respect there is no widely accepted criterion to adjudge who is good citizen. However, some civic virtues are patriotism, obedience to the laws of the state, diligence, respect, tolerance, honesty, solidarity, responsibility, and most importantly community participation and political engagements. Agency is a state of being in action or affecting change. Torres and Reyes (2010) see the agency dimension as the capacity to make informed choices about actions to take and how to do them, as well as assuming responsibilities for the consequences. To Gerhard (2004), the concept of citizenship is not complete without the concept of equality. Equality before the law is a cardinal principles of democracy.

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria chapter III sub-sections 25-35 deals with citizenship. It provides that citizenship of Nigeria can be acquired by birth, registration and by naturalization as well as the conditions for which a person may be deprived of his citizenship. Section IV subsection 33- 46 contains the fundamental human rights of the citizens. These rights ranges from the first to the third generation rights as declared by the United Nation as contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Right (UDHR). These includes the right to life, right to dignity of human person, right to personal liberty, right to fair hearing, right to private and family life, right to freedom of thought conscience and religion, right to freedom of expression and the press, right to peaceful assembly and assembly and association, and right to freedom from discrimination. Section 23 of the constitution provides that the national ethics shall be discipline, integrity, dignity of labour, social justice, religious tolerance and patriotism. Section 24 further prescribes the duties foe citizens of Nigeria which includes: to abide by the constitution, respect its ideals and its institutions, the national flag, anthem and legitimate authorities. Most Nigerians do not know these constitutional provisions. These and several other provisions such as the structure of the government and the public service are important constitutional areas upon which the teaching of civic education can be anchored to ensure citizens participation and deepening democracy.

III. Adult Civic Education Programmes in Nigeria

Adult civic education programme takes various forms. It can be formal, non-formal and informal. The formal adult civic education programmes entails courses which adults take which are embed with current issues on governance, justice and citizenship and classroom activities that expand their civic capacity for active citizenship and political participation. Some universities have a general studies course on citizenship education or fundamentals of government which every student must take. In adult basic and post literacy programmes, civic education is one of the core subjects that must be taken. Civic education is listed as one of the four core subjects in senior secondary school subjects. The other three are English language, Mathematics, and one vocational subject. Adults who enroll in adult basic and post literacy programmes pass through the civic education curriculum. The curriculum encompass such topical issues like citizenship rights, duties and responsibilities; values like selflessness, justice, honesty; road signs and traffic regulation; pillars of democracy, structure of government, federalism, capitalist democracy, constitutional democracy and the rule of law; political parties; Universal Declaration of Human Rights; political apathy, popular participation and civil society; drug abuse and human trafficking; public service; interpersonal relations and inter-communal relations. The content of the civic education programme can be divided into three disenable areas;

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these are moral education, democracy education and human right education.

There are other civic education programmes outside the formal classroom sitting. Civil society organizations, community based organizations and Non-governmental Organisations are all involve in providing various forms of civic education. The civic society organization like Amnesty International and other human right organizations provide human right education, while faith based organizations are more into moral and ethical aspect of civic education. Both the faith based organizations and the NGOs are more into peace than the human right aspect of civic education. These bodies visit communities and organize town hall meetings, seminars, workshops and radio programmes that centres on human right education, political enlightenment, peaceful resolution of conflicts not excluding social vices like drug abuse, child trafficking. People learn these rights to known how to insist on their right and to participate in the electoral process as citizens of the Nigerian state.

It is hoped that with the present civic education curriculum been applied in adult basic and post literacy and as part of the lifelong learning among adult citizens will facilitate their participation in the democratization process and promote neoliberal societal values beyond the avowed objectives of the curriculum. These include: love of freedom and equality; resentment of autocracy, respect for individuality of each person, a drug free society with its attendant ill-health, equality of opportunity and access to democratic dividend; the creation of an ordered, stable society which guarantees security of lives and property of individuals; cultivation and inculcation in the citizenry of a democratic temper, an attitude of service and trusteeships, a sense of civic responsibility, a spirit of fair play and tolerance of other people's opinions and interests; faithful, selfless, disinterested, impartial and objective service, dedicated, selfless, disciplined, patriotic, honest and highly motivated leadership style, free from social indiscipline, ethnic hatred and jealousies, religious bigotry and the tendency to personalize rulership. All of these are essential elements for a just, egalitarian and democratic society.

It is undisputable that deepening democracy is the function of an active citizenship. The citizens are the major actors in civil society that covers diverse interest and segments of the society; it is the citizens through the civil society that are the major defender of democracy. The citizens are expected to be constantly involve in policy-making and implementation by the government; participating in town hall meetings, public hearing and in respect of implementation and monitoring policy implementation and doing some oversight function to hold public officers accountable citizens through the civil society. The citizens should be able to monitor the democratic process and the performance of institutions and programmes.

As elaborate as the civic education curriculum may be, the question is can it be used to achieved its avowed objectives among adult citizens who enroll in the adult basic and post literacy programme or through lifelong learning? The curriculum content cannot be used to achieve a progressive and democratic society. The curriculum tends to promote neoliberal democratic values with capitalist exploitative tendencies. This perhaps is because of its emphasis on capitalist democracy without residues of socialist ideas which would have build people's consciousness for a radical and progressive mind for social change. The curriculum of civic education cannot produce citizens who can participate in the political arena without questioning why and how they are participating and the status quo in particular. Adult civic education is supposed to shape the minds of people to enable them to function effectively in the democratic space; to be able to read the word and read the world. Thus the curriculum is reminiscent of what Freire called banking education deprived of radical participatory democracy and radical humanism. With this system the citizens will develop the culture of salience which is a negation of democracy. The curriculum is also bereaved of global issues which are necessary in creating citizens beyond national boundaries with the attendant intent of creating global citizenship in Nigeria capable of participating in the international and global political arena in their private capacity. As Barber argues, "citizenship is both transnational and local, rather than strictly national" *(Barber cited in* Battistoni, Longo and Jayanandhan 2009: 90*)*.

> *In respect of human right education as contained in the civic education curriculum, the curriculum is grossly inadequate. The curriculum merely list human rights as contained in the UHR and as contained in the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The content does not contain how the learners can seek redress within the ambit of the law. In a society where the citizens do not know how they can seek redress on the occasion of their right been encroached upon and in the society where public officers often fails in their responsibility, teaching human rights without how to enforce these rights and seek redress with an independent judiciary will make no meaning. The people are under the mercy of the powers that 'be' the rich and mighty. What this will amount to is a society where rights are given without justice. Such curriculum lacks the emancipatory essence and can be seen as a placebo and not a medicine to cure democratic deficit.*

It can be pointed out that some important aspects of community life is absent in the curriculum

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content of civic education such as diversity, multicultural learning and community integration and rural development. The curriculum of civic education is more nationalistic fostering blind patriotism, with no ethnic, tribal, or even mono-religious learning that can tell the narrative of the Nigerian historical past and its present configurations. The histories of the past democratic praxis and the configuration of the country has an over bearing influence on its democratic praxis and so doing civic education without a political history of the country is like not knowing were one is coming from and not knowing where one is going to. Thus, there is the need for intercultural learning, peace education, moral and social education as well as media learning in civic education. We include media learning because governance have become digital with the emergency of e-governance. E-governance as it is presently practiced in most advance countries promotes transparency, accountability, trust, ease access to government information system (which is the right to information act), greater participation of the citizens and above all the freedom of information act.

Another important area of need in civic education curriculum for adults is service learning. Service learning entails volunteering which is a critical aspect of public and community self-help. Civic education curriculum ought to include different kinds of service learning. Service learning inculcates the attitude of volunteering and doing good works. The importance of service learning in any democracy lies in it capacity to build political bridges as well as bonding social capital (Putnam, 2001) and may also develop the capacity building for democratic citizenship within civil society (Kahne and Westheimer, 2000 and 2003). Service-learning is a democratic practice; it offers learners the opportunity to work with a diverse group of citizens in the local institutions.

There are some fundamental omissions in the civic education curriculum in the basic and post literacy programme. Some of the omissions are mostly in the area of government and politics. Neither electoral systems nor political parties are discussed in the civic education curriculum. There is a danger with these absences, the curriculum developers 'playing safe' and opting for a scheme of work that focuses on moral and social issues at the expense of political literacy. It is difficult to see how civic education can adequately inculcate political literacy without covering the electoral act and the processes of election as well as the roles and ideologies of the various political parties in Nigeria. In spite of the fact that the aim of the civic education is to highlight the structure of government, its functions and the responsibilities of government to the people; the issues of governance system is omitted in the curriculum. The question is what processes brought about the structure and how can the government become legitimate. Even legitimacy and the processes by which the government can become legitimate was not part of the scheme of work in civic education.

IV. Pedagogical Framework for Adult Civic Education

Adult civic education cannot be taught and learnt like other subjects because of its importance in developing responsible national and global citizens. First, the current curriculum of civic education as infused in adult literacy programme and as is applied in other non-formal and informal education programmes which adult citizens undertake to be become responsible national and global citizens are inadequate methodologically and in content. The adult learners should be subject of their learning process and the topics of learning must be related to their reality in the specific situations and context. Secondly, adult civic education as its presently applied in Nigeria likes methodological framework. To achieve the four fold objectives of adult civic education five pedagogical strategies can be applied. These are: the pedagogy of resistance, the pedagogy of citizenship, pedagogy of diversity, and pedagogy of peace

Pedagogy of Resistance

As pointed out learner, one major deficit of the current civic education curriculum as infused into adult citizenship education practice in Nigeria is the fact that how adult citizens can seek for redress on the occasion of their right been encroached upon and how the citizens can compel public officers to do their administrative responsibility is not contained therein. Pedagogy of resistance is about how the citizens can be taught how to fight impunity, how the people can demand for justice and stood to oppose all forms of oppressive tendencies in the society. The main strategy and topical issues are how to organize or mobilize for demonstration, protest, how to seek redress using lega and administrative means using such means like mandamus, certiorari, and other statutory remedies. The pedagogy of resistance takes a legalistic approach and helps to empower the citizens to insist on their rights and assert their political sovereignty. Civic education should enable the citizens to recognize their role as agents and subjects who can resist, reform and/or mold constraints to address their own interests and their cultural and material survival.

Through civic education adult citizens engage in a democratic dialogue on issues that emerge from their experience of exploitation with a view to uncovering the social structural contribution towards problems of poverty, cultural marginalization, and gender discrimination, while simultaneously considering the idea that if such structures are imposed by those in power, they can be challenged through resistance and conscious activism aimed at reversing power and domination. Organization and strategic action to

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address this possibility are integral to the process of democratization encouraged by such popular interventions.

V. Pedagogy of Citizenship

In a democracy citizen participation is very germane. Pedagogy of citizenship emphases the rights of citizens to participate and to make decisions in the society. Adult civic education aims at empowering citizens to participate in the democratic process. Pedagogy of citizenship is to teach the citizens to be good citizens of the state. It is aimed at enabling the citizens to become autonomous, critical and capable of making argumentations and to participate in the civil society and work as a collective entity to exercise control over government and resolve conflicts peacefully and democratically. The pedagogy of citizenship is citizen centered, it is to enable the citizens to be it activity in the third sector which is the civil society to insist for accountability from public officers, develop their ability to engage in dialogue; develop technical and political knowledge for active political participation, to enable citizens learn about their locality, region and their state, to develop the value, self-esteem, skills of interpersonal skills. The pedagogy of citizenship will also foster a sense of solidarity, justice, unity, respect for others, tolerance, humility, openness to new ideas, and amenability to change which are necessary democratic values.

The methodology of Learning Projects: this requires learners to "unlearn", "learn to learn", "learn while doing" while engaging in a constant process of action, reflection and systematisation

VI. Pedagogy of Diversity

Diversity is a strength and also major challenge of heterogeneous state. In Nigeria it was the diversity of the country that federalism is adopted. In a democracy the protection of this diversity is necessary with the enthronement of majority rule and the respect and protection of the right of minority. The pedagogy of diversity emphases that equal right implies the recognition of the right to be different. This right is a fundamental right. Some of the key aspects of the pedagogy of diversity which the learners are to be thought are:

1. How to values pluralism and respects the rights of minorities and different cultural groups
2. fosters the construction of identity based on the particular context of each individual
3. How to takes account of the particular conditions of each community in order to increase the rate at which rights are established to respond to the requirements of 'difference' (gender, language, ethnicity, age, etc.)
4. How to develop a discourse that is not merely critical but also enabling, thereby fostering collective dynamics intended to create a new order.

VII. Pedagogy of Peace

This form of civic education is need because of the level of insecurity and constant violence both communal, religious and domestic. The focus of this pedagogy is to address torture, domestic violence, and other forms of physical and psychological violence. In the pedagogy of peace the learners will be thought the basic process of peace education, reconciliation, arbitration and mediation. This area of civic education is also known as pedagogy of non-violence or the pedagogy of conflict. This aspect of civic education focuses on the denunciation of structural as well as interpersonal violence including poverty and war. This pedagogy seeks to promote the values of active non-violence, dialogue, universal human dignity, justice and solidarity. In respect of methodology, the pedagogy of peace emphasis the methodology of dialogue, cooperation,

VIII. Concluding Remarks

There are three elements as the epi-centre of civic education: the first is resistance to domination; the second, love of oneself; and the third, recognition of others as "subjects" who have control over their lives, and of respect for the political and legal rules which allow people to live truly in this way. These elements sum up the formidable challenges facing the individual which are taken up by civic education in a country of shattered lives and shining hopes. Participation is a cornerstone. It is intimately linked to access to decision-making which takes into account the wishes of those affected.

The civic education curriculum for adult is grossly inadequate. Constant analysis is needed of social, economic, political and cultural circumstances, and of the key social players in the processes of transformation so that civic education can contributes to viable and humanitarian proposals for change, with emancipatory viewpoints and paradigms. There is a need to invest in more democratic, clearer and more effective pedagogical approaches, and in active, dialogical, critical and participatory methods centred essentially on raising the awareness of citizens.

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