
CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES FOR FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION, VALUES, KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper considered the relevance of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) for functional education, value, knowledge, skill for national development. The main objective of Christian Religious Studies is to produce quality education in all ramifications in the society. On the basis of the above assertion, the paper examined the objectives of Christian Religious Studies, problems of functional education, values, knowledge, skills which could lead to poor national development, and the measures for effectiveness of education, value, skill and knowledge for national development. To sum up, this paper also explained how CRS can be an instrument for functional education, values, knowledge and skills for national development. Relevant conclusion and recommendations were advanced based on the discussion of the subject matter.

The Problem of functional education and national development is an issue bordering sensitive Nigerians today. As a result of this sensitive problem, different methods have been suggested to improve the educational standard, and the standard of living for national development. Various attempts have been to make education effective and functional. These include: Universal Primary Education (UPE) launched by the administration of Shehu Shagari in 1976, and Universal Basic Education (UBE) launched by former President Obasanjo on 30th September 1999. The objectives of these programmes are to assure effective functional education, life skill, and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for national and life development. Again the curriculum provision for mother language of the immediate environment as stated in National Policy on Education (2004) is another attempt to improve our educational standard. This method is to ensure quality in education, to maintain and increase the quality and standard of education and other professional initiatives in order to increase the level of knowledge, skills, values and national development. Government also introduced human capital development and quality assurance for quality education and national development.

Lastly, efforts have been made to fight extraneous educational poverty and other professional areas through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to mention but few of the efforts made by the government to make standard of living meaningful.

Again the objective of education for national development is to produce qualitative and sustainable skills and values for better life, and this cannot be achieved because “education without religion produces wider devil”. Therefore, CRS is the vital and critical weapon for national development. For functional education and national development there is need for certain values and skills to be institutionalized. Such values include: truthfulness, accountability, honesty, kindness and fear of God.

The Concept of Christian Religious Studies

Various scholars legitimized the fact that religion is very wide and inexhaustible but this paper can grasp few examples based on the context of the paper.

According to Ducasse (2000:150): In Adesewo (2007:4) religion is whatever set of beliefs that is held without evidence which performs the functions of supporting useful behaviour for society and healthful psychological attitudes in the individual.

Kant stressed religion to its moral aspect when he opined that “religion is the recognition of all duties as divine commands”.

Nationally, according to National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) (1992) Christian Religious Studies is an academic discipline designed for the moral and spiritual development in the country.

Again in Adesewo (2007:4) Ferre (1970) asserted that religion is one’s way of valuing one’s belief most intensively and comprehensively. Ilori (1992:29) asserted that “religion as a final body of truth that has been made completely revealed and is imperative for societal survival. In support of the above definitions of religion, it is undoubted to say that Christian Religious Studies inculcates sound values for sustainable national development in any society.

Objectives of Christian Religious Studies

According to NCCE (1992) the objectives of CRS include:

1. To demonstrate professional proficiency for teaching CRS in all school levels.
2. To express satisfactory intellectual capacity
3. To benefit from further education in CRS
4. To demonstrate sound knowledge and appreciation of the moral value needed to live as a Christian in the various stages of growth and development.
5. To explore the place and significance of religion in human life and make a distinctive contribution to life.
6. To radiate attitudes and values which are typical of a nature and responsible member of the Christian community such as love, respect, honesty, and service.

CRS has the potentials of curbing the problems of functional education and nation development.

The Concepts of Education, Value, Knowledge, Skill and National Development Education

Education is derived from the Latin word “erudio” meaning to bring up a child physically and mentally or to rear. There is a general definition that conceives education as all round development of an individual, physically, socially, morally, mentally, temperamentally, psychologically and spiritually. Any education that leaves out any aspect of human development would be the worst. Therefore, education is not just what has often been reduced to transmission of scientific knowledge but assimilation of skills and values.

According to Fafunwa (1976) education is a process that prepares individual for the future. Education is expected to reflect in the life of the recipient a kind of behavior that conforms with the norms and values of his society. Functional education is therefore that type of education necessary for inculcating values and skills for future challenges and for national development.

Value

According to Saleh, J.B; Ademola, O & Damulup, P.A. (2011) “values are societal rules which emerged from time for the good and benefit of individuals and the society as a whole. Values are developed by people through parental instructions or elderly advice. For example a disciplined person knows that it is wrong to be lazy but an undisciplined person sees nothing wrong in being lazy. A person with values learns to acquire moral decency. Values are variables such as: justice, honesty, contentment, diligence, selflessness and obedience.

In the context of this, there are benefits attached to it either in the society or to individual. Examples of its benefits are: fairness, equal treatment, unity, trust, cooperation and hard work. At the same time the danger of lack of values are: indiscipline, bribery and corruption, laziness, nepotism and dubbing. All these negate functional education for national development.

Knowledge

Hornby (2000) defined knowledge as the information, skills and understanding that one has gained through learning or experience. Therefore to acquire knowledge, education is the tool to be used. Education is the step by step training and instruction given to young people especially in schools, homes, and other institutions for the attainment of skills, abilities, development of character and mind necessary for national development. Leah (2005) ascertained that knowledge can also be acquired by listening

to news and good advice from parent and other adults, it can also be got through reading.

Skill

This is the ability to do something well. Education serves the dual role of equipping individuals with knowledge and skills to effectively participate in national development. There are many types of skills that can be acquired. These include: life-coping skills, intellectual skills, artistic skills, communicative skills, manipulative skills, technical skills, interpersonal skill or human relation skills and managerial skills. From the above mentioned, it could be deduced that educational programmes are acquired to give the skills that can be used to deal with challenges that will be encountered in national development.

Development

Development is sometimes erroneously regarded as growth and change. Development incorporates both growth and change. Change could be in terms of social, cultural, political, economic, quantitative or qualitative dimensions.

In the context of this paper, national development is seen as the growth and changes as well as the various improvements that occur in a given environment with the aim of promoting good quality of life among the populace. As in the case of growth, it is generally regarded that education through its various processes is instrumental to any national development.

Having examined briefly the meanings of the theme: functional education, value, knowledge, skills and national development”, it is good to also examine the major problems hindering functional education before the relevance of CRS to acquisition of skills and values for national development.

Problems Affecting Functional Education, Skill, Value, Knowledge and National Development

There are certain surmountable problems affecting functional education. These include:

1. The operation of school curriculum is not in harmony with the needs and aspiration of the people.
2. Neglect of technical and vocational skills.
3. Much attention is not given to moral education in the school and society.
4. There is no sufficient political will from the government.
5. The aspect of informal education is not given much attention.

The problems of functional education skill, value, knowledge and national development can be tackled if these issues are properly addressed.

On the other hand there are a lot of benefits enhanced by education. These are:

1. Eradication of illiteracy and ignorance and poverty.
2. Education serves as an instrument par excellence for effective national development.
3. Education has been used as the greatest powerhouse for the generation of wealth (Palmer, 2001).
4. Education has invested a quick development such as: economic, political, sociological and human resources.
5. Lastly Eyibe (2000) noted that education is not only the acquisition of knowledge but the use of the knowledge for the benefit of the individual and mankind in general.

Christian Religion Studies for Functional Education, Value, Knowledge, Skill, and National Development

Man is a complex being full of possibilities and potentialities and the more we develop these potentialities the more accomplished and truly educated we are. Education entails the training of bodily and mental faculties.

CRS is a stabilizing factor in our individual personality. By encouraging people to be good, religion enables society in general to be good. In support of the above statement Ilori (1992) summaries that religion is complete and imperative for societal survival. In addition to this, National Commission for Colleges of Education (NNCE) objectives of CRS is to demonstrate sound knowledge and appreciation of moral value needed to live as a Christian in the various stages of development for functional education, value, knowledge skill and national development. Nigerians should be aware that God's relationship with man and authentic Christians values and virtues should be reflected. CRS programme executes sound moral and expected qualities for functional education and national development.

Again for sustainability of functional and national growth generally, Nigerians need to depend on encouraging the teaching of CRS. For example, Christian religion produces honest, truthful and courageous personnel who will develop and care for national properties. It also impacts or inculcates the fear of God in the recipients at all levels of development. Corruption, misappropriation of funds and fraud and others are social diseases that can only be addressed through the teaching of Christian Religious Studies.

Functional education, skill, value, knowledge and national development can only be possible if wastages in education are prevented. Wastage in education means inefficient use of educational resources, e.g. unemployment, lack of teachers and poor educational facilities. The nature of wastage in education is attributed to quantities

instead of qualities and one of the objectives of CRS is to produce quality personnel to develop the nation. Therefore, the major determinants of growth is religion.

Conclusion

Conclusively, in order sustain and maintain functional education, skill, value, knowledge and national development, educational planners and other stakeholders would need to take a good look at the roles of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) in producing morally desired manpower for national development. It also provides quality through the fear of God for the nation, and it makes life relevant in all ramifications. Lastly, it promotes the principle of self-reliance for national development.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been advanced:

1. Development of manpower in the areas of need should be facilitated through Christian Religious Studies.
2. The managers and administrators in all educational levels should be morally and religiously upright.
3. Politics should not determine national development but fear of God and prayer.
4. There should be relevant programmes for effective religious and moral education in all levels of growth.
5. Valid action should be taken to stem the tide of pornographic materials with which the country is being inundated, especially the law enforcement agencies should enforce the obscenity law.

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