

VALUE REORIENTATION AMONG NDIIGBO: THE ROLE OF TEACHER EDUCATION.

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Abstract

The paper examined the value system as expected in any advanced society. It discussed the value system among Ndiigbo. They believe in hardworking and producing wealth through legal means. They believe that value degradation will surely bring chaos within the society. To them values are society driven just as it is seen in other societies. The breakdown of value system was also examined and factors that led to the breakdown highlighted and discussed. The teacher education role in value reorientation was discussed. The role of the teachers as the drivers of the educational process was raised and new ideas to aid their work were discussed. Recommendations were given and conclusion was drawn based on the discussions from the paper.

Introduction

The value attached to anything will determine how important that item or issue is to the person or society. Value is usually seen from a positive perspective. Yet every coin has two sides; the good and the bad sides; depending on the divide the analyst or the person who is exhibiting the value is. Value means what represents the quality of worth which a people place on what they have in mind. An example is one nation, one destiny values are beliefs or ideas which people consider dear or acceptable in Nigeria (Okoh, 2012). The need for value reorientation stems from the fact that there is a deterioration of values held high in the society before. Every society that must advance attaches great importance to the core values that form the foundation

of that society. The developmental pattern of such society will always hinge its goal on the values of the society.

Education for an example is structured in a way that the fundamental values of the society are expected to be achieved. Such values form the curriculum development foundation. The curriculum of the educational sector is geared towards the achievement of the values of the society. Every society sets a target for itself which are the objectives expected to be attained at a certain period of time. Educational policy and programme are driven by teachers. Inculcating the values of the society in the children and students of schools age is the primary role of the teachers. Bearing this in mind, it is pertinent to train and retrain teachers who are the implementers of the educational goals. The educational goals or objectives were drawn from the values the society has hinged their developmental pattern.

The Igbo society as an ethnic group in Nigeria has values they cherished so highly. Such values are incorporated in the educational sector of the society. The ability to sustain this value is what Ndiigbo sees as progress in their socio-economic advancement in this country called Nigeria.

The conceptions of value

Every society determines what they see as a value. This informs why value is said to be society defined. According Bolerin (2005) “Value is the merit or esteem given to a person or object or an idea. Values influence people’s behavior and serve as yardstick for evaluating the actions of other people in the society that determines what it sees as representing value. The realities experienced by the society help in defining the value orientation being made manifest in the society”.

Nigeria is a nation with complexities. The composition of the population of Nigeria is so diverse and complex. This is as a result of so many tribes and ethnic groups that make up the geographical space called Nigeria. Therefore, the composition of her citizens is complex, the life style of the citizens is also complex and contradictory often times. This made it difficult sometimes to have a proper word to define such complexities. (Okoh, 2012). This multicultural diversity has made the value system to be so difficult to manage with the passage of time in the evolution of the country. Okoh, (2012) continued to say that the “complexities that have developed with each passing year and the consequent problems arising there from, seem insoluble. These complexities that breed insoluble problems emanated from value misplacement”.

Every society has values that guide them in their day to day living. Not minding how underdeveloped a society may be, it must have values which are inform of norms, unwritten codes, conducts and laws; which help in preserving the bonding relationship in the society. It is handed over to generations orally. The developed societies commit their values into writing and made it available to anyone in different formats: hard copy or e-copy. This made Bohn and Haley (2002) to say that “value is seen as products of human experiences that regulate not only what is but also what should be acceptable conduct”. The society sees it as a principle or standard considered worthwhile or desirable by the people of that community or society. The essence of the value entrenchment is to foster orderly living, mutual growth and positive development. In support of the above Schaefer (2000) stated that “culture drives value hence it is seen as collective conceptions of things that are considered cultured”. The value a society works to uphold directly affects their socio-economic development. They are the foundation upon which every society stands in its developmental achievements.

Igbo society and value protection

Igbo nation is largely situated at the present south east of Nigeria. There are some Igbo towns balkanized into same other states due to political reasons. They are also found in Delta, Edo, Cross river, Rivers, Kogi and Benue states. This balkanization started since the colonial era; hence the British see Ndiigbo as the only major tribe that was opposed to their ruler ship. It was also transferred to the period of the creation of states as a weapon to weaken the state of Biafra.

Value orientation forms the bedrock of the sustenance of Igbo society. Chinwuba and Ezeugwu (2017) opined that “fromtime immemorial, the need for socio-economic independence has engaged the attention of the Igbo people of Nigeria. This need has over the years brought the entrepreneurial skill of Igbo people to lime light. Ndiigbo understands entrepreneurship as a potent economic force and a core element in the development efforts of an individual and the nation at large”.

Ndiigbo view entrepreneurship as self-employment of any sort, which hinges on continuously identifying, evaluating and taking advantage of business opportunities and initiating sustainable action to ensure success. Every business enterprise to Ndiigbo is an opportunity to answer the question that come from their experiences in their world view. The essence of every business endeavor is to achieve a profit. Ndiigbo has proved to the world that

they are outstanding in pursuing opportunities to become active economic players despite the harsh economic environment. These unfriendly environments were seen as a fall out of the systematic governmental plan to subdue the economic growth and inherent gift of Ndiigbo. One may question my assertion but I am convinced beyond any doubt, that it was a game plan.

Notwithstanding the enormous challenges Ndiigbo are facing in realizing their goals in this enclave called Nigeria; they still believe in the value system that formed the foundation of the society. This made Chinweuba and Ezeugwu (2017) to assert that “Ndiigbo abhors idleness and tangibly contributes to the welfare and growth of the community. This economic gesture is what Ndiigbo prizes most as ‘akụ rue ụlọ’ (wealth that reached home)”.

They further said that “Ndiigbo allover struggle to transform economic resources within their control from an area of lower to an area of higher productivity and greater yield deriving strength from Igbo philosophy of life reflecting in the expression “Onyeruọ o rie” (He who works, must enjoy the wealth)”. From the above we can see that Ndiigbo by nature are not lazy people. They are good at bringing development to their native community in particular and their immediate environment in general. With such value, socio economic development of the nation will rapidly grow. The need to development their towns and villages without waiting for the relevant governmental authorities has made Ndiigbo to be the envy of the people within Nigeria.

Anyanwu (1999) says that “Ndiigbo no longer look up to benevolent government for salvation but are working towards self reliance and even contributes up to 80% of Nigeria’s economy while receiving the lowest decreasing allocation from the federal government”. It is evident that Ndiigbo believe in purposeful hard work and personal effort filled with communal colouration. These principles were inculcated in them from birth because aka aja aja na-ebute onu mmanummanu (soiled hands brings about oily mouth). This value that Ndiigbo hold to a high esteem made the economy of Eastern region before the advent of the civil war to be the fastest growing economy in the world. Adichie (2014) was of the opinion that “the 1967 secession of Igbo people from Nigeria which led to the civil war was foiled out of fear that Nigerian economy may collapse with the exit of the Igbo entrepreneurial touch”.

The value attached to ‘Igba mbo’ (being industrious) takes the centre stage in the socio economic endeavour of Ndiigbo. They have no room for failures and

able bodied idlers that merely exist, depending on others for survival. Status ladder is available for anybody to climb and change his or her social status. In every situation, Ndiigbo give meaning to prevalent socio economic reality, achieving performance by harmonizing their existence with the difficulties and contradictions prevalent in the environment. (Chinweuba and Ezeugwu, 2017). As a people, Ndiigbo cherish a comfortable living which invariably emanates from the availability of wealth; yet it is not every kind of wealth. Therefore, any wealth acquired without any proof of the source is questioned. As such, acquisition of wealth is expected to follow the means of hard work, integrity and honesty for it to be acceptable within the society. It is through that globalization and internet access have brought so many ills with it; yet, true wealth to an Igbo man brings peace of mind. They disdain wealth gotten from unknown source. To them ill gotten wealth is a curse to the person and it may transfer to his family. People are reluctant to associate with those questionable characters whose source of wealth is questionable. They are called ndi ego obara (blood money) ego mbutu (fraudsters), ogwuege (money from charm).

The changing values in Nigeria are a great force fighting the inherent values of Ndiigbo. According to Okoh (2012), “the greatest worry is that some of the value system pursued by many Nigerians, especially the leaders do not promote national unity and development, hence the need for a new value order or a better value re-orientation education at all levels of the system”. In his submission Ivowi (2009) opined that values are no longer regarded as principles or standard of behavior”. He went further to say that “the past glory Nigeria enjoyed after her independence in 1960 is now a history; instead of improvement to solidify the earlier cherished values that ranked Nigeria high in Africa in particular and the world in general”

Nigeria and dwindling value system

Nigeria seems to be losing her value of the national truthfulness, respect for labour and productivity, rich cultural heritage and honesty ascribed to her earlier by other countries in the world. According to Vision of Humanity (2019), “Nigeria is now the third most terrorized nation in the world. It says that Fulani extremists were responsible for 26 percent of terror related deaths in Nigeria at three hundred and twenty five (325) fatalities”. This spate of insecurity has brought so many vices in Nigeria thereby undermining the values cherished by the citizens. Human life is no more sacred. On daily basis we receive news of killings and murder of innocent citizens.

Negative values are springing up everyday within Nigeria society. Such values include; bribery and corruption, human trafficking, kidnapping, economic sabotage, nepotism, ritual killing, rape, robbery, terrorism, cultism, wanton destruction of government and individual property in the society. These vices are opposed to values which are representation of reasons, beliefs, convictions or virtues that guide people's action. Such acquisition of good values will enable the individual to determine how reasonable, right or wrong, true or appropriate his actions, attitudes as well as relationship with others are (Bolerin, 2005).

The right to life is hanging on the balance within the Nigerian society. Previously, Nigeria has great regard for the sanctity of life. According to Okoh (2007), "human life was held in a very great esteem. A violation of human life in any way was considered the greatest crime anyone could commit". Life for the traditional Nigerians was the greatest gift from God; therefore it should not be interfered with by anyone.

In recent times, the sanctity of life has been thrown to the dogs. The activities of the terrorist groups like ISWAP, Boko Haram, Killer herdsmen and Bandits have made the right to life of an average Nigerian to hang on the balance. Their activities have made people not to be sure of seeing tomorrow. The value of life as guaranteed by the teachings of Christianity, Islam and traditional religious which had permeated the subconscious of the citizens seems to be fading away due to present day reality. This is supported by the world terrorism index which ranked Nigeria third in the world.

The saying that, a good name is better than gold, seems not to be holding water now. The erosion of integrity among the political elites seems to have bred a wild fire in the level of corruption in our governance and even religious houses. Some religious leaders have buried the truth in order to please the highly placed in the society. Obasanjo (1993) recalled when the going was good for Nigeria society by saying that "Nigerians place high priority on filial piety, honour and respect not only to parents but also to all elders as well as men and women of honour." That was when the training and nurturing of a child was the role of everybody; not just the parents of the child.

Presently, the dominant value which marks the Nigerian society is the quest for cheap fame. The resultant effect is the excessive love for money. Naturally, money is highly valued for what it does and can do. Money, they say is a defense and it answers to all things. Okolo (1993) in Okoh (2007) said that "in the Nigerian context money is usually everything. It is a key to paradise on

earth, to prosperity, power, social importance, even national honours and so on. Its accumulation becomes a value. The more and even the fouler the means of accumulating it, the better and indeed the more powerful and important one with money is". The greatest enemy of positive value is the love of ostentations. No section of the society is free from the disease.

The quest for riches has made the citizens to look out for immediate gain in search of jobs or livelihood. Nobody wants to engage in what will take time to bring returns. This is why research and innovation are virtually dead within the society. Those that tried to venture into innovation are not celebrated and supported by the government or cooperate organizations. Little effort much gain is the value being celebrated today. That is why everybody is looking for a way to join politics. Politics is seen as the most lucrative way of generating wealth with ease. The activities of most of our political leaders in looting competition has made the youth to go into what they call yahoo or internet fraud deals so as to meet up with the demands of the society. Giving credence to the above, Okoh, (2017) said that "it is no surprise to anyone to realize that drug-peddling, armed or pen robbery, kidnapping and the like evils are rife among Nigerians and by some twist of fate, have become values in themselves as same means to instantaneous wealth".

Another negative value that is eroding the foundation of this nation is ethnicity and clannishness. Nepotism is rife presently in this present regime where ethnicity plays a pivotal role in selection and appointment to key posts in the administration. Invariably, this has brought in mediocrity into the governance which has led to low performance in the per capital income of the populace. Ethnicity being promoted presently has polarized this country to the extent that some sections of the country are agitating for self determination. The unity of the country bearing in mind that it is a country with so many diversities is at its lowest ebb. This has made development to stagnate and Nigeria is now the poverty capital in the world (World Bank, 2021).

Development from this perspective is seen as a qualitative change and thus, improvement on the lives of the people and their environment. It involves man and man alone. Its requirement are collectively put together by man to help attain the desired transformation (Okolo and Etekpe, 2014). This type of development can be attained where positive values form the bedrock of the societal development. Nigeria as a country must start from the basic to catch and reform the youth who are the future leaders to have re-orientation in their value system.

Teacher education as a model for championing value re-orientation

Education serves as the foundation of any society that wants to develop. It removes people from the bondage of ignorance and set them up at the platform of the enlightened in the society. Burchi (2006) stated that the “achievement of economic resources (total or per capital), or economic development in a dynamic version, is the final goal and education is an input that together with physical (and social) capital contributes to the increase of these resources”.

Furthermore, “the development of socio-economic life of a nation takes its root from education. Education is light to the people that are in darkness of ignorance. Every endeavour in this modern world must take its bearing from education. It enhances social relations. It helps to create wider social networks in which a person included helps in bringing assistance to the person in time of need. In modern times of ours, education serves as a social ladder that helps one to navigate the social strata. Education gives the capacity to rural poor to escape from poverty and hunger with their own power. One who is educated is more likely to find a job, and has also the capacity to use more rationally the resources he or she owns. Educated and informed people have more probability to select valuable objectives in life (Burchi, 2006).

Every educational attainment must be tailored towards the realization of the positive values that the society cherishes highly. Bearing in mind that values are conceived of in terms of what is accepted in any social system. It is a consistent body of standards which gives meaning or direction to an attitude. So value gives direction to attitude and behavior of the citizens of a society. Educational system is seen as driving force, in imparting the values of the society to the children or students. The teacher is like the driver of the educational system, steering it to its desired destination. Teachers are valuable human resources that a nation can count upon to mold and nurture its young minds. They are at the heart of the educational process. In a teaching process, a teacher plays a vital role to see those educational programs are successfully implemented by organizing and managing the learning experiences and environment (Burchi, 2006).

Preparing quality teachers is very important in ensuring students’ performance index both in their academic pursuit and social life integration. To achieve a value reorientation among our citizens and especially the youths who are the leaders of tomorrow, a teacher must play a vital role. The teacher education program needs to include content knowledge which is about the actual subject matter to be learned or taught. It involves knowing the theory, central facts,

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concepts and procedures within the specified field of study. The teacher that teaches an Igbo child or children as a case study needs to understand the personality, the spirit of every child and find a way to nurture that spirit (Burchi, 2006). In essence, teaching and learning is child centered in this era. In doing so, the values of the society should be brought to bear in the content of the teaching and learning processes.

The evolving new world order of the students, the impact of new technologies and the changing demands of world of work have a serious implication on the type of teaching and learning that take place in our schools. Value reorientation within the school age bracket is to be seen as a long term program bearing in mind that this target population is to be used as antidotes to the menace of value degradation that we are witnessing now. It is worthy to note that educated and informed people have the probability to choose values that are positive if properly nurtured.

To impact the students educationally, the teacher ought to be up to date with the trends in his field and the current societal realities. The good values within the Igbo society should be the yardstick on which the school curriculum should be anchored on and the teacher being the executioner. So the teacher has a great role to play in achieving the societal values. Isopahkala-Bouret (2004) said that “teachers need the self-confidence to carry out their duties in demanding unique situations and new to implement their expertise in such a way that their customers, stakeholders and colleagues trust them”. The teacher preparation is not one time project. There should be a retraining programme for practicing teachers to keep them up-to date with the changing trends in the society. This made Loughran (2006) to opine that “teacher education is the pre-service and in-service teacher preparation where students of teaching seek to develop knowledge and skills of teaching to learn how to competently apply these in practice”.

The greater the importance attached to education as a whole, whether for cultural transmission, for social cohesion and justice or for human resource development so critical in modern technology-based economics, the higher is the priority that must be accorded to the teachers responsible for that education (OECD, 1989). To have a better result from teachers in value reorientation there should be some review of the methodologies used in teaching and learning. Some are:

- a. The need for the use of technology in teacher education is very important. This will aid the teacher to move with the innovative trends

- in the society. It will also ease and aid his teaching skills and presentation. The students of this era are technologically driven and the teacher must be in tune with the current realities in the technological world.
- b. Sharing of ideas with colleagues. This should form the bedrock of every interactive session among teachers and school administrators. This will aid the transfer of methods and applications of principles of achieving positive values among the teachers and administrators. There is a saying that no man is an island. This will enable them to work, acquire and continue to share knowledge on behalf of their students.
 - c. Reflecting on the impact of the teaching and learning is very important in achieving the reorientation of values in the society. Therefore, assessing the effects of the teaching and learning will help to inject new ideas into the system thereby making the values of the society to be realized and sustained.

Recommendations

These recommendations were made for value reorientation to be effective in our society.

- Efforts should be made to sustain the values we cherish by starting early to impact such values in our children
- The political leaders should live and be example/models for others to follow through the cutting down of their life style.
- Teachers should be given their role as it was formally known so that they will start early to nurture and train our children.
- Teachers should embrace technology for it is the only way to bring transformation within our children bearing in mind that we are in the internet age.

Conclusion

The need to uphold and sustain our value system has been justified as the only way to keep the society in order. Ndigbo form part of the groups that make up Nigeria state and for that, are not immune to the rise of value breakdown. Though, it has been proved that notwithstanding the negative values springing up now, Ndigbo still hold their value of 'ezi ahaka ego' (good name is better than money) very high. The role of teacher education in

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value reorientation has shown that teachers are at the centre of any change expected to take place in a society.

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