

THE CHALLENGES OF TEACHER EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY IMPLICATIONS FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS

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Abstract

This paper discusses the role of teacher education in meeting the demands for a new democratic foundation in Nigeria. The paper assumes that so far the old foundation has been rocked and can no longer hold. In our present quest for a new social order, this paper believes that teacher education must be realistically involved in laying more emphasis on value systems which will accord with our future visions, concepts and survival. The paper examines current societal ills as well as present fallacies which have rendered education impotent in checking the spread of disorder in the social system. It recommends that teacher education pay more attention in providing necessary experiences for a new national foundation in the institutions' curricular offerings.

Introduction

A pluralistic society such as Nigeria on the threshold of transition usually combines a curious dependency upon tradition with an unorthodox frantic search for innovation. Nigeria today is in a state of flux, but it is difficult to predict the specific outcome of some of our efforts. Government policies and societal goals are often vague and in conflict. More confusing is the fact that interpretations of government policies are as varied as the interest groups that have access to the corridors of power and therefore lack credibility. The growing emphasis on education - quality education as an instrument "par excellence" for the achievement of national goals has placed education at the focal point of much of the debate - the searching for a new and enduring democracy where the progress and development of the nation can only be assured on the basis of a citizenry that makes the needs of others the measure of one's choices.

The primary concern here is that education must be implicated in this search, and cannot be viewed apart from this context. Similarly, teacher education cannot be viewed outside the social issues and trends from which it rises.

The rationale here is that since education enhances human development, the institution or system that can help its students become better integrated persons, with a sense of command over their own destiny and a sense of how they fit into their complicated and mercurial social environment, will have achieved the most demanding and significant educational/national objectives of our time. This paper calls for a qualitative, functional education, value oriented teacher education based on conscious efforts at self-integration and liberation of our students.

The role of higher education in this regard is very important. As the major source of the nation's supply of teachers at the most crucial levels - primary and secondary schools, current government policy favours a rapid increase of this category of teachers in quantity and quality for the school system. The arguments here are:

- 1) Since the teacher is the greatest single determinant of educational quality, their numbers, training and experiences will act as impact on the students' programmes and experiences. Since the ideal of Nigeria education as perceived in 1975 was "the effective education of all of the children of ail of the people", teachers normally must present a credible sign post for the children in their academic and social adventure.
- 2) There is a linkage between moral internalization and self-integration. Honesty; as a moral value may embody the concepts such as truthfulness, trustworthiness, faithfulness and credibility, when we discover that our teacher, for example, is dishonest in his word and actions, we deny him our faith, trust and confidence. The vitality of individuals, social relations, government and other institutions crumbles as soon as faith, trust and confidence are denied them. Their effectiveness comes to an end immediately they have lost a moral support or credibility.

- 3) Exposure to higher learning in higher institutions which fails to inculcate moral virtue is a worthless employment of time. The ultimate aim of mankind in all human endeavours should be to humanize man. (If skill and knowledge are values as ends in themselves without practical applications, if the fruit of education do not nourish the society, then education, it can be argued, is a sterile tree. It may be useful and decorative for a time, but it does nothing to enrich the future.

The author believes that if our higher education programmes incorporate and emphasize moral behavioural outcome in their experiences (curricula), we must have started our attempt to build an enduring democracy.

For purposes of clarity, this discussion is organized into three main areas:

- (a) Present educational practice and challenges;
- (b) Need for emphasis on education for self-integration;
- (c) Conclusions and suggestions.

A Educational Practice and Challenges

Nigeria's progress to nationhood, has witnessed a series of false starts and setbacks, followed by out-burst of great energy and forward surges. Nowhere is this so manifested as in the field of education, which has today become an essential instrument for the realization of all the legitimate purposes of all of the people. As the demand for education increases, a variety of factors raise serious doubts as to the ability of the present system in solving the challenges of modern democracy. Obviously, the role of schools, especially, higher institutions, has come under harsh criticism for (their failure to meet the challenges of societal changes because the extent to which the nation survives depends on the extent to which democracy is enhanced through the production of individuals who are honest, trustworthy and willing to meet the challenges of enduring democracy. The following challenges can be observed in our society.

1) Political Instability

The "civilian-army return match/round robin" - which at each inception, gingers the nation up into several lively activities, but often renders progress, programmes and policies fluid. Incoming administration spends greater time probing and re-probing and reviewing policies, and finds little time moving forward.

2) Economic Recession

This has hit the nation hard. Education budgets have been affected badly resulting in many abandoned projects. Retrenchment and unemployment have become rampant, while import restrictions, though resulting in scarce commodities, encourage local production and initiative.

3) Struggle for National Integration Amidst Stagnation

The result is quite anti-metrical and embarrassing. There is a constant pressure to do away with non-indigenes in the states; where such people remain especially in the schools and offices, they are isolated, marginalised and discriminated against. Qualified personnel now refuse to go outside their states of origin to work for fear of falling victims to our "indigenephobia". As a result mediocrity is established and glorified. In schools, students are not well taught - half-bred graduates that rise to high positions in the schools and states policy-making organs. The process is cyclic. The more indigenization is pushed, the more parochial schools and services become creating segregation (local zoning) of another type.

4) National Reorientation

Is intended to reborn Nigerians, and make them orderly, disciplined, honest and dedicated human beings, with love of country and work as the epitome of our "rebirth". There is now a search for a sense of identity and a set of guiding values upon which our behaviour can be based, and through which the individual and the nation can attain set goals. The subjugation of the individual to the mass, the breakdown of traditional patterns of behaviour, the mad rush for wealth and authority, poor quality education, the fragmentation and dispensation of our value system - all are factors in the alienation of the individual. As a result of frustrations that arise from the failure "to belong", the political and social behaviour of

individuals become caricatures of their personalities. As observed by Goldhammer et al (1967), "out of dissatisfaction, frustration, tension, and despair arises either apathy or aggressive behaviour which threatens the society, as well as mobilising those of like mind into movements which produce instability".

5) **Increase in Crime Rate**

As stated in No. 4 above the alienation of the individual has given rise to violence, armed robbery, drug trafficking, advance fee fraud (419), arson, rape and embezzlement, which have made the country a moral leper in the eyes of the world.

a) **Democratization and Bureaucratization of Education**

The ideal of Nigerian education as perceived in 1975 (UPE) was "the effective education of all the children of all of the people". That ideal is far from realised. Bureaucratization of education as a result of the capitalist nature of the Nigerian society has resulted in the following problems:

- (a) Inflationary school fees and uncontrolled school levies and sale of resource materials, absence of reference materials, books and equipment.
- (b) Lack of interest among the students to learn for learning sake. This situation has resulted to the obnoxious problem of examination malpractices that are in the ascendancy in the country and communities.
- (c) Lack of intellectual culture from the homes and communities upon which the child can draw. Both parents are daily out hunting for wealth. There is little or no interaction between the children and their parents. "Give them money and let them go", we say.
- (d) The deplorable low status of teaching in the eyes of the general public. This has exposed the teachers as beggars and outcasts who can offer nothing of worth, let alone meeting family obligations.
- (e) The environmental, economic, social and political climate under which schools operate are to say the least hellish! Overcrowded dormitories and lecture halls, hunger and disease among the students, unstable academic programmes and calendars, ethnic wrangles and factions among the staff, cultism etc. have become the hall-mark of our educational institutions.
- (f) Lack of willingness on the part of the policy-makers to face the reality and stress the primacy of education in the nation's development. What the educational policy-makers /have failed to realise or pretend not to understand is the irony that the country's future largely depends on the quality of education its poor, rural and other non-wealthy, functionally educationally deprived children receive. In the next century, these younger people will constitute a majority of the nation's population. Our prosperity depends on their success.

Instead mediocrity has taken over the schools so that intellectual objectivity may die. This is in line with Chinua Achebe's (1983) observation that "an absence of objectivity and intellectual rigour at a critical moment of a nation's formation is more than an academic matter. It inclines the fledgling state to disorderly growth and mental deficiency".

In the face of these challenges, and in the absence of enduring moral values and guiding principles, many people have become disillusioned, some have lost faith in the nation and in themselves, others have joined in the "rat race". In place of academic culture, we have substituted the V-Boot culture of an unprecedented calibre of nouveau-riche whose status symbol is the fashioned Mercedes Benz V-Boot and Rolls Royce Cars.

As earlier stated, the present situation has cast doubts in the ability of the present education system (content, structure and emphasis) to meet the challenges ahead. The question now is how do we as a nation react to these challenges and their impact and potentials? What are our guiding principles? Students have lost faith in the school and in schooling. They have lost faith because, the values they observe are strange to their circumstance and they cannot understand, lost faith because the net pay-packet is inadequate compared to the needs of the worker - i.e. where he is paid at all; Host faith because the uneducated contractor/politician tends to get on well much better counterparts who was a dropout has fraudulently and illegal enriched himself and has gone round mocking him for continuing in schools. Without dramatic reform of public education, we have staked the odds against our children and

ultimately against ourselves. We are a nation at risk.

B Need for Education for Self-Integration

A review of literature since colonial days reveals many articulate professionals' suggestions on the primary emphases in education. These emphases are based on two criteria viz:

- (a) Current issues in the society attention;
- (b) Issues deemed rather important by the professionals proposing them and which fall in the realms of education. A few examples may illustrate the point,
 - (i) Education for colonial liberation was judged a priority issue in the 1950s by several nationalists and educationists. This judgment was based on the feeling that education can contribute to the goals of national independence, economic development and the advancement of human dignity,
 - (ii) Education for national unity, has been judged a priority issue since the early 1970s by several professionals and government based on the national experience and concern since the civil war, and the need to build one united, indivisible, sovereign nation,
 - (iii) Education for technological take off has been emphasized in the 1980s based on the need of the country to industrialize and diversify her economy for the welfare of the citizens; so have been WAI, MAMSER and NOA.

In the issues above, emphasis has been raised to a priority level, which when well scrutinized lack effective fundamental approach since the emphases do not constitute a system devoted to the growth and development of *The Individual* at the idealization and internalization levels, which would lead to the production of morally upright, disciplined and dedicated individuals from which this nation can hope to draw her disciplined, patriotic and honest leaders and followers. This paper therefore emphasizes the need for a new fundamental approach in our education - *education for Self-Integration* and liberation, for an enduring democracy. Perhaps we need a guide that can help us view this approach/emphasis on a wider context. Such a sense of direction is available in the National Policy on Education (1981) which views "the integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizen..." as its basic philosophy. Again, Macdonald (1977) considers the basic aim of education "the most fundamental educational value commitment", and summarised by stating that the aim of education is the development of the individual for the purpose of his liberation. This view is supported by Akimpelu (1985) when he opined that "education should not be tailored towards seeking employment in government or private business, rather the objective should be such that makes the individual to be self-confident in their ability to propel them forward". We need to help the individual to develop the "common courage to be honest, the courage to resist temptation, the courage to speak the truth, and defend the truth, the courage to be what we really are and not to pretend to be what we are not, the courage to live honestly within our own means, and not dishonestly upon the means of others".

Returning to *The Individual* as the bottom line of academic agenda for our educational value commitments provides a direction in organizing appropriate experiences in coherent relation to a fundamental value commitment, i.e. liberation of the individual from the shackles of ignorance, indiscipline and corruption, ethnocentricity, intellectual and religious myopia, indolence, mediocrity and moral decadence. In the past, our education has 'malfunctioned' not because we lack command of theoretical bases for action, or control of the technological and technical skills of the act of teaching, but due to our lack of artistic manipulation of *the individual* either through emphasis or examples.

Implications of the New Emphasis

There is no disagreement with the need for accumulating knowledge. The problem is the effective utilization of that which we have. Our education programmes need to place emphasis on certain developmental objectives for the purpose of liberation and self-integration of the individual for the survival of Nigerian democracy. The objectives should include:

- 1) Development of skill in social living by encouraging in practical terms interpersonal relationship among students on one level, staff and students on the other level, as well as among staff. There is urgent need to de-emphasize the indigene - non-indigene rhetoric on the campuses and in our daily relationships.
- 2) Development of ethical values: the ability to make ethical decisions frees individual from the limited perspectives of conventional and self-interested thinking which in turn, allows for freedom for being a true moral agent. To do so requires the curriculum to pay explicit attention to moral criteria for action, develop procedures for ethical decision making, and make an examination of actual situations in life to which the criteria and procedures can be applied.
- 3) Development of an adequate ethical and physical basis for work. An adequate physical fitness promotes a healthy citizenry. Such a citizen is liberated to be the author of his own actions and not merely a passive on-looker in nation building. The increasing incidence of drug addiction, venereal diseases and promiscuity is an indication of growing weakness and deterioration of character that will emerge tomorrow.
- 4) Development of self-knowledge in action for purpose of providing a more accurate picture of the individual's personality as in consonance with his own reality. Emphasis should be on self as competitive as well as cooperative, the self as aggressive and submissive, the self as an individual and as a member of a group, the self as violent and tender, and the self as adequate and as inadequate. These developmental objectives are in consonance with the five essential preconditions which must be satisfied in the process of developing a morally educated person, which include:
 - (a) The establishment of one's identity ("Who am I?").
 - (b) The ability to accept oneself ("What am I really like?").
 - (c) The accessibility of moral models ("How must I behave?").
- (d) The formation of a mature conscious conscience ("What is the right thing for me to do?").
 - (e) The experience of achievement and success ("How am I doing?").

By implication, the five pre-conditions evolve "self", "others" and the relationships between self and others. This should be the tenets of education for a new democracy in Nigeria. For example, the institutions can draw from a sampled attitudes and norms to enable the student to:

- (a) Demonstrate self-discipline, self-respect and self-confidence;
- (b) Act in a tolerant, fair, and sympathetic manner towards others;
- (c) Be aware of his social responsibilities;
- (d) Obey rules, regulations, and respect authority;
- (e) Show concern and respect for private and public property;
- (f) Develop a sense of honesty, truth and integrity;
- (g) Render assistance when and where necessary;
- (h) Be ready to accept and assume leadership role;
- (i) Abide by acceptable group discussion i.e. cultivate loyalty to one's group;
- (j) Recognise and respect the dignity and rights of all other people;
- (k) Be aware of his society's social values and norms etc.

Implications for **Physical Education and Sports**

An essential feature in the mental unity of any country is cooperation among its people, In order to achieve this, it is necessary that individuals develop particular traits which help to promote cooperative spirit, impartiality, fair play and good sportsmanship. Without these traits, a happy group or social life would be impossible. Bryson (1979) has in fact, remarked that the next best thing to the rule of love is the rule of sportsmanship - the virtue without which democracy is impossible and freedom uncertain. Through her numerous activities in games, recreation and dance, physical education and sports can contribute to political stability through the development of desirable character traits. This, in turn, can effectively contribute to peace, and understanding among the different ethnic groups in the country. This is an important factor in the stability of any society or nation.

The concept that games and sports aid in the development of a society through acquisition of desirable character traits has been basic in physical education the world over. A few examples will justify this claim. Bucher (1981) states that "the Greeks, with the diversity of its culture, and small pockets of city states, located in mountain valleys, it was only through sports that the Athenians, Spartans, etc. came together", Ladani (1988) cites the function of P.E. and sports in a communist society as follows:

Physical culture must be considered not only from the standpoint of P.E. and health and an aspect of cultural, economic, and military training of youths, but also as one of the methods of educating the masses as a means of rallying them around the party... be drawn into political and social activity.

Equally, basic to P.E. and sports is development of fitness, which is basically a survival technique. It is necessary for day-to-day living, and receives special attention during a period of increased stress such as wars, emergencies, and catastrophes. It is also necessary for work, leading to fulfillment, righteousness and self-realization. A country needs workers who are physically fit and healthy in order to raise the living standards of all members of the community. The slogan "ready for work and defense" as used in some countries is a testimony to the fact that fitness is a requirement for political stability success in sports today reflects the nation's image, and consequently boosts national vitality, strength and development as well as symbolizing superior social and political discipline.

As educators, we may instill any particular set of values, rather our goals is to help the children recognize their own values and see them in relation to others. According to Rath (1967) "if values tend to guide our lives, if values tend to give an individual that quality we call character, if values tend to make the most significant discrimination between humans and other animals, if values development is one very important phase of human development, perhaps we should give more attention to them than we do". This indeed is the essence of value oriented teacher education for political stability in Nigeria.

Implications for Professionals Preparation in Sports

All of the implications for the development of a value laden atmosphere are also of importance in professional preparation programmes for physical and sports educators. If physical educators, etc. are to be able to facilitate guidance in the art of living, in the love of life, and in being warm, loving persons they must have an opportunity to personally grow and develop in these realms. The environmental inputs within the preparation of the programmes need to allow opportunities for these qualities/values to develop and find expression.

The process of growing and developing, interacting, and valuing within the forces of the society must be systematically examined and experienced by each student preparing to become a physical educator or coach. This will provide personal orientation and development toward an ethical balance in life and provide the skills and insights needed to assist in the same process with future students.

It is important also that students in physical education programmes experience a warm, loving role model, acknowledgment of themselves as a persons, faith in the potential development of goodness, and a non-threatening environment. Having an opportunity to experience these supportive elements in a teaching-learning situation should aid in their incorporation into the future P.E. with which these students will be involved. The nature of self-integration and its development implies the need for programmes which enhance, rather than diminish, the quality of life of the students.

Conclusion

In this paper, attempt has been made to demonstrate that as far as *The Individual* is concerned, the role of education has not been salutary. It has consistently turned out human robots who are mechanically wise, but morally dummies. A reversal of the educational emphases has been advocated so that there can emerge an individual centred curriculum. Its specific curricular objectives have been liberation. Each of the developmental objectives discussed above provides a frame of reference in our value commitment which if fully emphasized in practical terms leads to a restructuring of the principles by which we live to make them accord with our philosophy of life. It will rectify our attitudes to the things upon which we now devote the best part of our lives, money, sex, drinking, and restructure our attitudes to people specially different from us. So far we have gone off rail as individuals and as a nation because our education has lacked emphasis. The fundamental fact about teacher education is that it is concerned with knowledge as with values, attitudes, habits, and actions of men. The fundamental fact about method of

education is that real knowledge is not only acquired but caught; that it is developed from ideas by faith, by reasoning and by action. Education for individual reorientation provides an answer to most of our current challenges and ensures peace and progress for the new democracy; Nigerians must therefore see education as a dependable vehicle to . articulate our desires for true unity and greatness in a nation where no man or woman is oppressed. We must believe, as Faure (1973) observed that "for the first time in history, education is now engaged in preparing man for a type of society which does not yet exist". As the old mushroom rots away, the new ones replace them. Since the child is the prolongation of the society, we must take steps now for an evenly balanced and systematic maturation of the child using the curriculum whose goals and objectives must correspond to and inculcate the basic vision, concepts and universal norms of the nation at large.

Suggestions

- 1) Since decisions affecting educational policies and their implementations are directly political decisions, this calls for direct involvement of professional educators and implementors in the political decisions as it affects education, especially education for sustaining Nigerian democracy. My hope is that between the Nigerian government, the country's educational institutions and parents themselves that crucial steps must be taken. Contemporary foresight, if not past experience, strongly suggest that such a step can, and should be taken now. Adequate funding is sine-qua non to qualitative education and any reforms in education.
- 2) There is great need to ensure a conducive environment on the campuses and in all our educational institutions. Such an environment must be devoid of hatred, injustice, sectionalism, corruption, character assassination, greed and moral decadence. It must be an environment within our universal cultural and traditional values of: respect for age, experience and authority, the practice of stigmatizing and ostracizing evil doers and the indolent; the extolling of virtues and values not necessarily based on materialism, but on service to the community; the encouragement of excellence; and everybody his brother's keeper are enshrined and respected. These are time-tested values as love, truth, honesty, beauty and goodness.
- 3) As the first, social and academic institutions, the family must seriously give attention to an integrated development of the child. This is a moral duty and should not be abandoned under any guise. Raising a family without responsibility is irresponsibility. The role of religion in personal life must be recognized and re-enforced, for without it we lose some sense of right and wrong and belief in God (Allah).
- 4) The ultimate emphasis on this curriculum must be on self-integration, not in the sense of rugged individualism, but in the sense that the progress and development of this nation can only be assured on the bases of a citizenry that assumes a disposition of interdependence in action rooted in a self-discipline that is constructive and on a responsibility that makes the needs of others the measure of one's choices.

To be a morally viable nation, we must rise above self and tribal pettiness and realise in the words, of Abraham Lincoln that "righteousness alone exalteth a nation". This, then is the spirit in which we approach the stupendous problem of national transformation using teacher education as our bridge lo the future.

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