

SOLIDARITY EDUCATION: A SOCIOLOGICAL CATALYST FOR DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper presents the subject of Solidarity as a beacon to socio-political, religious and economic well being of any nation. The word Solidarity is a sociological construct and is an educational and academic area that could attract development. Solidarity in Sociology talks about man and his society, it is concerned with relationships between husbands, wives and children; between religious groups, between employees and employers, between government and the people and between nations. The paper poses that for development to thrive, Solidarity as a sociological function should be effectively activated for true community and national building. It emphasizes local, national and international relationships through the bonds of Solidarity to strengthen and promote internal and external cooperative cooperation for peace and true, stable national and international developments.

Solidarity is a sociological construct to perform sociological functions. Since sociology is a study of man and his society, solidarity is a part of the function of sociology in relation or relative to man and his society or man and his environment or man and his neighbors. In family, village, religious and other social circles, there is what is called 'visitation' which produces fellow-feeling amongst individuals, groups and organizations. This is local usage and in higher standard, it is solidarity. When visitations are conducted there is an air of wounds being closed and healed in broken relationships; there is hope for regrouping; there is faith in going forward and there is peace within hearts: then people can walk and work together.

The field of sociology is an area, educational and academic that propagates and disseminates love, sharing together and building together. This is talking solidarity and

this is showing solidarity. It is hoped that when individuals, families, tribes, religious groups and nations see need to employ the subject of solidarity in their inter and intra-behavioral relationships, there shall be cooperation and peace that shall unflinchingly grow and foster development.

Solidarity Theory grew out of the writings of Abdel Rahaman Ibn-Khaldun (1332-1406) in Ritzer(2008), Ogunbameru and Rotimi (2009). Ibn-Khaldun was a North African (Tunisia) Islamic scholar in his time. His oldest time ideas and works on society and sociology made him one of the oldest or ancient scholars of his time. Owing to the Dark age then and at a time Islamic culture and fame ran into decay, his works were not documented until the modern age when such works were discovered by modern scholars. Closely studied, his works associate with modern sociological thought. His works in history and Social phenomena saw Solidarity as central. Ibn Khaldun saw this subject as an idea that unites people together be it in tribes, clans or nations.

According to him, living together in common ties and endeavors generate solidarity. In this generation today, a sense of togetherness is a necessity. This is the framework of this paper. If there shall be any genuine and stable development in Nigeria beyond 2020, Nigerians need to grow solidarity in all spheres of life whether politics, religion, tribe or governance.

Some Definitions

For the purpose of this paper, the following key words are defined and or explained.

1. Sociology

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (p.1129) defines sociology as the scientific study of the nature and development of society and social behavior. Morrish (1972) sees it to be concerned with social facts, a province of sociology to examine structural aspects of human society and social relationships that occur within such structures.

2. Solidarity

According to Advanced Learners Dictionary (p.1417) Solidarity is support by one person or group of people for another because they share feelings, opinions, aims, e.g. community solidarity.

3. Catalyst

The same Dictionary above defines this word as a substance that makes a chemical reaction happen faster; a person or thing that causes a change to occur (P.170)

4. Development

Hornby's (2010) Dictionary defines development as gradual growth of something so that it becomes more advanced, or much stronger; or a process of producing new or more advanced products. In all, the definitions suggest progress, increase and prosperity.

Literature Review

The anxiety and burning desire to know and understand how society works birthed the beginning of sociological theories and eventual practices right from the ancient times led by Plato who is claimed to be the first western philosopher who undertook a systematic study of the society, Ogunbameru and Rotimi (2009). Kuper and kuper (1996) define sociology as the scientific study of society and the aspects of human life that derive from living in society. Ogunbameru and Rotimi (2009) opine that sociology is the study of human social behavior, interaction and organization. They point out that the term comprises two words: socius and logos with socius being a Latin word meaning companion or associate; while logos is a Greek word meaning 'word'. sociology is said to have been in use from the second quarter of the nineteenth century but before this time, works on sociology had been given a tremendous pioneering thought; most of them undocumented. Some of these earliest efforts are those of the Before Christ (B.C.) generation such as Plato (429-347 BC). Plato formulated the ideal state theory in realization that the society is a reflection of the individual, pin-pointing that a maladjusted society is the same as a maladjusted individual. Others were those of Aristotle (384-322BC) who coined the Organic Theory of Society, stressing morality as basis for societal standard, etcetera.

In the middle ages works of great philosophers reflected sociological theories which have found close acceptability in modern works of sociology. Abdel Rahaman Ibu- Khaldun (1332-1406) is one of them with his position on solidarity as a function of sociology Ogunbameru and Rotimi (2009).

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) played an influential role in the field of sociological theory, who saw nature as a state of anarchy where people are moved purely by mechanical appetite and desire, always at war with one another. He advocated for peace and security which are more advantageous if the people denounce anarchical behavior. Works on sociological theories have come down to the 18th and 19th centuries on the study of society, the people and their interplay in space and time in different cultures such as in France, Britain and Germany, America and Nigeria.

The central issue from these formidable sociological works into the 20th century is man and his society; relationships and how man may advance into more workable human-society organization for greater breakthroughs. Again, the earliest sociological works and influence of Ibn-khaldun on solidarity is the primary focus of this paper. Hence this paper is based on his theory.

Solidarity: Sociology of Relationships

Morrish (1972) listed so many types of sociology including industrial, cultural, historical, comparative, economic, knowledge, law, mathematics, political, moral, science, art, literature, music, language, migration and other arrays of it. Perhaps it escaped or eluded him to include the sociology of solidarity and probably, sociology of development. The hall-mark of each of these items is the effectiveness in the socialization process to back up harmony and progress in the relationship that has to exist amongst the players in each of these faculties or departments.

Solidarity is thus a sociological construct, seeking to create space or room where human relationship could be cushioned to allow a healthy nature of togetherness that could generate more peace and tranquility to facilitate development. The kernel here is that a healthy and enhanceable human interaction breeds healthy development. Hatred, rancor, malice, disharmony and distrust is, each, not an even bedfellow to development. This aspect of sociology, solidarity, may if truly cultivated and harnessed, facilitate and enhance genuine development. Sociology of solidarity to some extent determines the sociology of development.

Unfortunately there is pronounced absence of sociology of solidarity as a course in Nigerian Universities if development would be emphasized. The sociology of development as Ogunbameru and Rotimi (2009) write, seeks to explain why some societies have advanced and some have not; why some families, states, communities, organizations and nations have advanced or developed and some have not.

Perhaps the hypothesis of this paper is that the levels of development in families, States and Nations are influenced by the levels of solidarity exercised by players in these respective human communities. Since sociology deals with social relationships in part, solidarity should be used as a weapon of development. The social media mechanisms such as face-book, phone calls and twitter are in circulation for man's interaction with man, and nation with nation or husband with wife, etcetera. These are good but paying a visit nails relationships down amongst friends, acquaintances, government to government and nation to nation. Let it be stated that State visits that Heads of Governments exercise on counterparts across the world is solidarity in quest for love, understanding and cooperation, and in some deeper meaning, to gather support for problem solving. Let it be scaled down to the level that

visits on ground of sickness, birth, death, naming ceremonies, individuals, families and other stakeholders do is good and encouraging for oneness, closer ties, love and faith keeping with one another. These outings are capable of cementing relationships and open doors of support for some personal, family, state and national developments, one way or the other. Solidarity should be sought for and properly cultivated for some rainy day because one good turn deserves another. It further becomes more a concern when realizing that no single finger could remove a stone from the eye. It would therefore go down well to seek partnership for development. Solidarity is therefore partnership for cooperation in disguise.

Operational Areas for Solidarity

There are areas solidarity, as a pivot to development, could operate. They are:

1. The Family

The family is the first place for thinking about and enhancing development. Basic family level understanding is the cradle of solidarity- solidarity in listening, in showing empathy by one to another, and in sharing. Once love, understanding and cooperation are achieved, this is solidarity and it makes family development very possible.

2. The Community

Families make a village and villages a community. Solidarity is a shared responsibility. Events of death, child birth and cultural ceremonies make or create opportunities for love, care, concern and cooperation. Villagers are aware of these issues as often as they occur. Once community members participate, it demonstrates love, oneness and unity. This in turn shall create room for cooperation and for development where development is a concern of one village and another. This is how community projects could be easily carried out without too much anxiety and unnecessary delay.

3. State

In governance inter-state visits are allowed. It is assumed that state boundaries might not be a problem to genuine development where maturity is exercised or shown. There are things to share together when people learn to stay together in unity. Unity is solidarity that could be gained from interstate cooperation. It should be noted that solidarity, whether in cultural, political, social and religious circle, generates peace and tranquility within which orbit development could be enhanced. Solidarity prevents war, strife and anarchy. The scenario then enhances development on either side.

4. The Nation

Inter-state visits at international level that Heads of state and Government embark upon often and often, is a show of solidarity and is a ground on which to meet people and gather love and understanding. This could also be enhanced through many other ways such as education, power, Agriculture, trade and investment. By these, sound developments come in and the nations and people live well and rejoice. This is the extent to which solidarity could go.

Solidarity and Education

Stenhouse (1967) argued that Education should bring people into contact with culture in their society so that their individuality, behavior and freedom of thought are enhanced. The National policy on Education of Nigeria (2013) appears silent on this great issue as solidarity even though it captures it in the perspectives of national consciousness and unity. Though it has captured Education as instrument par excellence for national development; emphasis could have been placed on National solidarity as a catalyst for development. Since education is an engine of development, it becomes imperative to create space in the Educational policy of the nation to actually capture the issue of solidarity with emphasis that it is a beacon for genuine development.

The spirit of solidarity is character. So people's character should be re-orientated to enhance development. This paper would call for the attention of Government to consider this subject of solidarity in the grid of national syllabus at primary and secondary school levels for a start. What is meant here is that the issue of solidarity should be brought into the school curriculum in a conscious manner. As a course or programme to be taught, it shall hopefully go a long way to refine the people's thought and passion for cooperation towards development. The instrument that shall propagate this view point is education and that is why solidarity should be enshrined in the education system, because it is a vehicle of social change, and this is development.

Perhaps since this thought-view is new and rather strange, that is why it should be introduced into the school system to make for educational solidarity to be formally taught in schools. In the words of Sule in Enoch (2000), educational sociology attempts to solve educational problems in a practical way by using sociology, and this is solidarity dimension. Solidarity education as peace education is needed in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Human societies are complex but it is believed that they could be connected on every side. As the word 'socius' suggests, man should be each other's companion. For development(s) in Nigeria to exist and expand beyond 2020, living in solidarity becomes imperative. It then becomes instructive that Nigerians should be trained and made to cultivate the spirit (character) of solidarity by which individuals and societies

could be linked up for genuine brotherhood and purposeful co-existence. This is the pathway to socialize for greater development in Nigeria beyond 2020.

Recommendations

Going by the above analyses on the issue of solidarity for development in Nigeria beyond 2020, the following recommendations are raised.

1. Solidarity as a sociological function should be brought into education curriculum to be taught to learners. This process shall create much awareness for its importance in human society;
2. It should be made a national issue such that the National curriculum and Development centre could design appropriate curriculum to guide its teaching;
3. In the next review by the National commission for colleges of Education (NCCE) on minimum standard, this subject could go into deliberation and adoption as part of General studies in Education;
4. Nigerian students could be encouraged the more to conduct visits to other schools within their states of domicile and outside the country for intercultural purposes;
5. The syllabus that shall be designed should capture the needs of adult men and women on this purpose as well;
6. National and International diplomatic relationships should be expanded and strengthened to promote internal and external competitive cooperation for true, peaceful and stable National and International development on the wheel of solidarity engineering;
7. Agencies for public enlightenment on solidarity across ethnic, political, religious and cultural boundaries should be created by Governments both State and Federal, to facilitate peace for development

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