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Abstract: This paper examined the relevance of history of education in Nigeria to the teacher and society at large. In order to actualise this aim, a short explanation on what education is was made, including who a teacher is, what history of education is all about and a relationship between the teacher and history of education. Furthermore, a basic review of history of education in Nigeria was made with a finding consistent with the assertion that “the African today is a product of two Worlds, the African and the west”. The traditional educational system in Nigeria, including a short review of the Islamic education in Nigeria was made. The introduction and subsequent growth of western education in Nigeria were also assessed. This paper further established the relevance of history of education to the teacher pointing out how history of education helps the teacher to gain knowledge of the past educational policies, curriculum and perspectives which influences the future. This paper also revealed some positive aspect of history of education to the society, including development of good citizenship, provision of identity and development of democracy in a nation amongst others.

Keywords: Education, History of Education

I. INTRODUCTION

Education which has remained a social process in nation building and the maintenance of society for decades (World Bank, 1998:11) can be regarded as a weapon for the acquiring of skills, relevant knowledge and values for surviving in a changing world. According to the national education law no. 2 of 2003 ‘Education is the conscious effort to create an atmosphere of learning and the learning process’ Igbuzor (2006:4) in emphasising the importance of education, states that education is a human right that should be accorded to all human beings with Obani (1996:5) depicting education as a core instrument necessary for societal development. Education can therefore be regarded as the best legacy a country can give to its citizen.

Wosu (2016: 6) opined that the word ‘Education’ is used for the development of human beings in the cognitive, affective, psychomotor and psycho-productive domains. He further stated that there is an agreement between the educationists and the educators that education involves a useful change in human behaviour through the process of teaching and learning. This entails that a human being whose behaviour is not in tandem with the acceptable social norms cannot be considered or regarded as an educated person, irrespective of the fact that he once passed through an educational system.

From origin, education derived its meaning from two Latin words ‘educare’ and ‘educere’ respectively. The word ‘educare means to train or to form or to mould. This implies that the society trains, forms or moulds the individual to achieve the societal needs and aspiration (Wosu 2016:7), while on the contrary the word ‘educere’ means to build, to lead or to develop. This perspective of the concept is mostly favoured by the humanists, who insist that the functions of education is to develop the natural potentialities in the child to enable him function in the society according to his abilities, interest and needs. This perspective is child centred, whereas the former is society-centred. Following the above discussion, education can be said to mean the total development of the individual child, through acceptable methods and techniques, according to his rightful place and contribute adequately to the advancement of his society. (Amaele 2003 in Wosu 2006).

To the social anthropologist, education focuses on aspect of knowledge or social upbringing that people especially adult members of society receive and transmit to the young ones with education been seen as an acceptable process designed by society to transmit virtue of love, justice, peace and order towards making the society a better place.

At the centre of education and any educational system is the teacher who according to Wosu et al (2017:28) is an individual who undergoes training in various skills and knowledge in a formal institution and is employed to guide learners to achieve their set educational objectives. Wosu et al (2017:28) further expressed that if there is anything like instructing and impacting like helping and guiding the learner, a professional teacher is cardinal. A teacher is also seen as the fulcrum of any good educational system and hence the bedrock of the subject of history of education in any nation.

Wosu (2016:1) opines that history is the study of past events of man which is linked to what is happening at the present and can help in the planning. According to Osokoya (1996:1) history deals with evidence of human beings who have lived in times past. It also talks about how human lives have been transformed over time. It does not only talk about the acknowledgement of distant past but also with the modern world. History of education is therefore a study of every past activity of man in the education industry as depicted by Wosu (2016:11) with history majorly concerned with those
institutions, ideas and activities of society that supports education. He also emphasized that History of education is concerned with the study of how societies passed on cultures from one generation to another. History of education, therefore could be regarded as past efforts at bringing solution to the socio-economic problems of man in order to better the present and future.

The teacher and history of education are therefore inseparable as the teacher is useful to the history of education and vice versa. While the teacher propagates the history of education, the history of education much more imparts the teacher as it helps the teacher understand how past events helped in influencing the present educational systems, theories and related occurrence in the area of teacher education and education at large. It further more brings to the teachers’ illumination the value of education to mankind since the ancient generations. By that, the teacher is able to critically checkout the fundamental part which education plays in the transformation of society.

Additionally, the teacher as a change agent may remain powerless without a good knowledge of the history of education as such will help in preparing the teacher to examine current trends and dynamics in education, derive practical lessons from the past, avoid possible mistakes, and initiate more feasible plans for the good of society and by so positively affects the community. All these are therefore applicable to the Nigerian society and its’ educational system as such a good knowledge of the Nigerian educational history by the teacher will significantly influence both the teacher and the society at large.

II. HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The learning of History of Education in Nigeria is important as it enables the teacher to understand how cultures and values have transferred from one generation to another (Wosu 2016:11). It also enables the teacher to be acquainted with our educational policies and the philosophical ideas guiding the Nigerian education system.

III. TRADITIONAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Before the advent of western education as introduced at different points by the missionaries from Europe, the indigenous African and indeed Nigeria communities had its system of education which according to Nwaenyi (2003:24) could be defined as “a training allegiance, mutual interest and interdependence, the content of which is the community’s values, beliefs, traditions and vocations which have been cherished and practiced over generations”.

In this system of education, the child is introduced to the knowledge of religion and oral literature, skill-training in agriculture and craft, the building of physical strength and agility as well as character formation and development of freedom (Kosemani and Okorosaye-Orubite, 1995:5).

Fafunwa (1991:20) in his work on the traditional education system deposited that the goals of this educational system which were focused towards functionalism could be summarised as followed:

- To develop the child’s latent physical skills.
- To develop character.
- To inculcate respect for elders and those in position of authority.
- To develop intellectual skills.
- To acquire specific vocational training and to develop a healthy attitude towards honest labour.
- To develop a sense of belonging and to participate actively in family and community affairs.
- To understand, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large.

The traditional educational system in Nigeria had its basic contents which Taiwo (1980:179) identified to include:

- Basic education, which is education for in conformity with the traditions of the community. This includes family history, geography of the environment, knowledge of plants and animals, verbs, riddles, appropriate greetings, etiquette values, use of language and knowledge of counting numbers.
- Education for occupation and economic self-reliance. This includes subsistence farming and crafts; related to community needs. Parents sent their children for these training according to sexes.
- Education for special occupation includes family crafts, medicine, secret organization, religious priest—hood and divination. This type of education is secret and exclusive to particular families.

The following are some characteristics of traditional education in Nigeria:

- The process is oral and informal.
- Emphasis is on value systems, beliefs and norms of the society.
- The child is committed to the land as part of his training.
- Both the living and the dead are members of the society since the dead are held in great reverence.
- Division of labour among sexes with regards to certain jobs.
- The child is introduced to the knowledge of religion and oral literature, skill-training in agriculture and craft, the building of physical strength and agility as well as character formation and development of freedom (Kosemani and Okorosaye-Orubite, 1995:5).

Under this traditional educational system, basic education is compulsory for every child with teachers being members of family. Education for occupation and economic self-reliance is necessary for every child for future job
placement and self-sustenance and survival in the community. Education for special occupation in this educational practice is exclusively for the family, the elected people or individuals with special privilege to be trained to practice such skill or craft.

Since the traditional education is geared towards functionalism, the environment determines its content and method. For instance, the type of occupation, houses to build, the range of sports to participate in, the objects of worship, time of festivals, knowledge of agriculture, identification of herbs, the accepted values, popular beliefs and religious tenets are products of environment in which the child finds himself/herself but today with the changes in environment, the traditional education has also undergone some major changes. Kosemani and Okorosaye-Orubite (1995:8).

IV. ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

In the northern part of Nigeria, Islamic education formed a core component of the traditional educational system especially amongst the Hausas and Fulanis. The spread of Islam in Africa was made possible because of trade and the Almoravids’ conquest. The introduction of Islam in Nigeria occurred between 1349-1385 when Muslim scholars from Mali came into Kano. In 1493, the ruler of Kastina was converted to Islam by the famous missionary, Al-Maghili of Algeria. Later, Muslim scholars from Sankore University came to Kastina. According to Gbadamosi and Ade Ajayi in Ikime (1980: 348-349), many reasons have been adduced to explain the rapid spread of Islam:

They are strategy of missionary agents who aimed at the conversion of whole families or community units rather than individuals; the support of many traditional rulers and chiefs; the many sided roles of the “Mallam” as man of God, preacher, teacher, scholar, trader adviser and medicine man; the pressure of Ilorin on the Eastern parts of Yoruba land and Nupe; the identification of Islam with the class of warriors and long distance traders, the prestige which this conferred on the Muslims, few as they were; the extent to which the religion met the social and spiritual needs of the people, it offered literacy, new ideas, a wider world concept, a richer civilization and a new religion that did not imply subordination to the white man (Ogbondah 2002:137).

Islamic religion brought along the Islamic education which according to Ellah (1999:43) has five cardinal aims which included:

- To live a life that will guarantee the continuity of man’s essential goodness.
- Develop piety and faith.
- Service to Allah and man.
- Develop the intellect.
- For individual adjustment (Ogbondah, 2002:140).

The following are some other aims of Islamic education according to Taiwo (1980:177): To prepare the children for adult life as Muslims. He further explained when he quoted Hilliard that “to be a Muslim is not just to believe and worship, but to think and dress as a Muslim.

From the above, man is seen as the product of goodness that was endowed with him. Islamic education encourages the trust or belief in the existence of the supreme power of Allah and to conduct himself in supreme power of Allah and to conduct himself in accordance with the dictates of Islam. The education acquired is used for the service to Allah and man through arms deed to the poor. Also, Islamic education emphasizes on intellectual development and offered subjects like philosophy, psychology Jurisprudence and literature. Islamic education emphasizes the channel for adjustment in the changing society. It encourages the development of the child from birth to adulthood.

The core values of Islamic Education as enumerated (Ogbondah, 2002:142) include:

- The cost is cheap and assessable.
- Focus is understanding rather than examination.
- Memory development.
- Encouragement of high morals.
- Prepares the child for an adult life.
- Provision of vocational opportunities.
- Intimate relationship between teacher and pupil.

Islamic education is also said to have its limitations which have contributed to its poor global acceptance. These include but not limited to the following:

- The aim and content were religion-based.
- Narrow curriculum.
- The drudgery of a pupil/student memorizing the Koran in Arabic imposes far greater strain and hardship than learning in western school
- The course extending over ten or twelve years at the primary level is unnecessary long and tedious.
- The system was authoritarian in nature.
- No uniform curriculum.
- No prescribed qualification for teachers.
- Schools were run according to the discretion of individual teachers.
- There were no rigidly codified rules.
- Limited teaching method.

Over the years lots of modernization of the Islamic education in Nigeria has taken place which has further deepened divisiveness among Muslims as documented by Kosemani and Okorosaye-Orubite (1995:22). Furthermore, they explained that it has divided its scholars into rival groups either the orthodox or the modernist, the fundamentalist or the progressive, the theocrats or the secularists. In the 19th and early 20th century, the Muslims discovered themselves in a dilemma when the powerful forces of the church and state and
combined in an unholy alliance to convert Emirs, Obas, chiefs and people to Christianity. Christianity - oriented schools, textbooks, sermons and other built-in educational devices were employed as instructors of conversion (Ogbondah 2002:143).

Muslim organizations and Jamats such as the Ansar-Ud-Deen society, Ahmadiyya movement, Zumratual Islamiyya, Jamaatu, Ishamiyya; Isabutudeen, the Crescent Bearers, Ijebu-Ode Muslim friendly society and others have been very active in an attempt to bridge the gap between Muslim and Christian education., but their efforts as compared with those of the Christians are minimal in terms of number of schools in relation to population.

Today, some higher institutions in Nigeria including the Abdullah: Bayero College, Kano (a branch of Ahamadu Bello University) offers Arabic and Islamic studies at different levels of the institution’s programmes. Again, some private universities in Nigeria such as Al-Hikmah, Afe Babalola, Crescent, Katsina, Fountain, etc. are established by adherents of Islamic faith.

V. WESTERN EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The history of education in Nigeria cannot be discussed without a full attention on the history of western educational system in Nigeria which has contributed in no less measure to the development of the Nigerian nation. Western education in Nigeria has a close relationship with the activities of early Christian missionary activities in Nigeria. The introduction of the early mission schools was between 1515 and 1580 by the Portuguese missionaries and merchants through trading posts, churches and schools (Ogbondah 2002:145). This became the foundation for western education in Nigeria.

This early missionary activities and western education were however truncated by the commencement of slave trade which lasted for about three hundred years (Ogbondah 2002:146). At the termination of slave trade between 1807 and 1833, western education was revived with the arrival of another group of missionaries to Nigeria. However, these missionaries were received in Nigeria in the first half of the 19th century. Following this, Western Education in Nigeria was introduced by the Church Missionary Society in 1843 (CMS), The Wesleyan Methodist Mission in 1842, The United Presbyterians (Church of Scotland Mission), The Roman Catholic Mission, The Southern American Baptist Mission (Ogbondah 2002:146-149). The CMS in 1846 opened two schools for boys and girls respectively.

They also established a Teacher Training College at Abeokuta in 1849, as well as the Lagos Grammar School founded in 1859. The CMS contribution to education in the early days made tremendous impact as they made the students to write in their ethnic groups such as the Igbo, Efik, Kanuri and Hausa (Ogbondah 2002:148). They also established the first Yoruba Newspaper Iwe-Irohim in 1859. They established a total of 50 schools including Hope Waddell Training institute. The subjects taught in majority of the elementary schools included Scripture, English Compositions, English Grammar, Arithmetic, Geography, Music, Singing, Reading, Writing, Dictation, and for girls Sewing (Fafunwa 1974). The emphasis in the infant classes was on the teaching of the 3 Rs (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic).

The growth of schools was, however, limited by lack of funds and sometimes parents unwillingness to send their children especially girls to school. Formal education in Nigeria began when the first primary school opened its doors in 1843 in Badagry, Lagos. This school was then owned by the Methodist missionaries, marking the first evidence of private sector stimulated delivery of education in Nigeria.

Following this, was the flag-off of secondary school education in Nigeria by Christian missionaries with the establishment of the C.M.S Grammar School also in Lagos in 1859. By the year 1914, when both the Northern and Southern Protectorates were amalgamated, there were a total of 59 government and 91 mission primary schools in the South; all 11 secondary schools except for King’s College Lagos were run by Missions. Due to the pressure on the need to have more schools across the federation, additional schools where created by local efforts in the 1920s to meet these needs. Since then, the private sector’s involvement in education delivery across Nigeria has been on the increase. The various bodies that constitute the major private sector elements involved in providing basic, post-basic and higher education in Nigeria include: private individuals, communities, corporations, foundations and religious bodies.

The growing confidence in private schools across Nigeria over the years has been informed by the belief that these schools outperform their public counterparts particularly in the area of education. Also, owing to the peculiar nature of education in Nigeria, most private schools are known to be consistent with their academic endorser compared with public schools which are known for repeated strikes and unstable time frames. While there is no doubt that the private sector has contributed significantly to the growth of the education sector in Nigeria, it is also a reality that there have been some challenges along the way. The efficiency and effectiveness of private schools across Nigeria is marred by the lack of accreditation and high tuition.

However, the spread of western education in the northern Nigeria was largely limited compared to the southern Nigeria due to the entrenchment of the Islamic system of education for many years before the introduction of western education in the north. However, efforts were made by different missions to open primary schools in the north.

With the overview on the history of education in Nigeria already done in this chapter, the next chapter will now focus on the relevance of history of education to the teacher.
VI. RELEVANCE OF HISTORY OF EDUCATION TO THE TEACHER

The teacher who is at the center of education will largely benefit from a good knowledge of the history of education; hence this chapter will focus primarily on the relevance of history to the teacher. History means different thing to different people which according to Henry Steel Commager (1965) is an ambiguous word because it means two quite distinct things. Firstly, history according to him meant the past and all that happened in the past. Secondly, it meant the record of the past, that is, all that men have said and written about the past. Hence the importance of History of education cannot be over emphasized because a teacher who has good knowledge of his/her past educational records whether positive or negative will be able to prevent future occurrences and proffer solutions to existing problems in the educational sector.

Furthermore, history of education will enable the teacher to gain background knowledge, understanding of useful materials and putting them into action (Ogbondah 2002:6). This becomes important for the teacher in proper application of educational materials. Additionally, history of education enables the teacher to be acquainted with various events that have led to development in the educational sector while also useful in the preservation of the culture by conveying it to the learners (Ogbondah 2002:6).

Additionally, history of education can help the teachers and by extension the learners to be acquainted with what was obtained before independence and what is obtainable now providing the teachers with past knowledge to assist them in solving problems (Ogbondah 2002:6) as the knowledge of the past will shed light on our current educational system and its problems.

Over and above that, the understanding of History of Education also enables the teacher to have a positive perspective of him and his country (Ogbondah 2002:6) helping the teacher to cherish the elements that influence the development of education in the country. Boldness to foresee the future is an added advantage offered the teacher through the knowledge of History of Education (Ogbondah 2002:6). The idea of history of education will allow the teachers and students ask questions about the purpose of education. When a teacher has knowledge of the past, the teacher plans for a better tomorrow.

History of education allows the teacher to study other people’s educational norms, values, and ideas for the purpose of developing our own. The study of History has enabled the teacher to have knowledge of the past and efficiently interact with others in the present. The study of history helps the teacher to think critically and make arguments about events and back their opinions up with proof. Through the study of history, the teacher is able to learn other people’s culture and way of life.

Conclusively, the history of education remains pivotal to the success and professional growth of the teacher and should be part of the teachers’ carrier education.

VII. RELEVANCE OF HISTORY OF EDUCATION TO THE SOCIETY

According to Peter (1998), the study of history is essential to individuals and society because it harbour’s beauty. History of education is useful to the society because its study helps to create good business people, professionals, and political leaders. History of education which is a study of every past activity of man in the education industry as depicted by Wosu (2016:11) with history majorly concerned with those institutions, ideas and activities of society that supports education, has remained relevant to the building of a balanced and prosperous society.

According to William H. Mc Neil, in an essay commissioned by the American History Association, history is necessary for people to be worthwhile citizens of a country as well as valuable human beings to the society. History of education will continue to impart the society positively as transmission of societal cultures is a cardinal function of history. History of education therefore remains cardinal in the following areas in the society and to the society:

- **Development of Good Citizenship**

  The study of history of education enables the system towards the development of a society and her people to be responsible and good citizens. This is so because history of education helps us understand how recent, current, and prospective changes that affect the lives of citizens educationally can emerge and what causes its emergence. This is relevant as previous educational issues could serve as a platform for this.

  Additionally, this is useful in generating national identity and loyalty through a history spiced by realistic stories and lesson in individual success and morality.

- **Provision of Identity**

  History with history of education in particular plays fundamental role in providing identities to individuals, families, communities and indeed the nation. Historical data include evidence about how families, groups, institutions and whole countries were formed and about how they have evolved while retaining cohesion. The various educational policies and practices in the past have continued to help in generating direction while providing educational identity to the society. The provision of free and compulsory education by the late Obafemi Awolowo of the western region of Nigeria in the first republic has remained an identity to the Yorubas and has helped in tremendous ways in shaping the educational system in the current south-west Nigeria.

  Furthermore, histories that tell the national story, emphasizing distinctive features of the national experience,
are meant to drive home an understanding of national values and a commitment to national loyalty.

- **History of education and the democratisation process of a nation**

  History of education remains useful in the institutionisation of democratic values in a nation. In Nigeria, the understanding of our educational system as it evolved played a core role in the birth and sustenance of democracy, though interrupted at some points.

- **History of educational and Moral Understanding**

  History also provides a terrain for moral contemplation. Studying the stories of individuals and situations in the past allows a student of history to test his or her own moral sense, to hone it against some of the real complexities individuals have faced in difficult settings. People who have weathered adversity not just in some work of fiction, but in real, historical circumstances can provide inspiration. "History teaching by example" is one phrase that describes this use of a study of the past—a study not only of certifiable heroes, the great men and women of history who successfully worked through moral dilemmas, but also of more ordinary people who provide lessons in courage, diligence, or constructive protest.

- **History of Education Helps Us Understand People and Societies**

  History of education gives a clue about how people and societies behave. It is difficult to understand how people operate in the society, even though some disciplines have made attempts.

For us to understand the influence of technological innovations and the roles that beliefs play in shaping our family life, we must know about our past educational practices and policies. Also, the practice of Sharia and the terrorist group known as Boko Haram are contentious issues that have threatened the unity and peace of Nigeria.

- **History of Education and the World of Work**

  Employers often deliberately seek students with the kinds of capacities historical study promotes. The reasons are not hard to identify: students of history acquire, by studying different phases of the past and different societies in the past, a broad perspective that gives them the range and flexibility required in many work situations. They develop research skills, the ability to find and evaluate sources of information, and the means to identify and evaluate diverse interpretations. Work in history also improves basic writing and speaking skills and is directly relevant to many of the analytical requirements in the public and private sectors, where the capacities to identify, assess, and explain trends is essential. Historical study is unquestionably an asset for a variety of work and professional situations; even though it does not, for most students, lead as directly to a particular job slot, as do some technical fields. But history particularly prepares students for the long haul in their careers, its qualities helping adaptation and advancement beyond entry-level employment. There is no denying that in our society many people who are drawn to historical study worry about relevance. In our changing economy, there is concern about job futures in most fields. Historical training is not, however, an indulgence; it applies directly to many careers and can clearly help us in our working lives.

History of education helps in transforming the society positively because the knowledge of history will enable both the student and teachers to have a broad knowledge which now influences their behaviour thereby impacting the society.

### VIII. CONCLUSION

As stated from the beginning, this paper had its focus primarily on the teacher and history of education in Nigeria. In order to achieve this, I first looked at the meaning of education from different scholars, secondly reaffirmed who a teacher is, and history of education helped in gaining understanding on the relevance of history of education to the teacher and society. This study of history of education as a discipline helps the teacher to be knowledgeable about past educational events that either moved the sector forward or backwards, thereby making it possible for him/her to plan for a better future. History of education is therefore important to the teacher as it is major tool that guarantees how far the teacher will go thereby making the society a better place for all.

### REFERENCES


