IMPORTANCE OF ETHICAL EDUCATION IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

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Abstract

The paper briefly reviews some approaches to curriculum development. It then reports empirical study of acts of indiscipline in educational institutions, in Lagos and Oyo States of Nigeria. It was discovered that unethical conduct permeated all spheres of the educational institutions. The pupils or students, teachers, lecturers, head teacher, principals, schools administrators and even policy makers were reported to be active participants in this unholy alliance. The consequences of the unethical behaviour of these various interest groups are the decay and destruction of our social and economic infrastructure in Nigeria. It also resulted in poverty for the masses of this country. To correct the anomaly, the paper calls for a renewed and more innovative employment of education in schools, seminars, seminary, news media, information technology and the person to person contact as way out of the economic and social stagnation and decay.

Introduction

Education is viewed in this paper to be formal knowledge imparted in schools, colleges, universities or any other formal institution of learning. The purpose of education is to develop the individual.

Udo-Aka (1987) considered education as involving the acquisition of general knowledge and the development of basic mental ability. The main burden of education falls upon our formal school system. Education is concerned with increasing general knowledge and understanding of the total environment (Flippo, 1996). It must be appreciated that business firms, religious organizations and other forms of social organizations are also involved in the education process. Although training often has more immediate utilitarian purpose than education, in practice training and education sometimes occur at the same time (Yoder, 1963).

Ethics is concerned with right and wrong in human organization. It is the field of study that is concerned with the morality of human behaviour. It is the discipline which studies the basic principles of human conduct (Omoregbe, 1991).

Ethical education, therefore, refers to education that impart societally desirable moral values which are guides to good conduct or behaviour of those passing through specified educational system. Ethical values are moral values that are right, good and acceptable conduct.

Theoretical Concept

It is necessary to review some of the approaches that are relevant for the development of curriculum based on the work of various writers. Tyler (1949) specified four elements for developing a curriculum. These include: (1) Statements Of Purpose. (2) Educational Experiences For Attaining The Purpose. (3) Organization Of Educational Experiences For Achieving The Purposes. And (4) Evaluation Of Learning Experiences.

Hirst (1969) listed three elements of curriculum namely: (1) Objective (2) Programmes of Activities and Work, and (3) Content or Subject Matter of Activities. Kerr (1971) provided four curriculum elements namely; (1) Objectives. (2) Content. (3) Learning experiences, and (4) Evaluation. The major contributions to curriculum development based on the above listed works are the elements of (1) Objectives. (2) Content. (3) Learning Experiences. (4) Methods, and (5) Evaluation.

Objectives stand out as the core of any curriculum development. All other elements are built around them. For example the content, learning experience, methods and evaluation are designed to attain the objectives. Also, appraising the effects of learning experiences must be based on statement of objectives as reference points. Bloom (1956) and Krathwohlet al (1964) noted the cognitive and affective domains of educational objectives, and provided schemes for classifying expected behaviours of learners. Walker (1973) stated that curriculum content should include the plans, intentions, hopes, fears, dreams and many more agents; including teachers, students, curriculum developers and policy makers.

On methods, Taba (1971) calls for organizing a curriculum around ideas and learner skills.
(requirements) instead of subject and content topics. Wood (1963) suggested five criteria which are (1) The Purpose of the Curriculum. (2) Maturity of Learner. (3) Administrative Organization of the Institution of Learning. (4) Preparation, and (5) Experience and Ability of Teacher.

Taylor and Johnson (1974) provided six criteria for evaluating curriculum. These are (1) Identifying Who Decides on What Would be the Purpose. (2) What is to be Taught. (3) Selection of Learning Outcomes. (4) Directing What and How Teacher Would Teach. (5) Advising Teachers, and (6) Deciding on the Conditions in Which Learning Takes Place. It is necessary to note that the government, the community, the administrators, the educator and the student would share decision-making responsibilities (Imade, 1983)

The central issues in any curriculum development are functionalism and self-reliance of the learner. Imade (1983) noted that curricula of various levels of educational institutions in Nigeria, on post-hoc basis were found to be wanting in the task of contributing effectively to the solution of problems of rapid modernization of the nation. Thus they were functionally deficient.

Imade (1983) provided 7 tenets of functionalism which include (1) Education and Training as Means of Achieving Other Ends. (2) Individual Needs and Requirements to be Subsets of Societal Needs and Requirements. (3) Teachers to be Coordinator of Learning Resources. (4) Practical and Theoretical Performance should be Prime. (5) Community Should be the Laboratory of Educational Institution, not the Four Walls of School (6) End Products Desire Should First be Determined, and (7) Release of Funds, After the First Cycle of a Programme Should be Contingent on positive Impact on the Society.

On Self-Reliance, Imade (1983) provided the following 7 standards (1) Mutual Education should be Encouraged. (2) Independence in the Gathering and Utilization Information For Problems Solution Should be Primary. (3) Independence in Thinking, Interpretation and Evaluation of Information to be Emphasized (4) It Should Integrate For Actions. (5) Self Education Should be Activated. (6) Opportunities to Try New Ideas Should be Established, and (7) It Should Strive to Make Individual Self Supporting.

Nyerere (1972) has earlier asserted that the object of the teaching must be the provision of knowledge, skills and attitudes which will serve the student where he or she lives and works in a developing and changing socialist state, it must not be aimed at university entrance. The two purposes of education for our nation should be practical relevance to the society functionality and to self-reliance. Below is a report of a field study in education institutions in Nigeria to assess the level of unethical conduct or indiscipline within the society

**Field Survey**

In a survey of acts of indiscipline in Nigeria, Ogundele (1999) found that some causes of acts of indiscipline were traceable to education, training and development. They accounted for 7.18% of the 16 global causes of indiscipline in Nigeria. Respondents to this survey were drawn from primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions in Oyo and Lagos State. They included classroom teachers, head teachers, schools administrators, lecturers and post graduate students. The period of the study spanned from December 1997 to September 1998.

**Results**

Respondents were asked based on their experience and perceptions of their agreements or otherwise with the view that 'elite' (top educated people in society) contribute largely to maintenance of indiscipline in Nigeria. Table 1 below contains the perception of respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptions</th>
<th>Educational Institutions Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>79.74</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.76</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Sources: Responses of people in the primary, secondary and tertiary educational institution in selected schools in Oyo and Lagos State)

A total of 594 useable responses were content analyzed. The result contained in Table 1 above showed that 77.60% of the total respondents perceived that the educated elites largely contribute to
maintain acts of indiscipline in Nigeria. The balance showed that 13.47% of them disagreed and 8.93% of them did not respond to this segment of the questionnaire. The total columns is a reflection of the three sub-columns from which it emerged.

A total of 48 reasons and incidents were supplied in the questionnaire to back up the perceptions displayed in Table 1. Below are a few examples from them:

1. Employing the Wrong People on the Job
2. Lack of Exemplary Good Leadership
3. The Educated Elite Use Their Positions to Oppress the Less Privileged
4. Reports of Armed Robbers Claiming Sponsorship by the Top People In The Society
5. Mass Media on Daily Basis Report Incidence of Indiscipline Engaged in by Elites
6. They Pass Careless Remarks That This is Their Own Time and They Must Make it at all Costs.
7. The Elites are the Only Group That Have Opportunity to Govern. Therefore, Bribery, Corruption and Fraudulent Practices are Perpetuated by Them
8. I Wanted Admission into the University and Certain Amount was Demanded
9. They Occupy Position of Influence in the Society, as Such, Their Behaviours Have Direct Multiplier Effects on the Masses of the Society
10. They Found it Difficult to Obey Social Norms e.g Queuing Up in Public Places.

The above examples were merely illustrations of the types of products the Nigerian educational system is sending into its market environment. They are indicative of the fact that our social and economic systems are in very bad state. Ogundele and Kio (2002) noted that our educational system had not been able to produce people with disciplined behaviour to meet the demands of NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development). They therefore call for a more positively innovative educational programme for Nigeria to be relevant with the aspiration of NEPAD. Ogundele and Opeifa (2002) characterized that multi-dimensional negative consequences of unethical conducts in Nigeria on the economic, social, global and other spheres.

**Education As Instrument For Innovative Change In The Society**

The issue of indiscipline reported above are ethical issues. They touch on the moral aspects of our lives. They are also attitudinal and behavioral in nature.

Education at various levels and in various forms could be employed as an effective tool, if properly planned, to bring about the urgent and required changes in our behaviour as a nation.

Thus we need committed and creative individuals as a primary condition for bringing about the required innovative employment of education in the economic and social reconstruction in Nigeria. The innovative individuals are necessary for the development of functionally relevant educational programmes with self-reliance content.

Ogundele and Ojodu (2002) noted that the central requirement of self-reliance in the development of indigenous technology are creative individuals who are to produce new products, new technologies, new service and accumulated stock of wealth. In this demand all levels of educational and moral instruction institutions will be involved.

At the primary and secondary levels, there is need for us to go back to the good old days when moral instructions from the Bible and Quran were made mandatory. Strict application of rules and norms on pupils and teachers must be enforced. But the innovative requirement here is that application of rules must be to correct behaviour and not be wicked in intent.

It the tertiary level, Lyanda (1986) observed a good management (National) education for tomorrow's (Nigerian) manager must strive at three interrelated objectives: developing the individual’s intellect, enabling the student to acquire managerial/other forms of specialization/vocational skills and instilling societal values in him. Instilling societal values calls for the teaching of social and other forms of professionally relevant ethics in our tertiary educational institutions. This should be made compulsory for all students in our tertiary educational institutions.

A seminar for working adults on ethically desirable behaviour should be emphasized. We may have to fall back on the books of moral guidance, the Bible and the Quran. Making these books relevant to people of differing faith is the innovative aspect of the training contents.

Seminaries of various religious groups have of recent been turning out graduates who are more materialistically focused than need be. We need people who will be more concerned with the real side of the congregation. This will help in the economic and social reconstruction of our society.

There is also the need for skillful and innovative employment of the mass media and other information technologies to fight the endless list of unethical behaviours which are reported daily by the media. Therefore, practitioners in these fields should be properly groomed on the ethics of the society and their profession. They occupy a unique position in molding the behaviour of people.

The person to person contact comes in the forms of family member’s influence, friends, peers and
other social groups interactions. This is the level at which conducts are more readily observable. If the preceding levels are made to function properly, this last level automatically falls in.

It will be difficult to reconstruct the social and economic decay that we have in Nigeria today without innovative use of education as outlined above. Our education has to be made relevant in solving this major problem of our society. If we agree that technology is the application of knowledge to solve community problem, then our education will be made more technologically useful if it can, through ethical education, help in economic and social reconstruction. Uya (2003) stated that we must fashion out new paradigm for African development which pays heed to African historical specificity and is fully connected to our culture and institutional reality.

Our suggestion therefore, is innovative readjustment in our current educational curricula at various levels of our educational institutions, where moral and ethical instructions would be raised to the same level as other core subjects (e.g Mathematics and English). This is the right direction in fulfilling the demands of this call and this will serve in bringing about the much needed social and economic reconstruction.

**Recommendations**

The sceneries presented in the proceeding pages on the state of ethics in Nigeria's social, economic and other systems call for corrective actions. The following recommendations, therefore derive from such needs.

Education becomes the principal tool of which our multi-dimensional ethical ills could be corrected. This is because education and training are crucial factors in behaviour modification and change and are therefore, to be employed in solving our ethical problems.

Our leadership training development programmes should include ethics as a core course. The study reported above indicates that the elites who are societal leaders largely contribute to the maintenance of indiscipline. They therefore need to be reoriented on desirable conducts.

At the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of our education, ethical training and education should be made compulsory and a pass in it at credit level should be made compulsory for admission in all our tertiary educational institutions. It should equally be made a prerequisite for the award of diploma and degree certificates.

Our seminaries should be more actively involved in solving the ills of our society. They should emphasise ethical issues than materialistic miracles that have produced religious members who have no feelings for other people right in their search for material wealth.

The mass media practitioners must be involved in mass education of Nigerians on the desirable ethical conducts. They should emphasis virtuous behaviour rather than over dramatizing ill conducts.

Education should be employed innovatively in solving Nigeria’s ethical problems. People should be made to realize that without ethical discipline development will continue to elude Nigeria. Ethical or moral discipline is a minimum condition for economic progress. There we need to employ education in the lines listed above to restore sanity in our educational system and the general society.

**Conclusion**

Our social and economic systems cannot survive for long at the rate unethical conducts are being exhibited daily. The most effective way of bringing about positives change is through moral all ethical education. This has to cut across all levels of educational institutions. It should include or classes or groups of Nigerians. We need complete moral rebirth through the use of formal and informed educational and training systems.

This is the most economic reconstruction of our delaying social and economic system.

**Reference**


Krathwohl, D.R. And Others (1964) *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Handbook LI.*


Yoder, D, (1963) *Personnel Management And Industrial Relations* (5th Ed) London Sir Isaac Pitman And Sons Limited.
Education - Social-reconstructionist education: Social-reconstructionist education was based on the theory that society can be reconstructed through the complete control of education. The objective was to change society to conform to the basic ideals of the political party or government in power or to create a utopian society through education. In the first half of the 20th century, communist education was possibly the most pervasive version of operational social-reconstructionism in the world. Originally based on the philosophy of Karl Marx and institutionalized in the Soviet Union, education is a foundation for the development and progress of any society. It is a base upon which the whole building of human development stands. Getting proper education is necessary for success in life just like the food is necessary for the healthy human body. The good education is constructive in nature which is very helpful in future life. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz has rightly said, “Make me the master of education, and I will undertake to change the world.”

If we want to change the world, we have to focus on education and increase in knowledge. Following points highlights why education is...

The process of entrepreneurship and the importance of business ethics to entrepreneurial success, and the concept of stages of ethical consciousness... As jobs disappear in the traditional state-owned sector, the key dynamic force in market economies, and more generally in economic development, will be entrepreneurs. Throughout the world - in Western Europe and the United States as well as in Eastern Europe and other developing economies - a large percentage of the new jobs are created in new enterprises and in rapidly expanding firms. If it is so evident that the creation of small and medium sized companies is vital to the creation of jobs and wealth in developing countries, why is it so difficult to stimulate private enterprise in areas lik