

The Role of Citizenship Education in Developing Democracy in Iraq

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Received: October 14, 2018 Accepted: November 28, 2018 Online Published: December 1, 2018

doi: 10.23918/ijsses.v5i2p152

Abstract: Citizenship education is considered an essential tool for democratic development. This article begins with a reflection of the central problems that are afflicting the democratic process in Iraq, issues such as corruption, civil and ethnic conflict, and populational diversity in Iraqi society. This article argues that by introducing a comprehensive citizenship education program into the school curriculum, it will have a positive effect on both national democratic development and political participation in Iraq. It will also help young learners to recognise their civic rights and responsibilities. The paper also analyses the extent to which citizenship education can play a role in building the Iraqi national identity. This application is not to deny other religious or ethnic identities in Iraq but to encourage them to adhere to civic and national identity. The questions that this article has addressed are the following: What is citizenship education? What is its importance? What are the significant problems facing democracy and citizenship education? And finally, why is citizenship education needed in Iraq?

Keywords: Iraq, Citizenship Education, Citizenry, Democracy, Political Participation, Rights and Responsibilities

1. Introduction

In a democracy, citizens can play a significant and active role in sustaining democracy and developing the institutional state, but in a country like Iraq, which is characterised by violence, instability and corruption, the process of democratisation is incredibly tricky if citizenship education or other such measures are not considered. This paper is not arguing that democratic development in Iraq can only come about through citizenship education; instead, it asserts that citizenship education could improve the democratic process in Iraq and improve youth involvement in politics. The fledgeling Iraqi democratic process has already stalled and retrenched due to the numerous challenges it has faced (Bapir 2010). However, there is still hope for democratic progress in Iraq if the Iraqi government can introduce a new comprehensive program that deals with the issue of security, the problem of corruption, the question of militia forces, and a revision of the education system and civic education curriculum in Iraq's education system. In this regard, various institutions and organizations can, directly and indirectly, contribute to the education of the Iraqi citizenry, such as schools, the media, religious leaders and political elites. These sources of knowledge can play a positive and negative role in the way specific populations participate in political and social life. To ensure that citizenship education plays its positive role in democratic development, it is the Iraqi government's responsibility to guarantee that students from different ethnic

and religious groups receive civic educations. The evidence shows that this education is best achieved through a state-controlled system of education and provision of better citizenship education curriculum in schools (Pybas, 2004). In this article, 'qualitative' methods are used to answer questions about the role of citizenship education in the democratic development of Iraq. It also relies primarily on secondary sources, such as books, journal articles, official websites and leading reports from key international organizations and government website. In answering the critical question of the study, this article is organised as follows:

Part 1 - The concept of citizenship education and its importance will be explained

Part 2 - The main problems facing the democratic process in Iraq will be examined

Part 3 - The Problems facing citizenship education will be investigated.

Part 4 - The role of citizenship education in developing democracy in Iraq will be examined by answering the question; why is citizenship education needed in Iraq?

2. Citizenship Education and Its Significance

The concept of citizen (*citoyen, citoyenne*) was first introduced by the French revolutionaries to demonstrate the symbolic reality of equality (Heater 2013). Today, citizenship is the core element of democracy as the source of all authority in a democratic system comes from the citizens of the state (Patrick, 1999). Scott and Lawson (2002) argued that citizenship is made up of a number of critical components, such as participation in social life, a sense of identity, rights, responsibilities and the acceptance of societal values. Roh (2004) added that the highlighting of five critical dimensions of democratic citizens was significant; these elements were responsibility, a sense of community, critical thinking skills, active participation skills, and tolerance. What is more, Kisby and Sloam (2009) made clear that citizenship education deals with a wide variety of subjects including government, politics, human rights, the legal system and equal opportunities issues.

Thus, the transitioning of a country's political system into a democratic one is dependent on the preparation of the citizens of the state to be aware of their political and social rights and responsibilities. The National Curriculum Handbook for Secondary Teachers in England (Department for Education and Employment 1999) describes the importance of citizenship as follows:

Citizenship gives pupils the knowledge, skills and understanding to play an effective role in society at local, national and international levels. It helps them to become informed, thoughtful and responsible citizens who are aware of their duties and rights. It promotes their spiritual, moral and cultural development, making them more self-confident and responsible both in and beyond the classroom. It encourages pupils to play a helpful part in the lives of their schools, neighborhoods, communities and the wider world. It also teaches them about our economy and democratic institutions and values; encourages respect for different national, religious and ethnic identities; and develops pupils' ability to reflect on issues and take part in discussions.

From this statement, it is clear that citizenship education is a vital tool for the preparation of students so that they can go on to play an active role in society. This importance is multiplied when dealing with a country that is transitioning into a democratic system. In this sense, citizenship and civic education aid students to be more responsive and self-reliant when dealing with the issues and problems associated with living in a diverse society. It also offers students extensive knowledge, skills and understanding in regards to public values (Arif 2017). Butts (1980) argues that the subject of civic values might differ in citizenship education from one local to the next. However, he explains that ten civic values need to be taught when it comes to teaching citizenship education in diverse societies, these are equality, freedom, diversity, justice, authority, participation, due process, privacy, international human rights and personal obligation for the public good. Towards these civic values a citizen often has both rights and responsibilities, for example, while freedom, equal protection of laws, property right and participation are the rights of citizens; paying taxes, obeying laws, a personal obligation to the public good is the associated duties of citizens in respect to the civic values (Penrose, 1951). It may be the case that some citizens may know their rights and responsibilities in a given society, but they may have difficulty fulfilling them, or they may not know how to exercise them. Therefore, the question arises: how can citizens enhance their involvement in political and social life? Citizenship education can play a decisive role in developing students' knowledge and understanding of their rights and duties. The primary motivation behind citizenship education originates from the nature of democracy. Democracies need reactive, responsible and informed citizens who are prepared and able to participate in the political process and to take responsibility for themselves and their communities (Hina et al., 2011). Since 2003, in Iraq, there have been efforts to modernize the education system and add civic education programs to the school curriculum. However, these efforts were not far-reaching enough bias the country has been plagued problems inherent in the country's democratic system, such as violence, civil wars, ethnic conflicts and corruptions. To ensure that citizenship education program in Iraq is fitting there needs to be a significant revision of it as such a program would ultimately play a vital role in Iraqi democratic development.

3. Problems Facing Democracy in Iraq

Iraq has an incredibly diverse population; however, accurate statistics and data about the structure of the Iraqi population is scarcely available due to past inaccuracies in census data. The majority of sources reveal that at least 97% of the Iraqi population is religiously Muslim and the other 3% of the population are either of the Yazidis (ethnic Kurds), Mandaeans faith (gnostics), Christian (Chaldo-Assyrians and Armenians) or of the Jewish faith. They also reveal that the largest ethnic group in Iraq is Arab accounting for 77% of the total Iraqi population. Iraqi Arabs are divided into Shiite Muslims and Sunni Muslims, with Shiite Muslims accounting for nearly 75% of the Arab population (60% of the overall Iraqi population), and Sunni Muslims making up almost 25% of the Arab population in Iraq (20% of total Iraqi population). The second-largest ethnic group in Iraq are the Kurds, and they are approximately 20% of Iraq's total population with them subscribing mostly to the Sunni Sect of Islam. Lastly, the Turkman are the third-largest ethnic group in Iraq (Kirmanc 2013, p. 5). Therefore, Iraq is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural society, and there are deep conflicts among these groups over territory, power and resources.

After the fall of Saddam Hussein, Iraq's Shiite Muslim - Iraq's majority group was able to win control of the Iraqi Federal Government in Baghdad and worked to marginalise and undermine the role of the Iraqi Sunni Arabs and in government (among other groups). The Iraqi Sunni Arabs largely boycotted the 2005 elections as they as they could not accept their loss of power over the Iraqi government after the collapse of the Iraqi Ba'athist regime in 2003. What is more, this unwillingness to accept the new Iraqi status quo lead the Sunni Arabs also to attempt to deny power to the Shiite Arab's in Iraq. The Sunni Arabs set about using violence against the Iraqi state to demonstrate their rejection and disapproval of the effort to shift power to Iraq's majority population (Hadad, 2016). Scholars argue that the invasion of Iraq in 2003 created chaos for Iraq (Al-khalidi, 2017), and that as a direct consequence of the United States and United Kingdom invasion into the country, Iraq was plagued with lawlessnesses, armed insurrection, sectarian conflict, high level of corruptions, weak internal security, rise of militia groups, external intervention, terrorism and political marginalization of particular groups. Hence, it is clear that while democratisation has been in continuous development in Iraq, the process has faced many challenges.

Ethnic and religious division in Iraq has mostly produced insecurity, a weak state and ethnic and sectarian conflict. The sense of belonging to a single Iraqi identity is lost on the people of the country. Hence, while the Iraqi state exists, there seems to be no such thing as an "Iraqi Society". This dilemma has posed challenges for relations between state and society and by consequence the process of democratisation (Bapir, 2010). Regarding a unified Iraqi identity, the major obstacle to it is that the people of Iraq adhere themselves to sub-ethnic and religious identities. Thus, it can be argued that ethnic and religious diversity is the primary reason behind the fragile state of democracy in Iraq, with the ethnic and religious conflicts play a significant role in stalling Iraqi democratic progress. For the democratic process in the country to take further steps forward these groups need to view the Iraqi state as a united entity and should refrain from only considering the country as the home of only one particular group (Al-khalidi, 2017).

Also, since 2003 political elites and religious leaders have played a significant role in intensifying ethnic and religious conflicts among Iraqi citizens and the sub-identities. In 2006, when Nouri al-Maliki became the prime minister of Iraq, he led to a deeply divided government weakening his leadership for two years of his premiership. In that period, violence increased with the Iraqi Security Forces unable to enforce the rule of law in Iraq (Al-Qarawee, 2014). This state of Maliki's premiership was evidenced by data from the Iraq Body Count project, which revealed that between March 2003 and March 2013, 174,000 civilian and combatant died as a result of violence in Iraq, and its highest level was in the 2006 and 2007 (Iraq Body Count, 2018). This weakness of Iraq security and Maliki sectarian-driven policies ultimately caused the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in 2014. Hence, the events that followed in 2014 until 2017 meant that Iraqi citizens were, once again, subject to violence and terror.

Another reason behind the stalling of democratic development and the failure of political stability in Iraq has been the presence of terrorist groups in the country since 2003. One such terrorist group was Al-Qaeda in Iraq, which was led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. While the group's leader was killed by the United States forces in Iraq in June 2006 (Gomes, 2018), it continued to remain active in Iraq. However, the group was ultimately weakened after the Sunni Arabs approved the formation of militias, termed "The Awakening Councils", to drive al-Qaeda out in Iraq (Gold & Faber 2017, p. 3). Al-Qaeda in Iraq

had carried out many terrorist attacks against the United States forces in Iraq, Iraqi security forces and Iraqi civilians.

ISIS has also had a negative influence on democratic development in Iraq. This organisation was led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who introduced himself as the "caliph" of Islam in the territory that fell under ISIS control in Iraq and Syria. In 2014, an ISIS assault into Iraq allowed the group to control approximately one-third of Iraq's land. This territory included Mosul (one of the largest city in the country) among other areas (Smith, Brook-Holland and Page). ISIS's occupation of Mosul resulted in the city's ruin. The group destroyed ancient and sacred sites, hospitals, schools and many government facilities in the town. What is more, under the governance of ISIS school attendance in Mosul dropped from 80.3% (before their invasion) to 2.2% (after the attack) (Lafta, Cetorelli and Burnham 2018). According to Asien Hamza, the manager of Nineveh governorate's reconstruction committee, the population of Mosul was 1.8 million before ISIS's occupation; however, their invasion resulted in the displacement of over 875,000 residents of the city and the destruction of the city's infrastructure (Kossov, 2017). Even though in 2017 the Iraqi Government announced the defeat of the Islamic State, ISIS networks remain a threat to Iraq and continue to have the ability to operate in small cells and launch deadly attacks against Iraqi security forces and the Iraqi population.

The presence of paramilitary forces and the absence of a strong national military force in Iraq is a further obstacle to the process of democratisation in Iraq. While these paramilitary groups have played a significant role in defeating ISIS, they have also committed atrocities against the local populations of the territories occupied by ISIS. In this regard, Human Rights Watch published a report in 2015 about the offences committed by Shia militias. These offences, and many others, undertaken by the Shia militias were also repeated in the Tikrit and Tuz Khurmatu offensives (Human Rights Watch 2015). Following the defeat of ISIS in Iraq, these Shiite militia groups went on to reorganise into the Fatah Alliance, and they participated in the 2018 Iraqi elections. The alliance won 47 out of 329 parliamentary seats, and thus, are set to play an influential role in the formation of the new Iraqi government (Frazer, 1995). If these militia forces are not effectively demobilized or disarmed, they will be a threat to the future of Iraq's democracy. The danger that they pose derives from the fact that these forces are not controlled directly by the Iraqi government but are instead loyal to different political and military personalities. Moreover, some of these militia groups are directly linked to Iran and take their orders from Tehran.

The issue of corruption is also a destabilising factor for Iraq's democratic development. Since 2003, evidence shows that the levels of corruption in Iraq have significantly increased. What is more, a report on corruption by Transparency International in 2017 has ranked Iraq 169th out of 180 countries regarding corruption, this at a time when in 2003 Iraq were ranked 117th out of 133 countries in 2003 (Abdullah, 2018). Moreover, recently the Parliamentary Transparency Commission in Iraq revealed that in the past 15 years 320 billion dollars have disappeared as a direct result of government corruption (Khan, 2018). Therefore, fighting against corruption should be a significant concern of the current and next Iraqi government because, after ISIS, Iraq's primary challenge is corruption. All of these problems have affected Iraq's democratic process negatively and led to the ineffectiveness of citizenship educations in Iraq.

4. Problems Facing Citizenship Education in Iraq

Citizenship education in Iraq faces many problems and difficulties. These problems have come about as a result of sectarian conflict, terrorism, insurgency and corruption. These problems also left their mark on the Iraqi education system and citizenship education programs. UNICEF revealed that, since 2014, there have been more than 150 attacks on centres of education in Iraq and that, as a consequence, half of all schools need compensation. UNICEF also reported that more than 700,000 displaced children in Iraq had lost a year of education and over four million Iraqi children are in need of immediate aid after three years of war against ISIS. Today Iraq has a shortfall of schools, to fill that shortfall the country needs to build more than 7000 schools. The fight against ISIS deprived 3 million Iraqi children of access to regular schooling (ReliefWeb/Unicef, 2018). The lack of educational infrastructure has resulted in overcrowding with average class sizes now being over 60 pupils.

The lack of infrastructure is not the result of a lack of funds as millions of dollars have been allocated by the Iraqi Government to develop and to build new public schools; however, only 6% of the school project has been completed or implemented. The funds allocated for the other 94% of projects have been misused as a result of government corruption (Bassem, 2016). Therefore, if Iraq is to provide for the educational needs of its new generation, it is imperative to provide them with a secure environment and enough educational infrastructure to overcome the problem of overcrowded and underfunded institutions. The evidence shows that overcrowding hurts the quality of teaching in schools as school heads are forced to reduce time and quality of classes to accommodate for the sheer numbers they are charged with teaching. Quality of education is diminished as teachers do not have adequate time to finish the annual national curriculum, especially in subjects related to citizenship education. What is more, overcrowding also makes it difficult for teachers to provide for the education needs of all students equally. In such an environment the process of learning becomes almost impossible (Sulaiman, 2017).

After 2003, the education system in Iraq went through a period of significant reform and saw the removal of Baathist ideology and school subjects related to the Baathist regime from the curriculum. In 2005, further revisions were made, and civic education was added to the state curriculum by the Iraqi Ministry of Education. Other changes were made in 2010 and 2012, with the name of the Iraqi civic course changing from "national education" to "national and social education". The Iraqi Government required the subject to be taught to students between grades five through nine, in one forty-five-minute period per week (Faour & Muasher, 2011, p. 25). The issue introduces the concept of democracy and its practice in a civic education textbook. The majority of the subject for students in ninth grade is intended to discuss the new Iraqi constitution and the function of the government's executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

In the seventh grade, three-quarters of the national and social education textbooks consist of discussion around of topics relating to democracy. While different political systems are mentioned in the textbook, its emphasis is on the democratic system other issues such as human rights, freedom, and good citizenship (Faour, 2013). Hence, it is clear that, since 2003, much effort has been employed organise citizenship education in the new Iraqi curriculum. Given that Iraqi society is a diverse one, it is also essential to include discussions in civic education classes on peaceful coexistence between different

peoples. Moreover, the purpose of civic education classes in Iraq should be to produce an inclusive society in which everyone feels respected and adheres to a single Iraqi national identity.

While there is no doubt that "curriculum revision is an important part of academic work" (O'Neill, 2009, p.61), without considering the other part of the education system and methods of teaching, curriculum revision is less effective. Traditional teaching method coupled with a lack of sufficient training for educators is another challenge facing citizenship education has in Iraq. The practice of memorisation in teaching is a problem prevalent in the Iraqi education system. Teachers mostly rely on this practice because they believe it is the best way of teaching. However, memorisation as a teaching method often leads to the production of submissive students who later develop into passive citizens who are likely to accept everything at face value without thinking critically into its validity (Sulaiman, 2017).

Students are expected to memorize and recall all of the information which is provided to them in textbooks, this is mainly the case in the social science subjects, such as citizenship education. This method is contrary to the objectives of civic education, which is to develop the civic knowledge of citizens and their social skills through analysis, evaluation, understanding and an ability to criticise the issues around them. In Iraq, students do not have the space to think freely and to criticise what is presented to them in the national education system. Mohammed-Marzouk (2012) argues that teaching in Iraq is mostly based on lectures and the memorisation of information, with little attention paid to meaningful memorization. Class discussion and assignment which are two essential pillars of learning are largely missing in the Iraqi education system. Moreover, among educators, social studies, including subject related to civic education, has been seen as a trivial supplementary subject; hence, students are only given forty-five minutes per week to study this subject. The problem is that forty-five minutes per week is not sufficient time for teachers to teach the syllabus of civic studies to students.

A lack of training for educators is another problem of the Iraqi education system. It is clear that teachers can play an important role to educate new generations and then preparing them as a good citizen for the society. But in Iraq, when teachers graduate from the college, they will directly start teaching at school without studying any modern teaching method courses. Most of the teachers use the old method of teaching which is dependent on rote memorization (Sulaiman, 2017). Also, not all teachers are graduates of the college of educations, some of them graduated from other university colleges and disciplines that do not relate to education, such as agriculture and economy. Therefore, these teachers are not informed of the necessary educational methods and are not prepared for teaching in schools, particularly in a subject related to civic education.

Illiteracy is also a persistent problem in Iraq as it leads to social isolation and a lack of civic attitudes. What is more, those Iraqi citizens who are illiterate feel that their voices are neglected in political and social institutions. Young illiterate Iraqi's consider themselves at a disadvantage in society; and thus, a more likely to join violent and terrorist groups. According to a UNESCO report published in September 2010, "one in five Iraqis, aged between 10 and 49, cannot read or write" (ReliefWeb/ UNESCO, 2010). This rate has increased as a result of recent conflicts, internal displacement, and the destruction of Iraq's educational infrastructure in conflict zones. Therefore, Iraq needs to allocate more funds to develop the public education sector. It is also essential for the Iraqi government to cooperate with international educational organizations so that they can oversee the implementation of modern education projects and

work with the Iraqi Government to prevent practices of corruption in those projects. The Iraqi government should work to promote security and provide a secure environment for all students because without this education cannot play its vital role in democratic development. Education is a useful tool to bring about peace, the acceptance of diversity in society and the understanding of others. These achievements will not come about without the introduction of an inclusive curriculum related to citizenship education, where such a curriculum focuses on the promotion of peace and acceptance of Iraq's diversity of ethnicity and religion.

5. The Need for Citizenship Education in Iraq

Even after the defeat of ISIS, Iraq is still facing many challenges and problems, for example, many people still do not have access to essential services, civilian protests for a better life have been persistent on the Iraqi streets, paramilitaries forces play the role of a national army, most of the educational facilities remain unusable, corruption continues to be at high levels and the democratization process is on the brink of collapse. While no single solution exists to solve all of these challenges, there is one 'common-sense' step that Iraq can take to strengthen its democracy. Citizenship education could prove a valuable tool to introduce and invest in as it can play an essential role in improving political participation, promoting civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

The benefits of civic education are clear, most notable of all is it promotes support for democratic values. The 'power of the people' is the central pillar of the democratic system, as it allows elected government. Keane (2004) explains that the standard definition of democracy is "the rule of the people": a system in which the government receives its power from the political participation of its citizens. In the case of Iraq, even though every four years democracy is practised via the holding of elections, democracy continues to be a relatively new concept in Iraqi culture; and therefore, requires more practice to be fully effective. True democracy, in Iraq, can be achieved when there it is also supported and participated in by an active and informed citizenry.

Given that the development of Iraqi democracy demands informed and active citizenry, such a citizen base can only be achieved through education, or more plainly through citizenship education (Yoldaş 2015). Galston (2004, p. 264) states that "the more knowledge we have of the working of government, the more likely we are to support the core values of democratic self-government". Therefore, it is the responsibility of Iraqi schools to provide students with the necessary understanding of the necessary value and function of democracy. Once Iraqi schools engage in this practice it is only then that Iraqi citizens can truly experience and appreciate politics and democracy.

Elections are considered the critical tool of democracy and political participation as it enables citizens to express their opinions and select their desired political leadership. Moreover, the holding of elections is the only way to transfer power peacefully between governments and to establish stability in a society that is based on equality, justice, and respect for human rights (Al-tmimi & Grisham, 2013). In the last Iraqi election on 12th May 2018, the voter turnout was recorded at only 44.5%. In comparison, previous elections have had turnouts of over 60% (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2018). These figures are clear evidence that Iraq has failed to provide basic civic knowledge and skills to citizens as voting is a fundamental right and a major avenue for citizen participation in the political process. It is for this reason that citizenship education in Iraq should focus more on increasing the potential of young adults,

which will lead to greater choice and also on improving participation skills and participation in societal decision-making. Civic education is generally expected to expand skills and the opportunities of civic engagement (Roh, 2004). Schools should motivate students not only to participate in the political process but also to get involved in school governance and contribute to their school or community outside of the classroom (Levinson, 2011). In Iraq, it is essential to encourage young students and teenagers to become politically active. Yoldaş (2015) argues that when young people avoid the ballot box, especially on the day of the election, this can be considered as a symptom of democratic crisis and a lack of civic education. As stated before, democracy in Iraq is indeed in crisis, and civic education needs more revision to be useful in the Iraqi society. The ultimate goal of teaching civic education in Iraq should be the preparation of active, responsible, knowledgeable and accountable citizens and the development of a commitment among young people to those essential principles and values that are needed to support and improve the Iraqi democratic process (Quigley, 1995). What is more, political and educational leaders should realize that civic education is a fundamental element of improving the democratic system in Iraq.

Civic education would likely promote tolerance and acceptance of diversity in Iraqi in the long-term period. As explained before, Iraq by its very nature is an ethnically, religiously and culturally diverse country; therefore, tolerance should be considered an essential value for the Iraqi citizenry. Understanding of others should be taught to students to promote peaceful coexistence in society. In Iraq, schools should encourage students to be tolerant and respectful of their fellow students who come from different backgrounds. For example, when a Sunni, a Shiite and a Kurdish student attend the same classroom, it is necessary to teach them to be friendly and respectful to each other despite their religion or ethnicity. If people in Iraq continue to insist on their own opinions and perspectives without considering those of others, social conflict and civil war could deepen further (Roh, 2004). To prevent social conflict civic education should also focus on the Iraqi national identity as a common identity among Iraq's diverse citizenry. As stated before, the Iraqi population, for the most part, adheres to some sub-identity, be it religious, ethnic or cultural and pay less value towards the Iraqi national identity as for Iraqi's the national identity is weak and feeble. Kaplan (2009) stated that if there is a lack of a collective identity and a cohesive society in state progress and development will be set to fail. The Department for International Development (DFID) defines nation-building as "the construction of a shared sense of identity or a common destiny to overcome ethnic, sectarian or religious differences and to counter alternative allegiances" (DFID, 2010, p. 18). However, this is not to deny the sub-identities subscribed to in Iraqi society, but it is the promotion of national and civic identity in Iraq and the significant role it can play in the alleviation of social and ethnic conflicts in Iraq.

Civic knowledge and skills could have a positive effect on the attitude and behavior of students in society. Such experience may include understanding of modern history of Iraq, administrative and political institutions, principles of government, citizens' responsibilities and rights, human rights, familiarity with different ethnic, religious and cultural groups and the ability to perceive the character of good citizenship (Jaeger, 2018). These values enable young citizens to recognize their rights and responsibilities in society. Thus, civic knowledge and skills are considered to have a positive influence on the guiding of students towards playing an active, positive and active role in Iraqi society (Isac, 2015). Generally speaking, civic education can play a crucial role in democratic development despite the many challenges that the democratic process in Iraq faces.

6. Conclusion

This article concludes that citizenship education can have a positive impact on democratic development in Iraq. While the democratisation process in Iraq is currently in retrenchment due to years of violence, terrorist attacks and sectarian conflicts, there remains hope for a resurgence of democracy in Iraq. However, this can only happen if the Iraqi government announces a new comprehension plan to deal with the mentioned problems and to revise the Iraqi citizenship education program. The ultimate goal of citizenship education is to teach young students how to be good citizens in society and to enable students to recognize their rights and responsibilities as well as enhance their participation skills.

7. Recommendations

As was mentioned before, citizenship education has faced many problems in Iraq; therefore, it is the responsibility of the Iraqi government to resolve these problems and to work to introduce new civic education program. Democratic Progress in Iraq is still possible if Iraq launches a comprehensive new plan to deal with the difficulties facing the education system and civic education programs in the country. To advance a complete education system this paper recommends the following:

- Iraq should work on the construction of more school buildings in cooperation with international educational organizations, particularly in its war-torn areas. This will overcome the problem of overcrowding in schools. Overcrowding in schools has affected the quality of education and the study of civic education negatively.
- Iraq should begin to introduce a new national identity building program that can support democratic progress in Iraq. The government should take the required steps to create a national identity, develop peace and security and improve the quality of life for its citizenry. Thus, Civic education is a vital tool that can have a positive effect on the promotion of national identity and the advancement of civic knowledge and skills.
- In Iraq, religious leaders and political elites should encourage young citizens in supporting important values such as tolerance, respect, equality, due process, anti-authoritarianism, political participation, and a sense of community between different religious and ethnic groups. Religious leaders can play a decisive role in society because ordinary people often see them as role models.
- Teachers should update their teaching methods in the classroom to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This is best achieved through the revision of the education system and by offering much-needed training courses for teachers, particularly those that teach the civic education program.

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