

Upholding National Values to enhance Community Development through Universal Basic Education Curriculum

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to stress the need to uphold Nigerian national values through the Universal Basic Education (UBE) curriculum to enhance community development. The relevance of national values to community development is that it encourages orderliness, credibility, equal distribution of resources, tolerance, hard work and patriotism. The major implication of the study was that if national values are truly imbibed by Universal Basic Education learners (primary school pupils), a lot of the tragic events that have been experienced in the recent past in our communities, would be checked because good character is easy to learn in childhood than to unlearn bad habits in adulthood. Some of the recommendations were that national values should be included in the teacher education curriculum and taught by teachers who serve as role models while learners should live the lives expected of them for development to thrive in the community.

Key words: National Value, Community Development, Universal Basic Education,

Introduction

Community development is the harnessing of the material and none material resources by the occupants of a particular locality to meet their needs for better living. In living together there has to be common grounds for understanding of operations and judgments, this is where the need for ethics and values arise. National values are like the sailors compass, they give direction to activities and lifestyles of the members of the community and also serve as objectives that could be used to evaluate the worth and extent of progress of the people.

When problems arise in civilized societies, formally recognized institutions like schools, religious and voluntary organizations are expected to rise up to the challenges and proffer lasting solutions. To this effect, the National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) which is the highest curriculum agency for Universal Basic Education (UBE) has put up a strategy using the curriculum to restore ethical values which would help the nation realize its expectations. The rate of moral decadence, corruption and inhuman molestations in our society is not only alarming but threatening the very existence of our once tranquil society. No meaningful development can take place when ethical standards or societal values are broken without recourse. Dishonesty, social injustice, wasteful and ostentatious lifestyles give birth to arm robbery, kidnapping, corruption, sexual perversion, child and human trafficking are negative values that can crumble a community and send it to extinction. Values are those elements that the community considers vital to its existence, sustenance and advancement. These societal values are being translated into learnable subject contents and Abubakar (2014) confirms that the curriculum is the instrument that is used to portray and transmit societal values to learners.

The use of the UBE curriculum is strategic because the Universal Basic Education (UBE) is a curriculum programme for early childhood care education and for children aged 5-15 who go through the three levels of basic education curriculum (Lower Basic 1-3, Middle basic 4-6 and Upper Basic 1-3). Learners at this level are still young and will imbibe good values without persuasions and may not have been entangled with non-ethical lifestyles. According to Akpan (2013), catching them young gives hope to the society because if they grow up with the right values, the society will benefit in the long run.

Programmes and initiatives for early childhood care and education, Six-year Primary Education, and three (3) years of Junior Secondary Education.

Nigerian communities are being guided by the nation's ethics/values stated in section 23 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Be that as it may, it is not the letters of the constitution that is the bane of the matter but the non-adherence to it by individuals, groups, government officials and agencies in the communities. On the other hand, a community will progress and have all-round development when it upholds values that build human and material resources. Since schools are located in communities and these communities make up a nation, it will be thoughtful to use the schools to fortify the inculcation of national values.

This paper will discuss how national values can be enforced through the UBE curriculum so as to bring about community development using the following sub headings:

1. Defining values
2. Nigerian national values
3. Community development
4. National values and UBE curriculum
5. Relevance of national values to community development
6. Recommendations
7. Conclusion

1. Defining values

Values are immaterial in nature but well demonstrated as people interact with one another and with their environment. Daniel et al in Arigbabu (2016) see values as abstract trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that pertain to desirable end-states or behaviours and guide selection or

evaluation of behaviors and events. While Ajero (2016) believes that values are elements that give identity, transformation and development or progress to an individual and the entire society. Again, Osanakpo (2015) puts it that values are beliefs or convictions that guide and direct a person's behavior, purpose and vision. Simply put, values are qualities that define a people, they have a major influence on people's behavior, attitude and serve as broad guidelines in solving problems, taking decisions or setting goals.

There are various areas of human needs and these are what seem to give credence to human values. Mkpa (1987) observed that values are named after the major aspects of life from where we have spiritual, social, political, economic, moral and family life values. Ajero (2016:46) named specific items that belong to these major aspects as respect, rightness, fairness, faith, sympathy, generosity, patriotism, industry, decency, solidarity, law and order, spirit of brotherhood, selflessness, sharing, friendship and hospitality. Most times, values are used as yardsticks to determine whether behaviours, events or happenings are to be accepted as good or bad. They serve as an identity and give direction to individuals and communities.

2. Nigerian national values

Having defined values generally, national values therefore refer to values or ethics that a nation uphold as a common guide to acceptable norms, principles and practices of governance, economy, social/human relationships, justice and obligations. In Nigeria, the constitution states clearly the values which the nation regard or should regard as guiding principles to her existence and development. This is borne in section 23 of the 1999 constitution, there it is stated that the national ethics (values) shall be Discipline, Integrity, Dignity of Labour, Social Justice, Religious Tolerance, Self-reliance and Patriotism. Each of them could be explained thus:

2.1 Discipline: this suggests an orderly or prescribed conduct or pattern of behavior. It also implies self-control which requires exercising restraint over one's own impulses, emotions or desires.

2.2 Integrity: this means adhering to ethical or moral values. It also refers to being incorruptible, that means incapable of being bribed or morally corrupted.

2.3 Dignity of Labour: this is also known as dignity of work, it is the concept that all types of jobs are respected equally, and no occupation is considered superior or inferior.

2.4 Social Justice: Social justice is the equal distribution of resources and opportunities, irrespective of your status or background. It also refers to the process of ensuring that individuals play their roles in the [society](#) effectively and also receive what is their due from society.

2.5 Religious Tolerance: this means putting up with other people's religion without rancor or allowing other people to have or practice other religions and beliefs other than your own.. In countries where they have a national or religion, religious tolerance would *mean* that the government allows other religions to be practiced.

2.6 Self-reliance: this means relying on our own efforts, powers, resources and abilities as compatriots.

2.7 Patriotism: this means devoted love, support, and defense of one's country.

These values are the principles meant to drive home the overall philosophy and goals of the Nigerian nation which are to: (a) live in unity as one indivisible, indissoluble democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom, equality and justice; and (b) promote inter-African solidarity and world peace through understanding. Teaching these values at the UBE level means inculcating right values at the right age to the right people. If this is successfully done, the community in future will have well behaved adults who not only contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of the society but also give room for others to do so.

3. Community development

Community development as defined by United Nations is a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems (Retrieved online 1/19/2017). Such common problems could be grouped under broad categories like: roads and transportation, sanitation and health, food and drugs, commerce and trade, environment and security, education, finance, religion and socio-economic problems. The list is actually inexhaustible as far human communities are concerned. Suffice it to say that down through the ages human communities have always found a way out of every problem that come their way even though it may take decades or even centuries.

The invention of automobiles airplanes, dual carriage roads, telephones, and sophisticated professional tools and equipments such as x-ray machines, scanners and others came as a result of the quest for solutions to problems that existed in communities. For instance in a community where farming is the major occupation and there are no good access road for transportation of their farm produce to and from neighbouring communities, it is the members of the community who create

access roads and build temporary bridges for ease of movement of people and goods before assistance from government. At other times the community could sponsor projects like building of schools, market stalls, town halls, skill acquisition centers, give scholarship to brilliant young people among them and other things that could aid the realization of community goals and objectives which translate to making life better for all concerned.

The other aspect to community development is utilization of available human and natural resources. When people live together, resources within and around the environment will be discovered, tapped and utilized. The management and distribution these resources for the general good of all, will require the practice of sound ethical values. Therefore the place of national values in community development cannot be compromised.

4. UBE Curriculum and National Values

In every nation education has always been a tool for effecting a change through the instrumentality of the curriculum. The recent global increase in crime, corruption, abuse of all sorts, and other anti-social vices has its toll on all communities of people including Nigeria. This explains why the National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) decided to undertake periodic review of the curriculum to reflect the changing realities of the times and make education relevant to the needs of the society. As result of this NERDC developed the 9-year Basic Education called the Universal Basic Education (UBE) with its curriculum called the Universal Basic Education Curriculum (UBEC).

One of the aims of UBEC is that at the end of the 9 years of basic education, the learner should have imbibed high moral values and positive ethical standards (Obioma, 2012). To achieve this, subjects that were previously on their own were merged with others that had similar focus. On this premise, Religious studies (Christian Religious Studies / Islamic studies), Civic Education, Social Studies and Security Education were brought under one umbrella and renamed Religion and National Values. The highlights of this subject are: honesty, regard and concern for the interest of others, justice, discipline, right attitude to work, courage and national consciousness. (NERDC, 2012) A look at the highlights shows that they are actually the core teachings of the Christian and Muslim religions. It therefore stands that there are strong ties between religion and national values such that the teaching of Religion becomes the platform on which national values, integrity and decent character are imbibed, in addition to learning the fundamental principles of the religion.

In teaching the curriculum content in Religion and National Values the teacher has to be a role model in the community. He/she must be living acceptable lifestyle, while teaching with dedication and deep sense of commitment to national values and community development. Children learn more by examples they see than by instructions or words spoken to them. When teachers are role models of national values, the learners in turn imbibe these values and grow up to be adults with good ethical principle who also raise their children in similar values then it will become a trend and generations following will follow suit therefore leaving no vacuum of having children who have not learnt to imbibe right values. This therefore means that if national values are well imbibed, the benefits will accrue to the society and this will spur up community development.

5. Relevance of national values to community development:

Community development involves working together to meet communal needs or providing things that will make the community a comfortable place to live. National values in its own part provide a workable guide to serve as a check, an objective or rule to be observed by all members of the community as it concerns meeting their needs. Igbokwe (2015) observed that Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) was developed in response to Nigeria's need for relevant, dynamic and globally competitive education in terms of knowledge, skills, techniques, values and aptitude. This presupposes that the 9-Year BEC addressed among other things, the issue of national values. The importance of national values to community development are discussed below.

5.1 It encourages orderliness and good conduct: For successful communal living resources will be have to be shared, individuals must take turns patiently, negative and positive excitement must be well controlled. This requires discipline, good conduct, the ability to have oneself, emotions, impulses and desires under control; It also requires respect for people, institutions and authorities. Discipline means orderliness in conduct at home or in public places and also involves rendering assistance to appropriate and lawful agencies in the maintenance of law and order.

When children are taught national values, they will grow up to conduct themselves in as desired both in private and public places and this will yield fruits of obedience to simply laws and order like paying taxes as and when due, obeying traffic rules and others. It takes discipline not to destroy public property for any reason, and this has been an ailment in the Nigerian society. Infrastructures that cost fortunes are easily destroyed because of industrial or electoral disputes. Most traffic jam that cost loss of several man hours on the roads are caused by acts of indiscipline, drainages are

blocked because indiscipline fellows pour their garbage into the gutters. These are factors that work against community development.

Children need to be taught discipline so that they would grow up to be responsible adults and leaders of tomorrow who abide by the nation's constitution, respect its ideals, legitimate authorities and its institutions. Discipline ensures law and order in the community needed for development because nothing goes on well when there is chaos, indiscipline and disorder. Investors do not invest when they are not sure of the enforcement of appropriate law and order in the community.

5.2 It encourages Credibility. Teaching the children national values will encourage credibility which is needed for fighting the war against corruption. Credibility means having integrity or being incorruptible and this is termed integrity in section 23 of the Nigerian constitution. Corruption is like a cancer worm, subtle and deadly, men and women of integrity will not receive bribe for any reason. When public servants are not using public money as due, it slows down or totally erodes development.

Lack of credibility can lead to perversion of justice, diversion of public funds, poor infrastructural development and under development. Integrity will help us to have credible elections, credible leaders and followers. Credible citizens are men and women of integrity, who will not allow diversion of public funds into private pockets, purchasing of obsolete equipments at the cost of new ones for use by the community, building of sub-standard houses which soon collapse and kill the occupants. Community development without integrity on the part of the leaders and the led is as dangerous as sitting on a keg of gun powder.

Children must be taught to imbibe the ethics of credibility so that when they grow up they would declare their income honestly to appropriate and lawful agencies and pay their taxes promptly to aid community development.

5.3 It encourages love for work: Dignity of labour also known as dignity of work makes all types of jobs to be respected, bearing in mind that no occupation is superior or inferior. This value is to encourage people to work with their hands and produce things that are needed in one way or the other. The ultimate end of this value is to make communities self sufficient by producing those things that they need, become industrialists, export to other communities and build infrastructures. The concept of dignity of labour recognizes that people are differently gifted and no job is odd or mean because each job is as vital as any other. Seeing work as something dignifying and fruitful

will drive away laziness and create enthusiasm to work out more thus leading to community development. When people like to use what others produce without producing anything themselves they hinder development in their community and this is why the UBE curriculum want to discourage by having national values in its curriculum. Adelaja, (2015), observed that One of the numerous reasons why African nations in general and Nigeria in particular are still under developed could be located within the ambit of less emphasis being given to the culture of dignity of labour. Dignity of labour as a national value aids community development.

5.4 It ensures equal distribution of resources, opportunities and privileges: Social justice is the equal distribution of resources and opportunities, irrespective of your status or background. It also refers to the process of ensuring that individuals play their roles in the society effectively and also receive what is their due from society. This is the value the society upholds to enable her assign rights and responsibilities to members of the community so that everyone will have a part to share in the benefits and duties. For instance every one must pay tax and everyone is entitled to buy in the market, attend school or use roads built with these taxes. These boost community development.

5.5 It encourages tolerance and corporate co-existence: in a country with diverse tribes, tongues and ways of worship, tolerance cannot be eluded. In Nigeria, religious tolerance has been guarded jealously because of past negative experience this is why it is a national value. Religious Tolerance means allowing other people to practice their religions without you taking offence. Learners are taught to respect the dignity, rights and legitimate interests of other citizens, how to live in unity and harmony in the spirit of common brotherhood with others. When this happens there will be peace, stability and development.

5.6 It encourages Self-reliance: Self-reliance aids community development in that it encourages members of the community to be contented with what they have by relying on their own efforts, powers, resources and abilities as compatriots. This national value is relevant to community development because when communities consume without producing what they need to consume they improve the economy of those they buy from, gradually ruin their own economy and cut short development. The curriculum teaches lifelong skills so that after graduation learners can be self-reliant and also make positive and useful contribution to the advancement, progress and well-being of the community.

5.7 It encourages Patriotism: when there is devoted love, support, and defense of one's country, service to that country would not be cumbersome. A developing country such as Nigeria would go a long way in infrastructural and human development if citizens were patriotic. Patriots always seek for what they would do for their country at their own expense, they would put in their best to bring in things that will add value to the lives of people and the society in general. They help to enhance the power, prestige and good name of Nigeria, defend Nigeria and render such national service as may be required. Patriotism is an instrument for community development.

5.8 It serves as a standard for leadership: leaders are like coordinators of the developmental process in the community and often they are being elected or appointed by the people. The extent to which one imbibes ethics and values as stipulated determines his ability to serve the people. Such values as discipline, integrity, social justice, patriotism and others, are not to be found wanting in a leader if the community should progress. If the contrary happens and a non-ethical leader oversees a community, there will be general disorder and stagnation in the community. Anarchy will thrive there, insecurity and destruction of lives and properties will not fail to be a routine occurrence in such a community.

6. Recommendations

- ❖ Teachers should be role models for result oriented teaching of National Values to learners.
- ❖ Teacher education curriculum should include the teaching and learning of National Values.
- ❖ Learners should imbibe National Values and exhibit same as a way of life in the community.
- ❖ Learners should impart National Values learnt in school to others around them so that the entire society will be saturated with rightful living which will boost community development.
- ❖ Leaders should be appointed based on the extent to which they have imbibed the nation's national values.
- ❖ Enabling environment should be created for the effective teaching and learning of National Values

7. Conclusion

Nigeria national values are clearly stated in the 1999 constitution, used as a focus for the nation's philosophy in the national Policy on Education and pursued as an objective in the UBE curriculum. The issue of National Values is very important to community development and the realization of UBE goals and objectives because it is the fulcrum on which both stand. The curriculum aids the propagation of national values by teaching national values as a subject at the UBE level. Injustice, corruption, crimes, poverty and environmental degradation as a result of wrong attitudes will gradually phase out if men and women, young and old, the leaders and the subordinates uphold the virtues of the National Values. National values promote community development by breeding virtues that enhance productivity, empowerment and sustainability of all aspects of the people's lives. If we are to realize the expected community development then the teaching of national values to UBE learners would be an indispensable instrument for this achievement.

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