

EVOLVING A FUNCTIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION CURRICULUM THROUGH SUSTAINABLE HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Curriculum Innovation, revision and change are processes of the prevailing social order, which revolve around it. The focus of this article is to advocate for a functional human rights education curriculum. Human rights education is one area, which has taken for granted over the years. It has since enjoyed high level support from international organizations such as United Nations and the council of Europe. The importance of human rights to man and society towards promoting a healthy community living necessitate its support. A call for this curriculum is fortified by the nature of the society we find ourselves characterized by crude governance, harsh governmental policies, oppression and suppression amounting to gross violations of the citizens fundamental human rights. This paper is written in line with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The above advocate can only be realistic through sustainable Human Resource development.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In his paper titled Human Rights Grassroots in Nigeria, Obi (2000) made a historical Survey from the period of the WWI (1914-1918) which claimed many lives. This shocked World leaders who eventually set up a body known as the League of Nations. It was established under an International Convention drawn in 1919 to lay down what its promoters hoped will form a firm foundation for lasting peace, justice, observance of treaties, respect for the rights of all nations, and international cooperation by all concern.

During that null according to Obi (2000), a young German Sadist called Adolf Hitler dreamed of world power and swore to attain it even though a prophet known as Nostradamus had foretold this in 16th century that this man Hitler was to be a deadly scorpion, a curse on humanity whose adventure into world history would throw the world into chaos and cause the destruction of many generations of lives.

In line with the above prophecy, in 1939, Hitler plunged the world into war of unprecedented savagery known as WWII for six years (1939-1945). This shook the world to its very foundations. It was only the timely intervention of USA in 1945 that brought the bloody war to an end. Hitler disappeared without a trace. Indeed the war ended out certainty not before the cream of European youths had been liquidated, not before a mind-buckling six million innocent Jews had been annihilated in huge gas chambers, and not before the two Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had been reduce to their basic units by two American atomic bombs.

It was the very day the war II ended that political leaders and leaders of thoughts the world over sprang into action, articulating ideas that promised to put permanent stop to those innumerable factors worldwide, those cases of man's inhumanity to man, that caused internal upheavals within the nations and external wars among the nations. These peace destroying factors were conceived to include the wrongful suppression of citizens rights, denial of personal freedoms, denigration of human dignity, absence of social amenities in

communities, unequal treatment of persons and nations, gross inequality in the distribution of wealth within a given nation and between nations of the world, unemployment and poor working conditions among others factors (Obi, 2000).

Having therefore diagnosed the causes of disorder within individual nations and among the various nations, world leaders and academics got set to work to identify solutions for the widespread of discontents that provoke internal revolts and external conflicts. Conferences and submits were convened by world leaders to put this ideas into rules of inter-human behaviour, fondly referred to as international law; for all members of the human race. The result is that today, international law is replete with beautiful theories about the rights of man. It also has a plethora of solemn declarations of all manner of sacrosanct human rights. The fountain of these ideas and the source of funding for their productions, propagations and implementation was and remains the United Nations Organizations. This body is formed by world leaders at the end of the WWII in 1945 to replace the League of Nations established in 1919 after the WWI.

The architects of the United Nations proclaimed that one principal objective of its character was the promotions and encouragement of respect for human rights and fundamentals freedoms for all humanity everywhere irrespective of difference in race, sex, language and religion (Article 1 of UN charter 1945). This declaration empowered the UN as the highest body in the world to bring international laws down to the grassroots. This was done by making individual human beings beneficiaries of human rights and fundamental freedoms which it pledged to promote and encouraged across the world.

To enhance and practicalise its lofty objectives, the United Nations authorize its economic and social council to set up commission for advancement of social welfare and human rights (Article 68). As a result, the UN Commission on Human Rights was set up in 1946; shortly

after in 1948, the UN General Assembly itself proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

On regional level, European nations set up the European Convention on Human Rights African Nations drew up the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights and they further to establish a body, the African commission on Human and Peoples Rights charged with responsibility of promoting and protecting those rights in Africa. It is interesting to note that, the UN's declaration of Human Rights is part of Nigeria's International Law, Nigerian being a member of the UN by simple argument, the African charter on Human and People's Rights in Part of Nigeria law.

Having established the background that conceptualized human rights, the thrust of this paper is on making human rights education an integral part of the school curriculum Particularly at the foundation levels since it is a novel education exploit. To ensure its operationality and sustenance, there is an enhanced need to encourage capacity building in the form of human resources development.

A CASE FOR A FUNCTIONAL CURRICULUM ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

Human rights have become not only a national issue but also a global one. All over the world, there is a great awareness that human rights are the key to human development, Zakariya (2002). Observing further, Bellamy (1999) noted that humanity never recognized until recently, that human rights are indivisible and that the fulfillment of one's rights reinforces and promotes those of others. Also that there is a human rights angle to education may still strike many as a novel concept.

In this our ever changing and complex society, developing and understanding that the world is an interrelated, interdependent system of lands and peoples is very important or crucial in the promotion of a global perspective in human rights education. Moreover, to corroborate

the above position, Zakariya (2002) pointed out that the world is on the cusp of an educational revolution, based on our expanded and revitalized concept of what education means and the ways in which learning can be enhanced. The threat of social instability and civil conflict makes argument for human rights education an investment to promote peace, prosperity, and the achievement of human rights even stronger now than they were a decade ago. The consequences of illiteracy are profound, even potentially life threatening. They flow from the denial of fundamental human rights to lack of awareness of one's rights proclaimed in the agreements, ranging from the over 50 years old universal declaration of human rights to the more recent convention on the rights of the child (CRC).

To add credibility to above observation, Greig, Pike and Selby (1991) asserted that human rights education has long enjoyed high-level support from international organizations such as the United Nations and the Council of Europe, but only recently has that support begun to translated into good practice undertaken by real teachers with real students in real schools.

The teaching of human rights in the United Kingdom has often adopted a narrow focus with teaching based on key international documents, emphasis on civil and political rights (i.e individual freedoms such as freedom of speech and movement) were the major preoccupation of study with relatively little attention given to social and economic rights (i.e those that ensure material and bodily well-being, such as the rights of food and shelter). There has been a rather uncritical acceptance of western individualistic notions of rights and some reluctance to stray beyond those laid down in key international documents such as the universal declaration of Human Rights (1948). Those leading to a narrow rights focus have sufficiently recognized that new rights reflecting new human preoccupations, need constantly to be identified. Broad focus rights educators, on the other hand, have shown a preparedness to broaden their teaching to include non-western concepts of rights and new rights issues that

have emerged subsequently to the major international documents, such as racism, sexism, the right to development and the rights implications of environmental abuse.

It is already pointed out that the promotion of human rights guarantees human development which is the ultimate focus of all types of development; economic, social, cultural and political. Its focus is what people are capable of doing or being: can they live longer? Can they be well nourished? Are they able to read and write, and communicate and develop their morals? Can they escape avoidable diseases?

Are the people's human rights guaranteed? These rights are interest in human nature and without them people cannot live as human beings nor can their human qualities-of intelligence, talents and conscience, and the satisfaction of spiritual and other needs be fully developed. Does the society respect the inherent dignity and worth of each person? The denial of human rights and fundamental freedom is not only an individual and personal tragedy, but also creates conditions of political and social unrest, violence and conflict with each nation and each society and between nations and societies (UNDP, 1996).

Appreciative of the relevance of human rights to the modern complex societies, the teaching, understanding and experience of human rights is an important element in the preparation of all young people for life in a democratic and pluralistic society. It is part of social and political education, and it involves intercultural and international understanding. This formed the basis for making human rights education more functional in our school systems.

THE 1999 CONSTITUTION AND THE ESSENCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTION

Theoretically, the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria articulated elaborately human rights for Nigerians. Two chapters of 26 sections covering social and human rights are committed to this. Chapter II on fundamental objectives and Directive Principles of State

Policy (section 13-24) provided for the socio-economic welfare of Nigerians. Section 14(1) provides that the federal Republic of Nigeria shall be a state based on the Principles of democracy and social justice. Stating further, section 14(2b) declares that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government.

Section 15(2) prohibits discriminations on ground of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties. Providing more on the economy, section 16 implored government to control the nation in such a way as to secure maximum welfare, freedom and happiness for every Nigerian on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity"- Section 17(10) states that the state social order is founded on the ideals of freedom, equality and justice. Section 17(2a-c) further provides that the social order of every citizen shall have equality of rights, obligations and opportunities before the law: the sanctity of the human person shall be recognized and human dignity shall be maintained and enhanced: and that governmental actions shall be humane.

For according to Obi (2002), these rights are non-justiable implying that no one can enforce them by any form of judicial process. That, apart from this non-justicable principle, Nigeria has one of the most comprehensive array of fundamental rights to be found in any nations constitution. All these are contained in chapter IV of 1999 constitution which includes the following:

- a. Right to life
- b. Right to human dignity
- c. Right to personal liberty
- d. Right to fair hearing
- e. Right to privacy
- f. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- g. Freedom of expression

- h. Peaceful assembly
- i. Freedom of movement
- j. Freedom from discrimination
- k. Compulsory acquisition of property
- l. Access to law court

From this wide provision of rights, if made practical, Nigerians would have been living on heaven but not up to 10% of the rights are observed both by the government and the citizen. Sometimes even the government who is the custodian of these rights is ignorant and unaware of their provisions let alone their promotions. This forms the essence and reason for the promotion of human rights through an educative process. It is through a conscious process of human rights education that everybody-Government, parents, students, children and the entire citizen that we can pay attention to what we expect to be the right thing.

To affirm the need for the protection of human rights, Rancharam (2003) on the state of human rights ten years after the Vienna world conference on human rights, addressing participants of human rights movement, observed that the great accomplishment of Vienna conference was to reaffirm the universality of human rights and to reiterate that human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birth right of all human beings. Their protections and sustenance through education is the first responsibility of government. It was strongly reaffirmed in explicit terms that "all human rights are universal, indivisible interdependent and interrelated".

Moving from the issue of universality to the issue of enjoyment of rights in practice, he states that for millions of people the world over, the basic human rights of the universal declaration remain illusory. As there has been increasing resorts to independent experts on issues such as the right of food, health, education, adequate standard of living including human right and extreme poverty. That of recent, the reform agenda is the wider recognition these days that

human rights must be integrated into strategies and activities for conflict prevention, peace-making, peacekeeping, peace-building, humanitarian operations and development.

In the light of this expanded scope and reformed programme of human rights, to achieve its overall goal, this call for a properly tailored, consciously articulated body of knowledge in the form of formal curriculum for the people. Lets take for instance when it comes to the enjoyment of civil, economic, social and political rights, it should be noted that arbitrary and summary misapplication of judicial processes, torture, enforcement and voluntary disappearance of innocent people, arbitrary detention, violence against women and children, religion and ethnic intolerance, denial of freedom of expression in some cases, deprivation of citizens a comfortable life style through deliberate obnoxious economic policies are brazen areas of concern. This is due to ignorance of the fundamental importance of human right to the people. The culture and orientation of rights promotions and protection is lacking in our country. Therefore, for rapid transformation, and to conform to the global acceptance of the universality of human rights, our present generation of people should be made to imbibe the culture of rights through an education process.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

According to Retish (2003), speaking on human right education and transformative learning notes that education too often, is talking about a subject and avoiding the practice of the subject. In human rights education, this is extremely important and in education difficult. That in USA, for instance, they have a system that must run smoothly, sometimes at the expense of the students, teachers, parents and others rights. Until there exist a system that shows, on a daily basis, that human rights are the core of what is happening, we will have difficulty getting the message across the stake holders. Nigeria situation provides an exception as the structures and the total system exists in theory.

Specifically, all educations must be transformative otherwise what is the sense in it? Education process is not a one way street from educator to learner. The best education informs both those supposedly teaching and those learning. Therefore for every situation of education, we are all constantly learners. This should particularly be the case in human rights education. Human rights is itself a developing area of learning moving from a relatively narrow origin in a particular political, cultural and historical set of roots to embrace and find its sustenance and growth in and therefore evolving to share in the character of literally many worlds of human culture and experience. While transforming us, we are constantly learning our understanding and knowledge of its subject matter.

The 1990 EFA conference held in Jomtien for example called for university quality education, with particular focus on the world's poorest citizens. However, without a major change in the approach to delivering schooling and ensuring learning, it will be impossible for most poor countries to deliver education for all. The world now has a much better understanding of how children learn, what kind of schooling are most likely to promote this and also how to deliver this more effectively. There are practical proofs of human rights education noted Zakariya (2002) whose principles are now broadly understood and shared and whose central elements are emerging in varying configurations around the world. The human rights education provides a framework by which quality education must be assessed. It guides towards a more child centered model of teaching and learning, one in which learners participate actively, thinking and solving problems for themselves and in this way developing self-esteem that is essential for learning and decision making through life.

It extends into questions of gender equality health and nutrition into issues of parental and community involvement into the management of education system itself. And the benefits and impact of quality education also makes valuable contributions to areas of human development, improving the status of women and helping to ease poverty.

The outlines of human rights education have already been discerned, but the elements of rights educations have been subjected of studies. But Fountain (1993) argued that these are only three element of rights education which include:

1. Learning about the rights, i.e. acquiring knowledge about what constitute one's rights and those of others.
2. Learning through the rights, i.e. learning using rights based methods which is child-centred method (process).
3. Learning for the rights, i.e. creating a group atmosphere either in the school or the society in which the individual is valued and participation is encouraged and whose responsible opinions is the norm. In short, human rights education will produce a group of young people who not only grasp cognitive concept, but also practice the skills and experience the attitudes relevant to the promotion of the rights.

But Hammarberg (1997) observed Zakariya (2003) group human rights education elements into eight items (element). There are universal access, equal opportunities, the appropriate content, positive, and the role of teachers, parents and the community.

Similarly, Bellamy (1999) identified five elements of rights education. There are learning for life, accessibility, equality and flexibility; gender sensitivity and girls education, the state as key partner and care for the young child.

THE NEED AND RATIONALE FOR HUMAN RESOURCES-DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

The importance of human factor in enhancing the implementation of any curriculum is highly over bearing. As in all human endeavours, it is necessary to keep in mind at all times that where economic and other forms of progress stops, decline literally begins. And rising educational productivity is the essence of progress. The changes in the progress that ultimately result in greater efficiency or high productivity may, however, minor, be regarded

as innovative the fashioning of or introduction of a new curricula, a new method of-doing things, of combining resources in order to produce more or better quality product from the same or less resources inputs (Yesufu, 2000).

Sometimes the process that leads to innovations may seem accidental or, unintended. But it is a rational process which is derived from human effort, including fore-thought and experimentation; planning, integration, organization and management of other resources. The capacity to allocate and analyze progressively requires a conscious effort to develop the necessary human capacity, both intellectually and physical to ensure requisite results and success on continuing basis. It is as combinations of multi-variant and multi-dimensional effect and activities that sustain and improve man's effort not merely to maintain, but to improve on current levels of general performance and social welfare that we term human resources development. In this context, the term human resources is all-embracing of persons who are likely to be productively employed sooner or latter to be trained for the challenge of human rights education.

Human resources development is accordingly one of the most important requirements, perhaps even the most important way to ensure the sustenance and improvement of any socio-economic formation. This human resources need must be consciously planned particularly in this advocated education adventure of human rights whose bearing in Nigeria has not taken a formal dimension. Economists have emphasized the importance of manpower planning for overall national development. As Morris (1976) did point, quoting the following Chinese verse of the 17th century B.C. attributed to Kuan Chung Tzu, to buttress the point.

If you want to plan for a year sow seeds

If you wish to plan for ten years plant trees

If you wish to plan for life time, develop men.

This should not be surprising because whether in the traditional or modern socioeconomic context, human resources as a factor of production can sometime be scarce just like other resources, depending on the total environment and the objectives that are intended to be attained. The objective of this paper is to advocate for a sustainable human resources in human rights education because, at the moment, we either have very few or an insignificant percentage. The recent globalization emphasizes the promotion of democratic values, the building of a global citizen who is conscious of his rights and that of others.

The logic of manpower planning is clear. It is to provide a realistic and implementable framework of action that will ensure the optimum development and productive utilization of all the human resources of the nation. At the moment, evolving a functional human rights education curriculum necessarily should begin with manpower development if this curriculum is to be sustained.

In developing and planning of man power, the essence is to prevent poor performance or promote proper performance. In summary, planning of any type involves the following elements and so does it apply to planning of human rights education:

- Think ahead
- Specify and take stock of the resources required to attain the objective
- Allocate the stock by progressive steps towards the goals;
- Fill our the gaps if need be, orienting and redirecting surplus for the purpose or sourcing shortages, as may be necessary, without losing sight of the main goal.

Evaluate the results, and adjust as the process progresses, bearing in mind that there is often need to modify the objective itself, Review of results and start again to meet new or modified objectives; which is a fundamental characteristic of a dynamic environment, particularly if people are involved.

SUMMARY

Issues of human rights are issues of universal concern that directly affect the lives of citizens of the world. Human rights bothers on formal commitment to democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights; the rights of children and women, humanity access to court and fair bearing among others. There is a high level down play of these rights leading to gross violations of economic, social and culture rights and civil and political rights, violence against innocent people committed by domestic terrorists, social injustices against women in the form of trafficking, unequal distribution of economic resources, deprivation experienced by minorities and bad governance etc.

In the midst of these circumstances the poor and innocent citizen suffer unduly. The quest for justice and human rights promotion will be won because young people across the nation and the world over wish this to be won. It is the young people of Nigeria who will vindicate the protection of human rights. This is why it is important to intensify our effort to provide information and education about human rights to the young people. This education process should begin with the training and developing of human resources to be able to sustain the education process.

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