Human Rights Education: an Instrument for Human Security in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of human rights education as an instrument for human security it x-rays the roles of education in molding the character of individual towards better life as well as the functions of education and the role it plays as a potential instrument for change and human development. It also looks at the synopsis on the needs for human rights education in Nigeria. It also examines the curriculum of human rights education and its impact on students and school environment. Finally the paper was concluded by making some recommendations on the strategies for the effective implementation of human rights education.

Keyword: Human rights, Education, Human security, Curriculum.

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Background to the Study

Nigeria as a Nation is currently at the cross road. There is widespread inter religious crisis, as well as inter and intra-ethnic violence in the country' Among these crises are Niger delta crisis, Indigenous People of Biafra crisis, religious riot in the north and Boko haram Insurgency in the North East, call for confederacy and secession, suspicion and distrust among the various ethnic groups. Several conscious efforts have been made by the government to maintain peace and stability in Nigeria without much success. For instance, the inauguration of council of inter-religious Harmony by the federal government. This council is co-headed by the sultan of Sokoto, the president of Christian Association do Nigeria

Various suggestions from well-meaning individuals as being made to ensure   Nigeria remains an indivisible entity where every Nigerian will consider himself Nigerian first before seeing himself as a Yoruba, Igbo or Hausa and so on. In other words, a Nigeria in which the national consciousness of her citizens will be high. This may be achieved through education. Education has become an increasingly important means for countries to educate their citizens about their rights such as values and responsibilities

Human Security

Human security can be understood as an academic problem, a political agenda or as a new research category. There is not yet a widely agreed upon definition of human security. Definitions from both the academic community as well as the governmental sources range from narrow concepts focusing on physical integrity or a limited number on threats to be addressed by human security to a broad understanding, which encompasses also psychological and emotional aspects of security and well-being of the individual.

In essences human security is an emerging new concept which is concerned with the security of people and the individual rather than with the security of the territorial state and this shift the focus state security to individual-centered security. Human security addresses various threats to the security, safety, integrity and well-being of human beings. UNDP (1994) defines human security broadly as "safety from chronic such as chronic threats as hunger and repression", protection from sudden and harmful disruptions in the pattern of daily life-whether in homes, in jobs or in communities. Such threats exist at all levels of national income and development. In a note shell human security is concerned with "survival, daily life and dignity of human beings" Amartya (2000).

Human Security Network

The human security network start from the presumption that "a human world where people can live in security and dignity, free from poverty and despairs, is still a dream many and should be enjoyed by all. In such a world, every individual would be guaranteed from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to fully develop their human potential. Building human security is essential to achieving this goal. In essence, human security means freedom from pervasive threats to people's rights, their safety or even their lives. Human security has become both a new measure of global security and a new agenda for global action. Safety is the hallmark of freedom from fear,

while well-being is the target of freedom want. Human security and human development are thus two sides of the same coin, mutually reinforcing and leading to a conducive environment for each other.

The network also narrows down the UNDP concept to a more policy-oriented and practical concept building on the principles that a commitment to human right and humanitarian law is the foundation for building human security. Human security is advanced in every country by protecting and promoting human rights, the rule of law, democratic governance and democratic structures, a culture of peace and peaceful resolution of conflicts. The international organizations created by states to build a just and peaceful world order, above all the United Nations, in its role to maintain international peace and security as stated in the charter, must serve the security needs of the people.

Promoting sustainable human development, through the alleviation of poverty, providing basic social services for all, and perusing the goals of people-oriented development, is necessary for building human security. Innovative international approaches will be needed to address the source of insecurity, remedy the symptoms and prevent the recurrence of threats which affect the daily life of million of people. The emphasis placed on education is borne out of the fact, as stated by Federal Government of Nigeria (2004), that education is considered a potential instrument for change and development. Probably, that is why Iyewarun (1989) asserts that education is an instrument by which young members are   brought up and socialized so as to become useful and active members of the society. How ever, the role of education differs from culture to culture. In support of this view, Metzieobi, and Osakwe (1996) notes that the emphasis placed on the goals of education ranges from culture to culture and society to society. To him, while some people sees education as an instrument for achieving a specific objective. Others see it as a means of training the mind intellect. This view is supported by Ukeje (1996), by stating that some people view education as an instrument for achieving specific objectives such as socialization and means of social mobility while others see education as a means of inculcating a particular ideology.

From a different perspective, Yusuf (2005) observes that the school should not be used as an instrument for training individuals only; rather it should be directed at training of the mind and the development of the intellect. Nevertheless, it is noted that many educationists and social studies educator such as Metzeobi (2000). Ezegbe, Okilo and Osakwe (1993) are of the opinion that education is an effective instrument for civic responsibility and the school has always been used to perpetuate the tradition of the society. Similarly, Cookey (1970) Opine that the school has always served as a major channel for inculcating in its members independence, self-reliance, responsibility and moral uprightness. Probably that is why Federal Government of Nigeria (2004) has as one of its educational objectives, the inculcation of right type of attitude for survival of individual and the Nigerian society.

In this present situation that Nigerian unity and democracy is under threat, education can be used to foster much needed unity for the survival of the nation. In the 21st century, and the unfortunate inter-ethnic and religious clashes including leadership crises that have become a common occurrence in Nigeria, it becomes imperative to introduce a special type of educational programmed that deals with issues that are related to National consciousness and national unity. Omare (1999) observes that at various times, the need arises for countries to seek solution to pressing problems of national importance, and this has been the position of various countries in search of political stability, unity, peace and progress, and the instrument employed always to achieve unity and national consciousness is education. Hence education for good citizenship in a democratic setting needs experiences in a democratic process and democratic living. (UNESCO, 2005).

Roles of Education
In recent times, much attention has been devoted to the roles the school is expected to play in the training of good citizens in Nigeria. The emphasis placed on education is borne out of the fact, as stated by Federal Government of Nigeria (2004), that education is considered a potent Instrument for change and development. Probably, that is why Iyamu (1999) assert that education is an instrument by which young members are brought up and socialized so as to become useful and active members of the society. However, the role of education differs from culture to culture. In support of this view, Metzieobi, and Osakwe (1996) notes that the emphasis placed on the goals of education ranges from culture to culture and society to society. To him while some people see education as an instrument for achieving a specific objective, others; see it as a means of training the mind and intellect. Ukeje (1996) supports this view by stating that some people view education as an instrument for achieving a specific objective such as socialization and means of social mobility while others see education as a means of inculcating a particular ideology.

In his own view Yusuf (2005) asserts that the school should not be use as an instrument for training in citizenship only, rather it should be directed as the training of the mind and the development of the intellect. Article 28 of the convention on the right of the child, establishes the child's right to education. Education empowers the child by developing his or her skills, learning, and other capacities, human dignity, self-esteem and self-confidence. The 1990 world summit for children set a goal: "By the year 2000 universal access to basic education and achievement of primary education by at least 80% of primary school age children". Also in 1990, a world conference on education for all was held in Jauntier, Thailand. The resulting world declaration on Education for all asserts that basic education "is more than end in itself. It is the foundation for life long learning and human development on which countries may build, systematically, further levels and types of education and training. Article 1-4 also states that "every person shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities design to meet his basic learning needs. These needs comprise both essential learning tools and the basic learning content required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions and to continue learning.

A decade later in 2000, the world Education forum, held in Dakar, set a framework for action, reconfirming international goals and identifying strategies for all aiming them. According to the convention on the rights of the child, children are the right-holders whose right to education should be realized by the duty-bearers at the national, sub-national, community and house hold levels. In unstable where the duty-bearers have difficulty fulfilling their obligations to respect and realize the child's right, the international humanitarian community often finds education as an excellent delivery point for human security measures to promote empowerment and protection of children living in especially difficult conditions

Curriculum of Human Rights Education
Human rights are the basic freedoms and protections that all people are in titled to. They are rights that we all have whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, sexual orientation or any other status. We all are equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all related to one another, dependent upon one another.

Human rights education is aimed at building an understanding and appreciation for human rights through learning about rights and learning through rights. Human rights education is inextricably linked with the pedagogy of teaching. It require not just imparting knowledge about human rights but also applying a human rights based pedagogy to ensure young people learn in a rights respecting environment that respect their rights and promote the rights of others. The element of human rights education are acquisition of knowledge and skills about human rights, development of respectful values, and attitudes and changed behaviour that neglect human rights of all motivation of social action and empowerment of active citizenship to advance respect for the rights of all.

Positive Impact of Human Rights Curriculum on Students and School Environment
Children attitudes, ideas and characters are formed at a younger age and these are heavily influenced by other environment, including their school education. Human rights education in school is an effective means to assists children to incorporate human rights values into their attitudes and behaviours. Assisting young people to incorporate these values into their daily lives is a concrete way to prevent bullying, discrimination and promote inclusion and respect for diversity. Human rights promote a valuable framework for good interpersonal relations and for making informed and proportionate decisions. From the play ground to government and public policy, it starts with human rights education in school. In the United kingdom UNICEF has been pioneering a program called the 'Rights Respecting School Awards Program'. The program award schools that incorporate the Convention on the Rights of the Child into their planning, practice and ethos. This include teaching and learning about the convention, creating a rights respecting culture and empowering children to become active citizens. In doing so, it has improved self-esteem behaviour and relationships; reduce bullying and discrimination; increased and engage children in planning and reviewing their own learning. Moreover, it has provided schools with a framework of common values, United Nation (2001).

Based on international human rights instrument, human rights education (HRE) can be defined as education, training and information aimed at building a universal culture of human rights through the sharing knowledge, imparting of skills and moulding of attitudes to prompt action directed at strengthening respect for human rights, fundamental freedom, tolerance, equality and peace among individuals, within societies and among nations. Such education requires the adoption of a human rights based approach to education, which promotes but 'human rights education', ensuring that all the components and processes of education including curricula, materials, methods and training are conducive to learning of human rights and 'human rights in education' ensuring that the human rights of all members of the school community are respected and human rights practiced within the education system, United Nation (2001).

In the school system human rights education is an important component of the right to education, as it enables the education system to fulfill its fundamental aims of promoting the full development of the human personality and appreciation of human dignity of strengthening respect for human rights and of delivering a quality education for all. In this sense human rights education contribute to improving the effectiveness of the education system as a whole, which in turn contribute to a country's economic, social and political development by proving improved quality of learning achievement by promoting child-centred and participatory teaching and learning practices and processes as well as a new role for the teaching profession; increased access to and participation in schooling by creating a human rights-based learning environment that is inclusive and welcoming and fosters universal values, equal opportunities, respect for diversity and non discrimination; a contribution to social cohesion and conflict prevention by supporting the social and emotional development of the child and by introducing democratic citizenship and values. In support of the above assertion Okilo (1993) stated that citizenship education teaches attitudes and values, and therefore, role playing as a teaching method can help the democratic processes and national consciousness in leadership training programme. The emphasis on the effective domain in human rights education will encourage feelings of patriotism and national consciousness inn individuals.

Conclusion and Recommendations
In this paper, it has been emphasized that human rights education should be introduced at all levels of our educational system. It is against this background that the following recommendations on the strategy for the effective implementation of human rights education are made.

1. Human rights education should be introduced at all levels of teachers training institutions. This is because teachers must be prepared and equipped to effect the needed change in the children. Teachers should be trained and this could be done through in-service training.
2. For effective implementation, education should be made free and compulsory at least up to senior secondary school level. This is because students would have acquired good human rights education.

3. Multi-disciplinary techniques should be employed as method of teaching human rights education at higher level of education

4. Researches should be conducted to identify major problems of teaching and o learning as well as support systems that may affect human rights education. To do this, researchers should be encouraged by government to carry out meaningful studies.

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