

NURSERY EDUCATION AND NATIONAL UNITY

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the foundation of peace and unity in our pre- school system of education in Nigeria. We are all living witnesses about the multiple crises surrounding each state. Education is fundamental to. All changes in our society. It does not teach hatred and violence rather peace and unity. Some historical events were discussed on how Northern and Southern protectorates were amalgamated as one entity. The paper also enumerated possible ways unity can be achieved among Nursery pupils which include active participate in school games, meaningful storytelling, visiting friends and relations, music and drama Teachers and Parents role in delivery of good conducts.

Keywords: Nursery, Education, National, Unity

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Introduction

The concept of education is universal and time memorial from birth to death. It compasses all aspect of human development including social, economics, and political moral and even religion. It is interesting to know that all these areas of human development are geared towards education of the child. A good education does more than just prepare you for a good job, it expands the mind, it teaches you to think, to ask questions', and -it helps you to be a good citizen. A good education fosters respect for individual's freedom and democratic principles of fair play. It prepares the child for a responsible life in the society, so much so that the spirit of mutual co operation, life-long togetherness, understanding of individual needs and inspirations and harmonious love and unity would all be inculcated in the minds of the child. According to Ibrahim [2004] a child is a person who is going to seat where we are seated, take over our institutions, corporations, firms and industries, he is going to judge our books, praise or condemn. But the faith of humanity lies upon him. In line with the above statement, it is obvious that a child nurtures what we do in life as elders of the society, whether those deeds we propagate in the society are rightly good or bad. The child most have seen and heard what we do every day and he may one day like to see and hear and possible do those deeds that we have being doing either positively or negatively in line with the principle of moral values of the society.

The Role of Nursery Education

The Federal government has finally achieved on the need to rekindle the name from Nursery Education to Early Childhood Education. Whichever reason behind it still remains the nursery stage of learning process. This is an important stage and because of its magnitude to human development is categorized from aged 3-5years as indicated by Federal Government of Nigeria under the National Policy on Education [2013]... This explains the stage where the child builds thought which is intuitive from mere impression, that is to say psychological phenomena such as real experience of objects one at a time. Although much needs to be put in place especially Safe commitment from parents, teachers, stakeholders, government as part of their responsibility ensuring that they inculcate the feeling of togetherness, kindness without any form of discrimination in the minds of these children who are just beginning to have taste of life. Education does not teach violence, hatred and other negative vices in and outside the school respectively rather it passes information of peace, respect of the dignity of mankind and commitment to nation building. [UNICEF,2000] rightly indicated that children should be brought up in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity. They should equally grow in a family environment where there is atmosphere of love, happiness and understanding. Children, by reason of their physical and mental immaturity, need special care including appropriate legal protection. The lamentation is that there should be adequate provision for cooperative teaching and discussion among the teachers and pupils. United Nation [2003] under Article xii AU Charter on the rights and welfare of the child sub[d] that the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, tolerance, dialogue, mutual respect and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, tribal and religious, group should be the advocacy. In the light of the above, it implies that the beginning of wisdom starts from birth. A child should be constantly shown care and collective form of group work so that as they grow up there will be no form of discrimination from both sexes.

Historical Perspective on National Unity

A Nation cannot be developed without total tolerance and commitment among its citizenry. The recognition and understandings among the diverse ethnic, religious and regional differences is passionately on National Unity. Nigeria. Is a nation with multiples of nationalities. This was as a result of 1914 Southern and Northern amalgamation and was granted independence on 1st October, 1960. Whatever might have been responsible for administering them separately, this indecision through commission or omission, has gravely affected the country's march into nationhood. There has been widespread inter-religious crisis, as well as inter and intra-ethnic violence in the country. These crises include among others Niger delta crisis, religious riot in the North due to the adoption of Sharia law by some Northern States, The notorious group call Boko Haram who have invited some part of North East region of

the Country, killing innocent souls and have no mission or vision 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 president Federal Republic of Nigeria during 1st October, 2013 celebration, of independence inaugurated a committee on Nigeria National Conference to go round the country to gather opinions of well-meaning Nigerians. There was that of inter-religious harmony by the Federal government co-headed by the two religious leaders, the president of supreme council for Islamic Affairs and the national president of Christian Association of Nigeria. Suggestion from well-meaning individuals are being made to ensure that Nigeria remains an indivisible entity where every Nigerian will consider himself a Nigeria first before seeing himself as a Yoruba, Igbo or Hausa and so on. In the light of the above, it is paramount that Nursery Education as Stated in the National Policy on Education, under Federal Government of Nigeria [2013] which is an educational institution given to children aged 3 to 5 years plus prior to their entering the primary school. There should be a starting point of infusing moral values that will help the child to inculcate the concept of peace and unity. Although we all know that education as an instrument of change has an important role to play in moulding individuals both in character and other social life. Children are leaders of tomorrow. It is right and appropriate at their stage of nursery. Education to teach them how to love and appreciate people both in homes and schools. They should equally appreciate natural environment they find themselves including the geopolitical setup at different location of ethnic groups.

Inculcating Peace and Unity among Nursery Pupils

There is no possible for a country to achieve any meaningful development without relative peace and unity among its citizenry. Likewise, children are more sustainable in assimilating and absorbing good behaviour if they are properly trained and guided. Considering the age levels 3-5years plus of these children, it is important that teachers, parents and government should take second look in inculcating the spirit of togetherness and promoting peace to younger generation. National Commission for Colleges of Education [1996] emphasises that teachers are to initiate the learner into a way of thinking and behaving, as well as into a core of norms, values, skills and techniques, considered desirable for; developmental purpose in his society. In the light of the above, teachers, parents and the government are 'to ensure that character building and the acquisition of desirable behaviours among pupils are promoted in the school. This paper intends to examine vis-a-vis some concepts like games, meaningful stories, visiting friends and relations, teachers' role, drama, music, parents/guidance as significant factors that could bring about cooperation and unity among the children.

Games [Play]

Playing games at specific period of time in schools could increase harmonious and cooperative understanding among children" It motivates them and brings out good talents. It makes them speak one language which at the end of the exercise they associate with one another. Games bring out physical fitness of the body and develop muscles, If children are taught at the early stage how to play games, there is likelihood of loving one another in spirit of games. The Federal government of Nigeria on National Policy on Education [2004] advocates play that the purpose shall be to develop a sense of cooperation and team spirit. Nnenna [1995] emphasises that young children learn best through interaction and observation with the physical and social environment. In essence children from different homes and backgrounds to explore their potential by working side by side.

Stories [Meaningful]

Stories are descriptions of certain events which might be true or fiction. However, the truth about it is that it portrays an event which could be rightly good or bad. A story can make a child admire friends and people living around him. Meaningful stories help children to sharpen their minds, give them encouragement and inspiration to do cooperative work and inter- group discussion. David [2000] lamented that children can be encouraged to express themselves through storytelling and exciting stories encourage participation which at the end generates interest, holding the attention of the children and driving home the message. Teachers should advocate at least one hour for story telling in the classroom. We all need someone we can be open with. No one makes it alone.

Visit friends and Relations.

Children visiting friends and relations at home, hospital and elsewhere have great importance in creating unity among people. It will create an avenue for interaction among classmates, parents and elders their behaviours and the environment}t they associated with. It brings success in life Conditions for reparations are necessary either from the teacher or parent and this include describing the Scene of the visit and t9 give details so that the child may see, hear and feel secured. The other area has to do with role-play family interaction. This means how to learn to greet and respect people and possible good Conversation with friends and elders.

Music

In achieving good atmosphere of unity and peace in a school environment, music has an important space in the life of the child and a very powerful tool for teaching and learning. It helps to develop hychological feelings and behavior of the child. Natural fascination with music makes its use an. immediate success in the classroom environment because it trusted that children begin to emulate good areas of music.

It unites and send messages of goodwill, for both children and adults and making them feel one and comfortable in the society.

Drama

This is a well known tool in education which can be used to explore behaviour, intentions and interaction as unifying factor of peace unity among the children. Drama touches the heart of all categories of people. It enriches many .forms of teaching like the demonstration methods and is tailored for a variety of purposes under a variety of settings. The varieties could be in a form of stimulating the children to participate and reflect characters that were good and acceptable in the society. Drama encourages and promotes group work at the same time discussion on solution finding.

The Teacher and Parent

Teachers and parents are role model of the society. They are meant to impact positive values to these children, show fairness, accommodation, love, joy and call them by their names, work together to explore the school environment. A teacher who has that quality and willing to accommodate fairness, stimulate pupils interest, will certainly arose the spirit of unity.

Conclusion

We need to be united in this country Nigeria. And this can only be achieved if we are relatively peace and more emphasis should be placed on education. Education is the key solution to these challenges. It is high time we should start teaching these children some moral concepts of loving one other, group work activities. T4is will definitely create an impact on the life of-these children and future generation.

Suggestion

Education is a continuous process of impacting the teaching and learning of moral values in our society. Teacher should not be left' with all these responsibilities of mentor and mentoring, parents, government and stakeholders should par-take in ensuring these children get adequate moral training.

- The teaching of peace and unity should be introduced **in** our school curriculum as a compulsory course right from nursery stage to tertiary levels to ensure good quality control of teaching moral values.
- Parents should have second thought on their wards and teach them how to live with their neighbours.
- Religious leaders should ensure they teach the right concepts to these younger generations.

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