The Changing Values of History of Education in Nigeria: Matters Arising

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Abstract: The paper examined the changing values of history of education in Nigeria. A brief explanation was given how history was previously expunged from our Nigerian school curriculum and how it was brought back in 2002 by the then President Oluseg Oobasanjo. The paper went further to examine the concepts of history, education, looking at formal informal and non-formal as well as general ideas in the definition of education. The concept of history of education was also discussed briefly. Teacher education and its foundation were also discussed as well as who should be a teacher and his qualities were discussed. It also enumerated the goals of teacher education as in (FRN, 2004). The paper goes further to discuss the relevance of history of education to the teacher as well as the relevance of it to the society. The paper concluded by saying that the knowledge of history of education is indispensable for teachers to perform their duties effectively. And finally it was suggested that history study be made compulsory in our schools.

Keywords: Education, History of Education and the Teacher.

I. INTRODUCTION

A review of history teaching in Nigeria has Left us with the manifestation that the subject is fast going into extinction and is becoming a subject of the past, as it is often referred to, as the subject where the past is studied. At one time in the country, history as a school subject was completely expunged from the syllabus as if there was no need for people to understand or know their history and that of the society in which they lived. sequel to the removal, some experts and professionals rose to the challenge by salvaging history teaching and learning from being relegated to the background and leading to the reintroduction of the subject in the curriculum of secondary schools in Nigeria but still offered as optional subject, particularly at the senior secondary and not at all in primary and junior secondary as it used to be.

The feat of bringing history back into the syllabus was achieved under the auspices of the “Historical society of Nigeria who took the bull by the horns and did everything, including consultation with relevant government agencies that matter. They drew the attention of the nation to the dangers and consequences of the Nigerian citizens, not knowing their history (Abdurahman 2017). Although nothing came out of this initial efforts. But in 2002, the then president Obasanjo announced the return of history to our syllabus.

On the significance of history, Daniels in Ikime (2006) submitted that “History” is the memory of human group experience. If forgotten or ignored, we cease in that measure to be human. Without history, we have no knowledge of who we are or how we came to be, like victims of collective amnesia groping in the dark for our identity. It is the events recorded in history that have generated all the emotions, the values, the ideals, that make life meaningful, that have given men something to live for, struggle over and die for”.

He argued further, that “historical events have created all the basic human groupings such as countries, religions classes and all the loyalties that attached to these”.

In a specific term history of education as an academic discipline is also doing more than expected to ensure the sustainability and continued relevance of history in education (Abdurahman 2017).

Furthermore, Michael & Ikurite (2017) submitted that education as a social institution is relevant to the survival of societies in our contemporary world. Changes in the family institutions create common need for the transmission and acquisition of knowledge, values and ideologies from one generation to another or from one group to another.

The pursuit and attainment of this need in formal settings create educational institution (Michael, and Ikurite 2017). The teacher therefore, is the engine room on which the transmission of the educational need of a country lies. Ellah and Obara (2002) confirmed that the quality of teacher education offered in a country is a useful index for the measurement of educational growth. In other words the level of development in a society is a function of the quality of the teachers, as no country’s educational system can grow beyond the quality of its teachers.

II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

History:

The word “history” and the word “story” both came from the same reek word “historia” which was grafted into the English Language many hundreds of years ago. Ward (1960) in Abdurahman (2017) said that English people took this one Greek word and made two different English words out of it.
because they wished to express too different ideas of history and story.

In actual fact, every African society has stories about its great chiefs, warriors and past heroes and heroines; eg. How they fought and led their people to victory. These stories constituted the beginning of history, because they are talking about real people, and because the elders who tell the stories believe them to be true.

Academically, history is a discipline that deals with human actions & activities in the past, pursued by interpretation of evidence for the sake of human knowledge. It is commonly used) to connote the entire human past as it actually happened (Abdurahman 2017).

Osokoya (2010) corroborated by saying that history as a discipline has developed from mere description of past events to interpretation of evidence of what happened in the past events evaluating such evidences and presenting the evidences in a form that would give intellectual analysis.

He said further that history is the development of human societies in space and time, for it embraces the thoughts and actions of men and women in the past and present.

Furthermore, Osokoya (2010) also opined that the word “history” and the “past” are often used as synonyms but there is a distinction between “the past” which embraces everything that had ever happened, and “history” which chronicles, investigates and explains the past. He asserts that history is concerned with evidence about human beings who had actually lived and how human lives have changed through time. Furthermore, it is concerned not only with the explanations about the distant past, but also with that of contemporary world.

Wosu (2016) stated that history is an account of what actually happened in the past which has a link to what is happening at present and can help in planning or projecting for the future. To him history is about yesterday, today and tomorrow. We study important development in human existence in the past for the development of today. Anaele, 2003 in Wosu (2016) affirmed in his contribution that history gives account of real names of people, places time and incidents that actually took place at the recorded time. History therefore, is a recreation of the true picture of important persons, places events of the past for the present and future generation. We should know that there is no beginning without a past. Wosu (2016) therefore, argues that the reconciliation of the present with the past is what gives value to the study of history.

Atkinson and Maleska 1965 in (Wosu 2016) also noted that the past is not the bucket of ashes, but a living flame that lights up the present and the future of man, thereby giving man the chance to see his past mistakes and also helps him to make enlightened decisions today.

Hence Henry Steale Commager argued in Osokoya, (2010) that for people to be without history, or to be ignorant of their own history, is to be without memory and thus condemned forever to make the same discoveries that have been made in the past. Therefore, just as it is difficult to imagine history without civilization, so it is difficult to imagine civilization without history. Osokoya (2010) stated further that since history embraces the whole spectrum of human endeavors, modern historians have attempted to classify the subject artificially into specific divisions for better understanding. Thus we have political history, military history, economic history, business history, social history, intellectual history, ethno-history and educational history among others. This confirms Wosu (2016) submission that there are different forms of history.

III. THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATION

Education is basically the instrument which aids man to realize cherished qualities of life and it is the medium through which one can make the society a better place (Wosu, Ukulor & Uriah 2017). According to them societies are categorized, developed, or developing, based on their educational attainment. It therefore means that the business of education is to develop skills, character and intellectual potentials of the citizenry.

Wosu, (2016) stated further that education as a social mechanism has been adjudged world over as an acceptable process designed by the society to transmit and inculcate cherished values, skills, attitudes, norms, cultures et.c to bring about in those submitted to it positive change that would ultimately lead to a fulfilled life.

Wosu (2016) opined that the essence of transmitting the above desirable values is to make them quality members of the society who would be useful to themselves in particular and the society at large. It then means that the process of educating the young ones is not the exclusive right of a particular society. According to him n traditional system of education, the processes are comprehensive involving the parents, adult members of the society, the peers and other social groups. The forms and modes of education varies from one society to the other and the joy of its peculiarities is expressed in the value placed on its educational goals.

Allen-Agih, (2017) on her part submitted that education is an ever-widening concept. Ever since the dawn of civilization man directly or indirectly has been trying to “educate” himself in order to meet the changing demands of life. She said further that man had been able to distinguish himself from other animals only by virtue of education. Education fashions and models man to become fit for society. She argued that education is an important human activity that ultimately leads to a fulfilled life.

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Etymologically, education derives its meaning from about four Latin words, i.e Educare, Educere, Eduatum and Educo. ‘e’
a) **Eduare**: means “to nourish”, to bring up” thus, educating a child with a view to fulfilling certain goals or aims

b) **Educerce**: means “to lead out”, or “to draw out” this means that educating a child implies drawing out the innate abilities that had been dormant into the limelight.

c) **Educatum**: means “to train or raise”

d) **Educo * e’**: means “to lead out”, this means that the business of education as opined by Wosu, etal (2017) is to lead out, to raise and train the learner towards developing innate qualities and potentials which would help him realize himself in the society.

Education therefore could be understood to mean the total development of the individual child, through acceptable methods and techniques, according to his abilities and interest, as well as the needs of the society, to take his rightful place and contribute adequately to the advancement of his society (Amaele, 2003 in Wosu, 2016).

**Forms of Education**

Education according to Wosu (2016) can be classified into three forms, namely: formal, informal and non-formal. By these various forms some people might be receiving education without knowing. Moreover there are limits to what each form of education can do to the receiver. Wosu argues that the type of society one finds oneself and the type of person one is, also determines what form of education is most appropriate for him or her.

**Formal Education**

This is the type of education which is received in the regular formal school setting, for instance, the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. This type of education has well determined setting where trained personnel interact with the students on regular basis, with the learner’s on planned educative processes. It also has a planned curriculum, time table, classrooms etc.

**Informal Education**

This type of education takes place outside the formal learning system. It could take place at home, church, or mosque, peer group etc. It has no specific place of learning. It could even be in the market, farm, along the road etc. Informal education does not have specific classrooms as was the case with the formal education, all the same it provides learning opportunities for the child to develop his potentialities within a given limit.

The teachers here include the parents, uncles, aunts, elders in the society or peer groups among others.

**Non-Formal**

This type is received through workshops, seminars, correspondences, television and radio media.

**General ideas in the definition of education**

Education is variously defined as:

- Building of the powers of the human mind and spirit
- Development of the whole man
- Formation of character
- All round drawing out of the best
- A process that starts from birth and ends at death
- The totality of life’s experience
- The sum total of culture which the society transmits to its young generation
- Fitting a man to perform justly (Wosu, Ukulor, and Uriah 2017).

**IV. CONCEPT OF HISTORY OF EDUCATION**

If history is the study of past events of man in relation to the present, it follows that history of education is the study of all past activities of man in the education industry. History of education is majorly concerned with those institutions, ideas and activities of society that anchors on education (Wosu 2016). History of Education is concerned with the study of how societies have transmitted cultures from one generation to another. It also explains how education became an instrument of problem solving activity in the society from one age to another. Wosu (2016) asserted that history of education could be seen as past efforts at solving mans socio-economic problems in order to improve the present and the future. In order words, history of education is the study of major educational developments in the society which took place in the past for the purposes of present and future generation. He stated further that history of education is an academic discipline which could be viewed as the application of historical methods or skills in studying and improving the education process of the past, noting their strength and weaknesses, so as to build a better system for the present and future generation.

Abiri and Jakayinfa 2005 in Wosu (2016) opined that history of education refers to the accounts, records or stories of all educational activities in the past, across the ages and changes on developments that have occurred in the process of educating or bringing up children both in informal institutions of learning and otherwise all over the world. To him the main crux of educational history is to teach the knowledge of educational past which could be applied to improve the present educational system.

Tyack 1955 in Wosu (2016) also in his contribution affirmed that the knowledge of the contributions of great educators and past educational policies of societies would help in no small measures in shaping the educational processes of the present. History of education however has to do with the origins and evolution of education in the past and to apply such practical values to the exhortation and inspiration of teachers and citizens in generals.
Osakoya 1989, in Wosu (2016) said in his contribution that by a true examination of the actualities and alternatives in the educational past, one is better positioned to make realistic choices about the present educational processes. It is a truthful integrated account of the relationships between persons, events, times and places.

Ogbonda (2016) also observed that history of education is the study of origin, development, growth, influence, principles, practices and policies of education of any society. He said further that it also embraces types and levels of educational institutions, the standard of teaching, the nature and scope of the curriculum, funding, control of education success and failure of any administrative policy etc.

Consequently, history must serve, however imperfectly, as our laboratory and data from the past must serve as our most vital evidence in the unavoidable quest to figure out why our complex species behave as it does in societal setting. History offers the only extensive evidential base for the contemplation and analysis of how societies function, and people need to have some sense of how societies function simply to run their own lives. History helps us understand change and how the society we live in came to be.

Only through studying history and history of education we can grasp how things change and only through history can we understand what elements of an institution or a society persist despite change. It also offers evidence about how nations have interacted with other societies, providing international and comparative perspectives essential for responsible citizenship. Furthermore, studying history helps us understand how recent, current and prospective changes that affect the lives of citizens are emerging or may emerge and what causes are involved. More importantly, studying history encourages habit of mind that are vital for responsive public behaviour.

V. THE CONCEPT OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Education across the world is regarded as a process whereby cultural heritage, values, attitude, rules, knowledge, norms and understanding of people are transmitted from one generation to another. Hence the essence of the transmission is to stabilize the present environment and positively walking into the future with confidence (Wosu, etal 2017). The task of inculcating or transmitting these values, skills and cultural heritage rest on the teacher.

Ogbonda (2016) asserts that teacher education is considered to be the foundation of quality and relevance in education at all levels. He said, that is why within the teaching profession, there is a global concern to see that regulation of the profession has common yardsticks so that teacher’s qualifications, knowledge, competencies, values, rights and obligations are comparable across countries. The aim is to make teachers global professionals marketable worldwide and globally competitive. He said further that the need to ensure standard in the teaching profession led to the establishment of the Teacher Registration council of Nigeria (TRCN) through Act No. 31 of 1993. This made it mandatory for teachers to be registered and licensed before they can practice. Thus Nigeria, like many other countries of the world have come to realize the central role of teachers in the education process.

Foundation of teacher education in Nigeria

Teacher education can be traced to two accounts of missionary endeavours into Nigeria. First was in the 15th century when the Portuguese merchants visited Benin in 1472 (Wosu, et al 2017). The Portuguese, having established trading post along the coast had communication problems with the indigenes hence they had difficulty in transacting business with the people. But through the efforts of the Catholic Church, a school was opened in the Oba’s palace Benin City. Teachers were brought from a seminary school in Sao-Tome to teach the children, train priests and produce interpreters. These efforts however, did not last as both merchants and the missionaries were subsequently consumed in the slave trade business that ravaged Africa during the period (Taiwo, 1980 cited by Wosu, 2017).

According to Wosu, (2017) a lasting attempt started in 1842 when diverse missionaries recorded significant impact in enthroning teacher education in Nigeria. Wosu (2017) stated that several Christian denominations made efforts to open schools in Nigeria. The first among them was the Wesleyan Methodist Church (WMC), followed by the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the United Presbyterian Church also came, then the Southern American Baptist Church, the Qua Iboe Mission and the Roman Catholic Church among others established schools especially in the southern part of Nigeria.

Who then is a teacher?

Teachers are known as crucial imputs in the school system, on whom the basic functionality of the school hinges (Amie-Ogan, 2017). She states that the concept of who a teacher is, has greatly remained a constant. To her teachers in the past, were regarded as an embodiment of knowledge, skills and abilities they were agents that facilitated psychological, behavioural and intellectual change amongst pupils and students in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. A teacher was expected to be abreast with varied knowledge while the curriculum then, in decades past actually provided. Thus, the teacher was equipped with a broad based knowledge covering the sciences, arts and language such as Latin, Greek, Arabic, etc. Amie-Ogan said further that today, teacher education gave premium to areas of specialization thus narrowing down the expanse of knowledge acquired by individual teachers, and at the same time gaining content depth and mastery. The teacher is one who imparts knowledge, skills and abilities at all level of education, with the aim of improving the quality of those who come in contact with him/her.
Teaching according to Ogan, therefore, involves a systematic transmission of knowledge, supervision and appraisal of the learning process, with an expectation of high student outcomes. This infers that the teacher is a vehicle of knowledge transmission, supervision and students appraisal with an intent that students change in behaviour become obvious through equitable outcomes.

Okeke (2004) in Amie-Ogan (2017) described the teacher as one who is employed to perform highly specialized services of instructing the young or the youths in an official school. He also enunciated some qualities of a good teacher as follows, highly professional and academic ability and qualification, interest in and aptitude for teaching, prior professional education and training; sound professional attitude, grasp of the subject matters; balanced mental health and emotional stability; good quality voice and speech; and good physical appearance. These outlined qualities suggest that teachers are not mediocre rather they are a crucial input to the educational system.

The Goals of Teacher Education

The national goals of teacher education in Nigeria are best sourced from the Nigerian policy document on education which remarks that no education system may rise above the quality of its teacher (FRN, 2004:33).

The aim of teacher education according to FRN (2004) therefore shall be to:

- Produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teacher for all levels.
- Encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers.
- Helps teachers to fit into social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals.
- Provide teachers with the intellectual and activities or military alliance cannot be set up as precise experiments.

VI. RELEVANCE OF HISTORY OF EDUCATION TO THE TEACHER

Wosu (2016) asserts that the main purpose of education is to produce useful citizens. A person is said to be useful, if he/she can positively develop himself and contribute to the development of the society where he/she lives. Although what is termed useful to one society may not be useful to the other. Hence the value of education in ancient Greece, Egypt, Rome etc. may differ considerably with the value of education in Africa or elsewhere.

For example in Greece to become useful meant that one must be physically and intellectually developed. In Rome, emphasis was on social development. In old Africa, it means to contribute to the development of the person and the community. To the developed countries such as France, Britain and the United States of America for one to be useful he/she must be able to contribute to the industrial economy, and in Nigeria, the value is to inculcate national consciousness and unity, values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society as a whole. Wosu (2016) said however, that the under listed points are some of the values of history of education. The study of history of education helps the teacher to interpret and generalize educational experiences in order to free from unnecessary routine.

By examining the activities and the alternatives in education, one can become aware of the realistic choice in the present. He therefore asserts that teaching-learning processes are made easy when one is acquainted with the trends of educational development of his/her area.

- The knowledge of the problems of the past would assist the teacher to solve easily the problems of the moment.
- It will help the teacher to know the various factors that influence educational development of any nation.
- The knowledge of history of education gives teachers confidence in predicting future educational needs.
- History of education will also enable the teacher to know what type of education we had and the purpose it served in past.
- Moreover, it will also give the teacher the opportunity of knowing the mistake they had made in the past and would therefore be able to make amendments.
- History of education guides us to proffer some positive solution to our present day educational problems.

Finally, it will also help us to understand some major trends and development in our educational system. History of education gives the teacher the opportunity of studying other people’s educational ideas and their programmes with the aim of developing our own system, aimed at building a self reliant nation. And of course, it widens the scope and knowledge of the teacher.

VII. RELEVANCE OF HISTORY OF EDUCATION TO THE SOCIETY

Since history deals with the record of past events and achievements of the society, it provides the inspiration for human existence. It is therefore of utmost importance that the society has to know itself and understand its relationship with the past as well as with other societies and cultures. This argument establishes a fundamental justification for history, for it is a subject that aims at meeting the basic needs of the people living in the society. In this sense, history could be seen as being functional for it meets the societal needs and aspiration. Hence, Osokoya (2010) stated that the need for every society to know its roots as well as its relationship with other societies is in agreement with the saying of “Cecero”
who once said, “not to know what took place before you were born is to remain forever a child”. Man therefore uses history to understand the present in the light of the past events and developments. There is nothing in the present that cannot be better understood in the light of its historical context and origin.

No doubt human society needs history, and the sophisticated societies of our time in particular need a lot of history in that we are all constantly calling up history and making historical judgments as daily routines (Osokoya, 2010). He argued that it is only through the knowledge of its history that societies whether agrarian or industrialized can have knowledge of itself. According to him the past is always with us because we cannot escape it.

History helps us to understand peoples and societies this is because in the first place, history offers a store house of information about how people and societies behave. Without history to understand the operation of people and societies will be difficult although a number of disciplines had made attempts, but an exclusive reliance on current data would needlessly handicap our efforts. For example, how can we evaluate war if the nation is at peace unless we use historical materials. Again how can we understand genius, the influence of technological innovation, or the role that beliefs play is shaping family life, if we don’t use what we know about experiences in the past? Some social scientists attempt to formulate laws or theories about human behaviour, but even these recourses depend on historical information.

Osokoya (2010) said further that we cannot have a perception of the present that is not strongly influenced by a version of the past. History therefore has a crucial role to play since it is scarcely possible to understand a practical present problem without a sound knowledge of its background and development.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The FRN (2004), stresses that all teachers in educational institutions shall be professionally trained. The document also affirmed that teacher education programmes shall be structured to equip the teachers for effective performance of their duties. This means the knowledge of history of education is indispensable for teachers to be able to effectively perform their duties. The teacher’s knowledge of history of education is indeed synonymous to having the potentials to influence and initiate positive developmental changes in the self and the society.

Osokoya (2010) and Abdulrahman (2017) equally maintained that education cannot be divorced from the learners and the society they ultimately help to build. The major purpose of educational history is to acquaint the students with the knowledge of the past which could be applied to improving the ongoing educational problems. With this submission, it is clear that the knowledge of history of education is “sine qua non” to teacher preparation, hence the need for all the teacher training institutions in Nigeria to rise to the challenges, redouble their efforts at making history of education an integral part of their programmes.

For as long as man continues to exist on the earth, history of education would continue to be relevant, and dictate how well our individual and collective existence should be fashioned for progress and development. This requires that the persons that would cause progress and development to happen should have the requisite knowledge of their past; considering the mistakes of the past and ensuring that such do not repeat themselves (Abdulrahman, 2017).

History therefore should not be expunged from our syllabus anymore as they did previously and one would suggest that the study of history should also be extended to cover the junior secondary school too. In other for us not to be like victims of collective amnesia groping in the dark for our identity history as a subject be made compulsory in our schools as it is in other developing countries, and not just as optional subject as it is being done currently in the country.

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