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QUALITY SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION FOR CHARACTER AND VALUES MOULDING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Ethnic violence, religious crises and other social vices in Nigeria have reached an alarming rate that if n: arrested, may break up the country. It is against this background that this paper considers the use of quali: social science education as a veritable instrument for character and value transformation of the socie: Character education in schools is the education that foster ethical, responsible and care for young people : modelling and teaching good character through emphasis on universal values that we all share. It is effor. by schools to instil in their students important core ethical values such as caring, honesty, fairnes: responsibility and respect for self and others. Character developed over time through a sustained process (teaching, examples, learning and practice. The international teaching of good character is particular. important in today's society since our youth face many opportunities and dangers unknown to earlu generations. They are bombarded with many more negative influences through the media and other extern: sources prevalent in today's culture. Schools assist families and communities by developing carin; respectful environments where students learn core ethical values. A comprehensive approach to charact: moulding is through the school.

Introduction

Education is the process of learning and knowing, which is not restricted to school te: books. It is a holistic process and continues throughout life. Even the regular happenings an events around us educate us in one way or the other. It would not be an exaggeration to say tha the existence of human being is fruitless without education. An educated person has the abili: to change the world as she/he is brimmed with confidence and assured of making the rig! moves. As a human activity, knowledge is developed to meet at least two ends; first t transform, modify, move or manipulate any part of "pure" nature or nature that has already bee extensively modified. Secondly, knowledge is communicative interaction between people, and involves the sharing and transmission of meaning (Sayer 1992).

What is particular about social science knowledge, is that, it is about society and th: social scientists relate, in some way to the society which constitutes the object of th investigation. Social science advance judgments, which means that they do not only sugge: solutions to conflicts but that the solutions suggested become part of the theoretical (ideological commitments of the social scientist. Problems analysis and its respectiv constituents permeate and simultaneously affect the hierarchy of social interest. Furthermore, defines the context within which social science knowledge and its application affects tl segments of any society (Mohamed, 1993).

As smith (2008) noted, the traditional view of character is a set of qualities that unique to individuals; encompassing their chosen values and beliefs or their natural an unalterable personality, position it as a private matter, lying outside the realm of public polic Since it is observable that some elements of good character brings about positivity – fairnes uprightness, opportunity among others, it should be a general concern especially for polic makers interested in those outcomes. Most often than not, character capabilities are develope from childhood. Therefore, there is need for strong support not only from policy makers b:

also from the home and school to enable the child develop positive attitude in conformity with the societal norms and values for the development of the society.

There have been examination malpractices in schools, unwanted pregnancies among the youths, kidnapping, violence of different types, disrespect to parents and constituted authorities. These are the main problems of the day in Nigeria and if not arrested on time will continue to promote evil in our society. It was based on this backdrop that the writers consider quality science education for character and value moulding as very vital to correct the ills in the society so that the society will have responsible men, women, boys and girls who are morally upright to work for the development of the country, Nigeria.

Significance of Education in our lives

It is important to highlight the significance of education as education form the basis of all disciplines. Therefore, the following could be seen as the description of the significance of education in our lives:

Education makes a worthy contribution to our lives by making us responsible citizens. We get to know our history and culture through education and imbibe those values. Education opens our mind and expands our horizon. It enables us to understand our duties as citizens and encourages us to follow them. There is no denying fact that an educated person is a better citizen.

Education is futuristic in character, in so far that it ensure that the one who receives good education gets a secured future. Our productivity is increased by acquiring new skills and talents through education. We find ourselves in the most competitive jobs courtesy of education. The importance of education is evident by the dizzy heights we achieve in life.

The significance of education to a large extent lies in its ability to open new vistas for us. It expands our outlook and teaches us to be tolerant towards other views. An educated person will find it easier to understand a different point of view than the one who is uneducated. Education broadens our mental landscape and is the way forward to greater enlightenment – the ultimate goal of every human in life.

Awareness is a virtue in itself given that the lack of awareness is lamented everywhere. Education spreads awareness, informing us about our rights and the services that we can access. On the most basic notes, it teaches us to differentiate between right and wrong. For most part of our lives, we falter in dichotomizing right and wrong but the right education gives us the right answers.

Decision making is an integral part of our lives. We have to take decisions throughout our lives and sometimes decision making can be a very tough and challenging process. It can leave us perplexed and often wondering as to what is the right choice. Education is significant because it enables us to take the right decision and prevent loses.

An educated person is a confident person. Education fosters a posture outlook and allows us to believe in ourselves. Self-belief is the most wanted trait in a human being and education leads us towards relying on ourselves, making us believe that we are ready to take on the world.

Roles of Social Science Education in Character and Value Moulding

Schools and School Districts lie at the geographical and psychological centre of most communities but they (school) have been historically shut off from them. The school alone can seldom educate and develop the child's character and moral or civic values without collaborating with the community in which it is situated. Since neither the school nor the community can work in isolation towards the child's character moulding, they should work co-

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operatively and dependably to inculcate the right attitude and value to the child. However, because of the high sounding negative effects of indiscipline in the society the schools have most recently realized the impact of relating with the community to support the child's behavioural moulding. In this direction, Social Science Education through Public/Civic Education should be used to inculcate a sense of virtue in children to become responsible and contributing citizens to the development of themselves and the society at large for the better.

Quite simply, plant growth is determined by the soil on which it grows. Healthy communities produce healthy children and communities that have short comings endanger their children. Working with communities has become crucial to the production of successful children (Houston, 2012). For too long, schools shy away from the formal teaching of values and character. Character forms the building blocks for becoming a good citizen. Raising a nation of good citizens is the real homeland security for us. Good character gained in school forms the twin towers of our democracy – understanding the right of every citizen to pursue his or her own dreams and possibilities and the communities need to support its members. But trying to teach civics without teaching character is like trying to teach reading without teaching the alphabet.

Social science education has a wide area of coverage. Some of the issue it explores include:
i.   How people can co-operate to make life more comfortable.
ii.   Ways and how peoples' right should be respected.
iii.   Reasons for obeying laws
iv.   Reasons for paying tax
v.   How to vote and be voted for in election
vi.   How enough food can be produced for everybody to enjoy.
vii.   How to produce enough clothes for people to cover themselves and build enough houses for people to live in.
viii.   How to live in peace, and ensure peaceful co-existence among members of society under a government.
ix.   How human beings lay in social groups and how these groups fulfil their varying needs of man in society.
x.   Ways of solving problems such as corruption, bad leadership, etc.

Through the knowledge of the above social issues and many other social sciences which include economics, geography, anthropology, political science, sociology, psychology, social studies and history, Social Science Education helps to transform the character and values of the citizens for onward development of the society.

The character value traits should include but not limited to courage, good judgment, integrity, civility, kindness, perseverance, responsibility, tolerance, self-discipline, respect for school personnel, responsibility for school safety, service to others and good citizenship. A person's "character" refers to the disposition and habits and the way that a person normally responds to desires, fears, challenges, opportunities, failures and successes. We describe the character of a person in reference to moral judgments about the worthiness of a person. That is to have a strong, great or noble character is to be a person of merit, worthy of admiration and honour. Your character is the sum of all the qualities that make you who you are. You are your values – thoughts, words and actions; you are often be judged by your character (Singla, 2009).

Character education in schools is a creation that fosters ethical, responsible and caring young people by modelling and teaching good character through emphasis on universal values that we all share. It is the proactive effort by schools, districts and states to instil in their students important core ethical values such as caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility and respect for self

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and others. Character education is not a "quick fix", it provides long term solutions that address moral, ethical and academic issues of growing concern to our society and key to the safety of our schools (Character Education Partnership, 2010).

The Need for Character/Value Education

The teaching of good character/value is particularly important in today's society since our youth face many opportunities and dangers unknown to earlier generations. They are bombarded with many more negative influences through the media and other external sources prevalent in today's culture. Therefore, it is critical to create schools that simultaneously foster character development and promote learning. (Character Education Information Handbook and Guide II, 2001).

An increasing proportion of young people are growing up without a firm understanding or commitment to the core ethical values needed to inform and energize the conscience. As a result, they lack internal mechanism to help them know right from wrong and to generate the will power to exercise self-control and consistently to do what is right (Josephson, 2002).Everyone wants a child, neighbour, friend or a complete stranger to possess good character. Yet we know this is not easy to obtain. and once it is obtained we must acknowledge that the development of children who will possesses and act upon ethical sensibilities must begin when they are very young. We want our children to be honest; we want them to make responsible decisions in their lives. We want them to care about their families, communities and themselves. These things do not happen on their own; it takes all of us and the support of social science education which sees to all round development of the child to get there.

Approaches to Values/Character Education

Most psychologist, educators, and policy makers. concur with the general public that universal set of values must exist although differences are expressed as to the origin of those values coming either from the natural or spiritual realm. Thus various approaches to teaching of values have been developed, depending upon the cultural view of the aims of education, and assumption about the source of values, as well as how people learn. Superkn. Ahrens and Hedstrom (1976) outlined five basic approaches to teaching values as:

1. Inculcation (having students incorporate the standards and norms of his/her referent group or society primarily through modelling, rewards and sanctions).
2. Moral development (having students move through the stages of moral reasoning based on higher sets of values, using primarily discussions of moral dilemmas.
3. Analysis (helping students use a rational scientific investigation to decide issues of values and ethics, often using case studies).
4. Values clarifications (helping students identify their own and others values often with role playing, games or stimulations as well as discussions and self-analysis).
5. Action learning (using value clarification and/or other approaches providing students with opportunities to put values into practice with social action.

According to Thomas Lickona (1993) all these approaches are necessary since no one is singularly sufficient to instil lifelong adherence to high principles. Good values/character education must be drawn from each of the approaches above. Schools must help children through social science education to understand core values, adopt or commit to them and then act upon them in their own lives. Each of the three components of value/character education (understand, adopt and act) requires specific qualities that must be present for values/character education to be effective.

1. Attention to the emotional side (self-respect empathy, self-control, humility, etc) is what Lickona (1993) describes as the bridge between judgment and action.
2. Competence in skills such as listening and communicating.
3. Will (i.e. mobilizing the judgement and energy to act).
4. Habit (a reliable inner disposition to respond to situations in a good way).

Therefore, a comprehensive, holistic approach to values/ character education is recommended. Based upon the assumption that everything that goes on in and around students affect their value/character. social science education can also be used to support and suppress an ethnic cause and may as well create a mythology to justify the role of dominant ethnic group in the struggle over power and resources.

Quality social science education should take cognizance of the following eleven points in the teaching of character and values education for proper transformation of the society.

1. Character education promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character.
2. Character is comprehensively defined to include thinking, feeling and behaviour.
3. Effective character education requires an international, proactive and comprehensive approach that promotes the core value in all phases of social life.
4. The school is a caring community.
5. To develop character, the school provides students opportunities for moral actions.
6. Effective character education includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners and helps them succeed.
7. Character education should strive to develop students' intrinsic motivation for developing good character.
8. The school staff are learning and moral community in which all share responsibility for character education and attempt to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of students.
9. Staff and students demonstrate leadership.
10. The school recruits parents and community members as full partners in character building effort.
11. Evaluation of character education assesses the character of the school, the school staff functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character.

Conclusion

The development of socialization skills and integration of character/value education are an important part of a child's academic success. Character/value education efforts may be effective when implemented rigorously and with a scientific foundation. Schools should focus on teaching character within the regular curriculum.

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