

## **EDUCATION: AN INDISPENSABLE TOOL FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Education is undisputably the bedrock of all forms of development. Man will likely have distorted and dwarf-like development without meaningful exposure to education. Emmanuel Kant once said that it is only education that makes man truly human. The role of education in the development of man is the focus of this paper. Particular attention was paid to the history of child development, the general functions of education, and some factors that inhibits sound child development. Suggestions were also made as to the roles that the various educational agencies especially the school can play in ensuring the effective or sound development of a child.

### **Introduction**

Education is indeed a major tool for making man truly human. Man is helped to behave and live as sound and rational being as a result of his exposure to education be it formal or informal. Man without education is likely to be barbaric, parochial, ignorant, backward, myopic and surrounded by diverse bottlenecks.

Such an individual may not find it too easy to operate successfully as a functional member of a functioning society. This shows that education is indeed an indispensable tool needed for success in all ramifications. Education is an instrument per excellence for effecting the desired personal as well as society's development. It is a sure medium for the transformation of man from his animalistic nature to a "well-baked" social being.

### **Definition of key concepts**

#### **Education**

This has been severally defined by scholars in the area of education. Considering the concept from etymological perspective, Osokoya (1987) explained that the word education emanated from two latin words "educere" and "educare". Educere, he explained simple means "to lead out; or "to draw out". This shows that education is the process through which the hidden or the inborn potentialities of an individual are helped to develop in order for the individual to be useful to himself and his society. The analysis shows that man is endowed with certain qualities but just like water in a well will remain unuseful to people unless it is drawn out, the basic potentialities that man is endowed with will have be stirred up and be developed for the sake of the usability of such qualities.

The second latin word from which education was derived "educare" according to Osokoya (1987) connotes "to nourish" "to impart" or "to transmit" meaning that education is the process through which the needs of an individual such as skills, knowledge, values etc are imparted or transmitted for the sake of nationality and comfortability within the environment where the individual finds himself. It is as a result of this functional purpose of education that the sociologists have defined education as the process of cultural transmission and renewal.

Education is the process through which the rawness in man is attended and transformed into a well baked and balance individual for the betterment of himself and the society at large.

## **Development**

This will be considered by looking into the What? Why? and How? of the concept. Development according to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English refers to the growth that occurs from rudimentary level to a fuller, longer, stronger, higher, maturer and more advanced condition or state.

From a global perspective, it can be seen as the improvement witnessed in every segment of life. It refers to the removal of poverty, employment and the provision of basic human needs.

Operationally, development refers to the gradual improvement witnessed or experienced by man as a result of exposure to diverse aspects of education.

## **The why of development**

This refers to the reasons why man should be developed. Development is needed to make man a complete being. It is necessary for the avoidance of stagnation, hardship, backwardness, crudeness, social vices and to allow for the steady progress in all spheres of life. Development gives room for conformity to norms, values, interest and aspirations of the society.

## **The how of development**

This has to do with what to do, actions to take or steps to be taken for development to take place. It refers to all that must be done for development to be realized such as the type of education to be given, those to impart the knowledge needed (teachers or personnel), the materials that are needed for meaningful development to take place, the funds needed and all workable strategies to be taken through which the anticipated development will be realized and sustained.

This paper focuses on the how aspect of development which is the most crucial aspect of development needing the highest attention.

Efforts have been made to consider the brief history of human development, the problems or factors that inhibit human development and the role of the educational agencies in the development of man. That is the role of the school, the home, religious organizations, and the society in child development.

## **Brief history of child development**

The necessity for the development of child especially the need for education has always been echoed by World Educationists and Philosophers! Plato, an ancient Greek philosopher and Quintilian, a Roman Rhetorician and philosopher and a host of renowned philosophers like John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau etc all stressed that early education should be given to all children regardless of their family background (Omogbe, 1990).

Parents and siblings that surround the child according to these philosophers, are to be well cultured so as not to be a source of pollution to the young growing child.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the cry for the need to get children fully developed by giving them early education became louder as enlightenment campaigns were led by churchmen, lawyers, scholars and other proponents of religious reforms. Children were seen as malleable, that is bendable hence, whatever is built into their lives would last and influence their later development.

As moralists spurred parents into taking up the responsibility of educating their children and wards, this eventually led to the rapid expansion of schools during the seventeenth century in Europe and America and the subsequent educational

development witnessed in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20 centuries worldwide (Mayer, 1966; Molagun, et al, 2004).

### **Some factors that inhibits sound child development in Nigeria.**

Molagun. (2005) Osoba, (2005) itemized the following as the major impediments to effective child development.

1. **Parents' lukewarm attitude towards their children:** The level of attention that parents give to their children will go a long way in making or marring the lives of their children or wards. When enough time is not spent in attending to the general welfare as well as the cultural, moral and educational well-being of a child as parents run after shadows which are all ephemeratities this can lead to kwarshorkoric development in a child.
2. **Poverty:** This can contribute to lack of proper child development. Today, although Nigeria is referred to as the giant of Africa many Nigerian families can hardly afford three square meals per day talkless of the paramount demands of sound education. All efforts made by Nigeria government, in the past for the eradication of poverty have failed such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) Special Adjustment Programme (SAP), family support etc. The results of poverty are very obvious. They are displayed on Nigerian streets through the school age hawkers, child labour and child trafficking.
3. **Separation of parents (Divorce):** This has led many children into miserable hands where their welfare are often neglected. It is an undisputable fact that children from broken homes do suffer untold hardship and lack proper development enjoyed by children raised in well cemented homes.
4. **Lopsided family planning:** Many Nigerian go net really pay adequate attention to their financial capacity before unlimited number of children are produced. Consequently, they find it grossly impossible to cope with the demands of child development in terms of provision for the basic necessities of life such as good education, feeding, clothing etc.
5. **Moral/spiritual decadence in homes:** Occurrences in Nigeria society such as the myriad cases of cultism, examination malpractices, 419, corruption, prostitution etc are sound evidences supporting the fact that the fabric of morality and spiritual tone of homes are gradually braking down in Nigeria. The fear of God that is to be displayed by parents for the younger ones to emulate has been played down. Moral ethics are nowhere to be found in many homes and lives hence, the production of vagabonds, hooligans and cultists who have consistently constituted themselves into heavy and formidable social menace in Nigeria society.
6. **Materialism:** Excessive love for materialism can hinder proper development of a child. Today, many Nigerian have interchanged the love, care, and concern for their children with the love for temporary things, many are more interested in purchasing fanciful cars, sophisticated houses and chieftaincy titles while the moral, social as well as their children's intellectual development are jeopardized and left to crumble.
7. **Impact of corruption-oriented situations in Nigerian society:** It is true to say that some of the programmes Nigerian Youths are exposed to and the types of morally stinking-lives being lived by many Nigerians are serving as great barriers to proper development of our youths. Added to this is the issue of indecency displayed through all devil-oriented ways of dressing copied from pornographic world and actresses watched from the screen of our television

media. Corruption has gradually become part of Nigerian culture displayed for the younger ones to imbibe.

### **The role of educational agencies in child development**

Attention is being paid here to the role of the informal (indigenous) the formal education, and other educational agencies in the development of a child. Indigenous education and child development: Fafunwa, (1974), Taiwo (1980) explained that children were adequately trained ever before the advent of Islamic and western education. The development of a child they expressed was not the exclusive, responsibility of the nuclear family. Rather, all hands were on deck to get the children acquainted with the beliefs, moral, values, customs, norms and aspirations of the society.

Molagun et al (2000) added that child's education usually started from childhood period when a child was taught how to talk, walk, hate, love, how to show sympathy and have respect for elders. Children were also taught the importance of dignity of labour and were heavily involved in the household chores as well as in all agricultural activities.

The indigenous education made provisions for the recipients to acquire all relevant knowledge needed for self-reliance. The young ones were exposed to a broad unwritten curriculum which catered for their all round development and made them functional members of the society.

Vagabonds were hardly produced because discipline were never porous, those who erred had sanctions and heavy discipline meted out to them promptly and appropriately. The situations have changed drastically today. Discipline in homes has been watered down. Functional education is yet to be pursued with vigor, that is why problems such as unemployment, hatred, intolerance, waywardness and the like have continued to increase in Nigerian society.

### **Formal education (the school) and the child development**

The role of the school is the development of a child can never be overemphasized. The school is the agency that socializes or re-socialize the child. The school builds on the foundation of the social and moral development laid at the family level.

Hence, the roles to be played by the school in this regard are enormous. What then are the functions of the school in child development? According to Molagun (2005) and Ojo, (2005) education, a social service provided by the government for the progress of the society and human development is expected to carryout the following functions.

- To transit the cultural and moral values of the society into the younger ones.
- To prepare the young ones for their future roles.
- To help each child to realize his/her potentials.
- To produce promoters of peace and stoppers of evil in society.
- To produce men and women that are temperate, just, honest, brave and tolerant.
- To promote vocational efficiency.
- To equip the child's mental and physical health.
- To promote vocational efficiency.

- To equip the child with the relevant knowledge and skills that are needed to ensure functionality and success in all ramifications in the society etc.

The objectives of all levels of education stemmed out of the general functions of education listed above. For instance, the general objectives of nursery/primary education according to the National Policy on Education among others include:-

- To impart into the kids Nigerian social norms.
- To build into the kids team and cooperative spirit.
- Catering for the character and moral development of children.
- To develop the manipulative skills that will enable each child perform effectively in the society within his/her capacity.
- To cater for the development of the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature and the environment.
- To lay sound foundation for scientific and reflective thinking and
- To promote citizenship education as basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society (NPE, 2004).

The above laudable objectives are to be the focus at the Nursery/Primary level of Nigerian education. However, a close examination will reveal the fact that a lot still need to be done in Nigerian schools for the realization of a sound child development.

What exactly should our schools do to ensure proper, adequate and sound child development? The expected steps to be taken will be considered by looking into the provision of broad and rich curriculum, the expected positive role of teachers and the government.

### **School curriculum**

- This should be broad and all encompassing. The intellectual aspect of life of a child should not be the main focus; every child should be made absorbable into the society by taking care of all segment of their development. The Japanese from whom Nigeria borrowed the 6,3,3,4 system of education pay particular attention to the moral development of the young ones as much as their intellectual growth.
- Attention should be paid to the vocational aspect of child's education as means of allowing for meaningful self-reliance and avoidance of unemployment.
- Moral and religious education should be given greater priority, this aspect of child's development will help to produce united, honest, tolerance and peaceful society. Moral bankruptcy will be eradicated if children are exposed to Nigerian cultural values and the fear of God pretty early. The idea of emphasizing pass at credit level in religious knowledge at the detriment of the mastery of the spiritual values should be seriously considered. The beginning and end of education according to John Herbert is morality. This should be our watchword.

### **The role of teachers in child development**

For proper child development to take place classroom teachers with whom the child is directly interacting have major roles to play. Contemporary and ancient philosophers have much to say on the role of teachers in the development of a child.

- John Locke explaining the fact that a child's mind is blank like a clean slate at birth (tabula rasa) emphasized the need for teachers to make positive and acceptable impressions on the innocent minds of learners put under their custody.

- Teachers are to love (not brutal) and to display and maintain good rapport with pupils. As Quintilian opined, nature and nurture should cooperate in handling the young ones for their proper development. Anything less than this can lead to emotional destabilization. Hence, like a gardener they should lovingly guide the child in all their classroom activities. Home atmosphere as recommended by Johan Pestalozzi should prevail in the classroom.
- Teachers are to be zealous, pious and see themselves as behavior modifiers.
- For a child to have proper intellectual development the possessor of the knowledge or the transmitter must be abreast of time, and be a citadel of knowledge. Hence, teachers are to be well versed in the knowledge imparted in to learners. Since cabbages in and out presentation of facts will not suffice for the said development of a child.
- Teachers as expressed by John Locke should be ready to add sweetness to their lesson by ensuring that viable, child centered, pragmatic and attractive instructional materials are used. Enthusiasm (not gloomy faces) should be displayed in their classroom presentations, coercion, high handedness will likely dampen the morale of learners. Self - learning self - discovery based on the level of maturity and readiness of learners for whatever is taught should be considered by the teacher.
- Teachers should ensure that discipline is meted out to offenders promptly and appropriately, children's faults should not be ignored. Good and acceptable attitudes should be displayed by teachers for learners to emulate.
- Teachers should guide against the problem of precociousness. Jean Jacques Rousseau emphasized that children should not be rushed to learn what is beyond their level of development. Rather, teachers should allow children to be children before they are men. They should be left to enjoy their level of development before something tougher is given to them this will mar their proper development.
- Lessons presented should graduate from simple to Complex and from known to unknown. While, learners should be stimulated through motivational strategies like praise, but not by clapping incessantly.

### **What the school should do for proper child development to be realized.**

Nigerian government through the various ministries of education should take the following steps:

- Train and provide 'well- baked 'teachers to schools.
- Provide all relevant educational facilities to schools on equal basis such as textbooks, laboratories, libraries, classrooms to avoid over rowdiness and the negative effect of this.
- Teaching of religious education should be made compulsory to university level
- Make laws that will effectively control the excesses of students.
- To ban all pornographic materials, and control the nauseating films shown on the screen of Nigerian Television
- Provide recreational centers to keep learners busy during their leisure hours
- To create greater employment opportunities for youth after their graduation

- To outlaw early pregnancy for school - age children which leads to the production of under-age parents breeding unwanted element in Nigerian societies.
- To make teachers comfortable. To provide all that will put lasting smile on the faces of teachers and encourage them to work zealously. Having itemized what the school should do to ensure proper human or child development, it is to be noted that parents and the larger society have much to do in this regard

**For parents:**

Since the family has been recognized as the best education agency, parents should do everything possible to allow for a sound development of their children by:

Finding time to relax, educate, discipline and provide for all the needs of their children;

- Transmitting the society's cultural values in to their children. What the child is exposed to at the family level will go a long way in helping him to have correct self -concept and family characteristics;
- Give their children the needed security through love and provisions of other needs
- Shaping the child 's behavioral pattern and attitude formation during the course of his development into adulthood
- Maintaining good husband wife relationship for the children to emulate when they grow up or go in to marriage later on. Divorce or separation should be prevented at all cost
- To discipline their children without restriction, and
- Exposing their children to God early enough. They should also live spiritually sound lives for children to emulate.

**The largest society**

Nigerian youths constitutes 55% of our population that is why the entire society should deem it fit to display good examples for the young ones to emulate. Production of vagabonds and dishonest elements will cause the society to derail. No doubt, a crime - ridden society will breed crime-ridden youths; a 419 society will provide 419 children.

No unity, peace, cohesion and progress can be witnessed unless good examples are displayed by all Nigerians including the politicians for the young ones to copy. Crimes, corruptions, social vices should be shunned while virtue-oriented behaviors are adopted by all.

**Conclusion**

All that have been discussed shows that man needs to develop and man's development will be lopsided except all hands are on deck to make things workable. All that constitutes obstacles to proper development of child's education will have be promptly attended to

The school, through the management, the teachers, and the government will need to make redress while the home will need to pay more attention to their children for proper child development to be realized and sustained in all ramifications. Education is indeed an indispensable tool for child development. Without it, man will live like animals and the social fabrics will be broken down. Hence, all efforts should be made to ensure the proper development of all children, so that the desired

emancipation and progress being clamored for in our society and by individuals will be realized.

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