

Ethical Re-Orientation: A Pathway to Education for Peaceful Co-Existence

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Abstract

National policy on education was meant primarily to be a tool for guiding Nigeria and its education. One of its objectives was categorically stated that the quality of instruction at all levels should be oriented towards the inculcation of certain values, among which, is faith in man's ability to make rational decisions. This study attempts to appraise that ability of man to make rational decisions vis-à-vis peaceful co-existence among Nigerian citizenry. The article discovers that a lot of the ills within the Nigerian society stem out of man's inability to make proper and rational decisions most often and posits ethical re-orientation, which involves a total over-hauling of our societal values, as a pathway to achieving education for peaceful co-existence.

Introduction

The National Policy on Education was certainly formulated for the benefit of all Nigerian citizens. Any nation's policy on education has the intention of realizing the specific part of the national goals using education as a pathway. The policy cannot be successfully formulated without identifying the overall philosophy and goals of the nation. Section 1 (2) of the NPE (2004) identified the country overall philosophy of one them is living in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom, equality and justice (2004:7). No 3 of that same section identified five (5) main goals of the country which form the basic foundation of the National Policy on Education. These are:

- 1) A free and democratic society;
- 2) A just and egalitarian society;
- 3) A united, strong and self-reliant nation;
- 4) A great and dynamic economy;
- 5) A land full of bright opportunities for all citizens

Looking at the philosophy we see that one of the statements in section (5) held that the policy is based on:

- a) The development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen.
- b) The full integration individual in to the community
- c) The provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system. This is highly commendable as every individual is seen as equal in educational affairs.

It is worthy of note after all these pronouncements, the quality of instruction at all levels has to be oriented towards the inculcation of certain values among which is make rational decisions that the problem lies. To what extent does the Nigerian man make which will in turn create the room for a peaceful co-existence in Nigeria? This is the million dollar question and the crux of the matter.

Conceptual Framework

Ethics: The British Broadcasting Corporation English Dictionary (1992) defined ethics as moral beliefs and rules about right and wrong; and went on to explain the term 'ethical' as meaning that which is influenced by a system of moral beliefs about right and wrong. According to Urserly as cited in Igwe (2006), ethics is the study of morality; it is the study of an individual's or society's moral rules and guidelines. It deals with morality but it is not the same as morality. He went on to explain that morality consists of the rules and guidelines, which an individual or a group has about what is right or wrong, good or evil. These rules or guidelines may or may not be ethical, but we do attach great importance to them, and they very often help form our attitudes and guide our actions.

In his own opinion, Hornby (2010:500) maintains that ethics refers to a "system of moral principles, rules of conduct". It is, therefore, a science of morals guiding the conduct (1997). They are standards of conduct governing the relationship of members of a given become the yardstick for judging members' behaviours as good (ethical), or bad (unethical).

Re-Orientation

To orientate means to be acquainted, to be conversant, and to establish one's position in relation to one's surroundings. Orientation seeks to enable individuals master their environ. Performance, For instance, in the school system, offices and in various work settings individuals need to be acquainted with the dynamics of operations such as rules and regulations, expected code of conducts, job demands, physical environment and where to get what.

A reorientation suggest a new way of doing things or a re-awakening of our consciousness. When we re-orientate ourselves we are re-channeling our attitude and behaviour time", it is a bad orientation and we need to change from it. The change to attending classes an unacceptable or wrong way of doing/perceiving things. A re-orientation in this context particularly in our educational system and national life style in general.

Education

Education has as many definitions as there are people who are interested in the to lead out, and 'educare'-to form or to train. By the term, 'educere' which is in line with the idealists point of view, the learner has innate qualities/ideas which need to be developed or brought out. This implies that the learner is led out from an undesirable state to another state that is desirable, good or perfect and acceptable, which will have to undergo series of stages. Plato, who is an idealist, believes that education consists of giving to the body and to the soul all the beauty and all perfection of which they are capable (Okafor,2004).

The term 'educere' which is in line with realists point of view implies that man is born tabula-rasa. That is to say that at birth man mind is like a clean slate on which to write. This means that one has to start from the scratch and fashion or mould out something that is good and worthwhile. The learner here has to be formed from the onset with the objects of sensation and impression which will form the information, knowledge and theory acquired

Education, because of the divergent views from the different theorists, has so many definitions and understandings. Socrates (470-399BC) believed that the aim of education was to train the child to know the truth. The object of education is not culture but the set out to lead the youths of his days by question and answers (Socratic Method) to a deeper Cremin in Nwabuisi (1992) noted that education is a deliberate, systematic and sustained

Durkheim, on his part, held that education is the systematic socialization of the younger generation by which the later learns religious and moral beliefs feeling of nationality and collective opinions of all kinds (Okafor, 2008). Education in a strict sense is a process which implies the transformation, the acquired materials, brought about in the Okafor (1992) therefore defined education as a process of acculturation through which the activation when necessary, according to right reason and to achieve thereby his perfect self-fulfillment. Hirst peters as cited in igwe (2006:17) opined that "education involves an all-round development of a person morally, intellectually and spiritually and that it would be absurd to say that someone has been educated but has not changed for the better".

Peaceful Co-existence

Hornby (2010) defined peaceful as that which does not involve violence, worth argument or disagreement; a situation that is quiet and calm, not worried or disturbed or in any way NBC English dictionary described peaceful people as people who are not violent and which society; people living in a quiet and calm atmosphere in the society, a situation that is totally Why Re-Orientation

Having acquainted ourselves with the key concepts of this paper, we shall now address and the Nigeria society in general. In attempting to provide a response to this question, we Nigerian Society? This brings us face to face with the ills of our educational system and the Nigerian Society.

Some Ills of the Nigerian Educational System/The Nigerian Society

From the look of things, the Nigerian educational system/the Nigerian society is bedeviled by a number of problems which seem to constitute a cankerworm to our educational system and hamper development in Nigeria at large. Some of these ills are:

Examination malpractice, poor funding of education, certificate racketeering/ undue emphasis on paper qualification, materialism, bribery and corruption, exploitation of students/sexual harassment, cultism, tribalism, religious extremism, etc. We may briefly look at these one to one.

- (i) *Examination Malpractice:* Examination malpractice is defined as a violation of examination regulations by candidates and/or school (Ike in Okai, 2003). Onyechere in

the same Okai (2003) viewed it as an act of wrongdoing that contravenes the rules of acceptable practice before, during and after an examination. He went on to say that it is the non-compliance with the rules guiding the conduct of examinations in order to gain extra advantage in terms of performance over and above other candidates. This practice occurs in institutions of learning, from primary to secondary of widespread malpractices from reported cases of results withheld, cancelled, etc. was not like this from the beginning. Hence, Njoku (2006: 248) observed that; to say that people maintained their integrity in all their spheres of lives. They held high and firm their aspiration as far as In Nigeria. Good moral upbringing and intellectual excellence characterized our education institutions of learning throughout the country. He went on intellectual and cultural virtues and when examination malpractice is holding sway in our educational system, manifest examination malpractice, such things as "miracle centres"-meaning those centres matter how unintelligent one may be. Thus, the school proprietor businessman charges candidates exorbitant fees which he uses to pay syndicates that write these examinations for the dull students outside the examination hall. Members of these syndicates pay their school fees which again is on the high side. What about the staff of the various national examination bodies (WAEC West African Examination Council, NECO, National Examination Council, NABTEB, National Business and Technical Examination Board) who may condescend so low as to accept money from these school proprietor business men to leak examination question papers to them in advance? What about the classroom teacher who may leak his examination question paper to a student for one gratification or the other, cash or kind? What about the parent who, aware of what happens at the so called "miracle centres" takes his child to such a centre, registers him with exorbitant fees to ensure that the child comes out with an "excellent" result in the long run, when he is sure that his child is not wonderful intellectually? So we discover that different sections of the society participate in making examination malpractice almost a culture in Nigeria.

- (ii) **Poor Funding of Education:** This refers to the inability of the government and/or other individuals to provide sufficient money for the education sector. Year after year we see annual budgets of Nigeria and discover that the percentage allocated to the education sector is usually insufficient especially when compared with the percentages allocated to some other sectors of the economy; and, again, especially when compared with percentage of the budget which other countries like Ghana allocate to education. Poor funding causes a lot of problems in the education sector in Nigeria. For instance, it seems that it is because the teachers' salaries and allowances are not enhanced enough that some of the teachers do not put in their best in the classroom, or may leave their primary assignment which is teaching to do some other private practices which affect teaching and learning negatively
- (iii) **Certificate Racketeering/Undue Emphasis on Paper Qualification:** Pairing these two together is on purpose since one leads to the other. Certificate racketeering has to do with forgery, or trying to acquire a certificate at all cost through foul means. That people would think of involving themselves in certificate racketeering. No wonder in Nigeria among other things reiterated that: "there is too much emphasis on paper qualifications" attitudes of the invigilators/supervisors and moral laxity in the society at large, to mention only two.
- (iv) **Materialism:** In Nigeria, there seems to be general tendency for people to be materialistic in their system of values and this seems to be having adverse effect on discipline (social and economic) as it encourages corruption and affects spending habits. When, for instance people are interested in living above their income level,

accumulating more and more material, the tendency for them to want to look way augmenting their individual incomes. Adewole (1988:22) put it this way

Ours is a society where a great proportion of worth is assessed by the quality of their dresses, the number of houses built and so on. No one is interests in the ways in which such things have been acquired

Because of this materialistic attitude everything is done for the sake of thing else and nothing for its own sake. Indeed money seem to be the major of all thing in Nigeria. Any activity that can not bring an immediately perceptible material gain is viewed as no value.

Even education itself is not looked at in terms of the knowledge and understanding it sity degrees are referred to as "meal tickets". For this reason, the child of the rich business-and what it guarantees is thought to be more valuable than the acquisition of knowledge. feeling is that after all a daughter will have to take away with her to the husband's house the material benefit of her education. Moreover, it is this materialistic tendency that will make the teachers to be more interested in the sale of their handouts and textbooks, forcing the students to buy them at exorbitant prices, than in their classroom teaching.

- (v) **Cultism::** The BBC English Dictionary (1992) defined cult as a religious group with special rituals, which is regarded by many people as extreme or dangerous. Thus, there is always something dangerous about cult. Cultism would therefore mean the practice of belonging to a cult and the participation in the rituals and other activities of the cult group. It is a religious or social group with special rituals which is regarded by people as dangerous. Yes, there is always something dangerous about cultism. Dangerous, because cultism is more destruc-tive than it is constructive. Cultism has today become a monster in our institutions of higher learning particularly. The menace of cultism in our institutions of learning today is so well known to everybody that it has almost become a household word which is dreaded by all right thinking persons in the society.

That the contemporary Nigerian education system is bedeviled by the evils of cultism and secret societies is only too obvious.

- (vi) **Tribalism:** Hornby (2010) defined tribalism as the behaviours, attitudes and loyalties that result from belonging to a tribe, especially in opposition to other tribes. Tribalism is a common of the erstwhile fragile nature of the country's unity. The issue of the quota system of admis-is that their candidates were being discriminated against in universities situated outside are reserved for candidates from the catchments area, referring to the location of the univer-qualified by merit to get the admission are edged out because they are from the non-catch-ment area of the university.

There is also the situation where if you are resident in a state other than your own, your brild was born in that state. Yet it is supposedly the same country. Adewole(1988)observed insecurity outside one's state and a consequent reluctance to work in a state other tan one's other than one's own, it will be on contract, except for federal government appointments.

- (vii) **Religious Extremism:** This has to do with religious ideas or actions that are extreme and not normal, reason-able or acceptable to the general populace (Hornby, 2010). Extremism has fanaticism as its fanaticism. According to the BBC English Dictionary (1992) extremists are people who wish to bring about political, social or religious change by using severe or unreasonable methods.

In Nigeria today BOKO HARAM has become a household word. Boko Haram is no other thing but a fanatical belief by extreme Moslems that western education is evil and so should be condemned and done away with. Innumerable lives and properties have been

lost in recent times in Nigeria sequel to the activities of these extremist Moslems. The list is unending, today it is in Kaduna. Tomorrow it is in Kano; next tomorrow it is in Maiduguri. It is like that all over the Moslem/Hausa states. It is now a daily occurrence in Nigeria. Hardly do we have these days any daily newspaper that does not have a story to tell about the inimical activities of this BOKO HARAM group each day. It is a tale of a litany of woes.

Well the author simply wants to say that it is a great pity. These Moslem extremists have decided to pour away the dirty water with the child instead of bringing out the child and pouring the dirty water. If there is something wrong in western education, everything about western education cannot be wrong/evil. In other words, there are some good things in western education that should be hailed as good. The researchers are of the opinions that the problem of book harm is ignorance and they need to rethink and be re-orientated. of the author the problem of the Boko Haram group is ignorance and they need to rethink and be re-orientated.

Recommendations

Having at length x-rayed the ills of the Nigerian society, it is highly recommended that which will then pave the way for a peaceful co-existence in Nigeria. A popular adage has it that united we orientation would afford the people the opportunity to pause, rethink and totally over-haul that we can hope to get a better Nigeria. Some of the ways to achieve ethical re-orientation among the Nigeria populace are:

1. By laying less emphasis on the acquisition of material wealth; stopping to assess No more be seen as the measure of all things in Nigeria.
2. By laying more emphasis on moral and religious studies and making it compulsory Nigerians understand that our life on earth is transitory, that it is only an opportunity beyond, and that whoever does not merit heaven goes to hell fire perpetually.
3. By laying less emphasis on paper qualification in Nigeria, but rather valuing virtues of honesty and hard work more than everything else.

Conclusion

In the light of the foregone, ethical re-orientation of the Nigerian citizenry is seen as a rite to follow their leaders equally conscientiously. When this is done successfully we then hope to get a better Nigeria with a fertile ground for a peaceful co-existence.

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