HARNESSING THE PROPER END OF EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INDIVIDUAL FULFILMENT

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ABSTRACT
This paper considered harnessing the proper end of education to foster national and individual development using the idealistic approach. The work was guided by logical deductions and model statements. It reviewed one of the goals of education which is to foster the worth and development of the individual for each individual’s sake, and for the general development of the society. The paper raised many issues such as the determinants of proper end of education, followed by a brief overview of proper end of education and relevance, and adequacy of the proper end of education. Relying on some established accounts of education’s fundamental nature, the authors argued that equipping students with what it takes to achieve worthwhile development of the individual in order to live a fulfilled life, is a proper end of education. The paper recommends that individuals should raise their children in such a way that they can be agents of change. The worthiness of such a goal, in educational terms, will be by whether or not such an upbringing leads to a meaningful life. The paper concludes that education is necessary for society to survive. And in order for this survival to occur, members of the society must share a common end (or ends), and they must also be both aware of and interested in that end.

Keywords: Education, National development, Individual fulfilment

INTRODUCTION
In Nigeria, education generally has as one of its important “ends”, to foster the worth and development of the individual for each individual’s sake, and for the general development of the society. That is to say it is aimed at helping individuals to engage in meaningful activities within their social community. When an educational system is doing the job that it is supposed to do, it is helping its students live meaningful lives. When education goes “right”, a student is initiated into the values of his or her community in such a way as to afford a workable and authentic social identity. This is not all education does, of course, but it is a necessary and
motivating aspect of the process. The progressive and radical critics of various institutional educational systems and approaches have attacked the educational processes that fail to provide the sort of authentic identity that gives its holder the potential for a more meaningful life.

To talk of education generally is to get caught up in a very broad discussion that is more or less co-extensive and which can conceivably cover any process or experience by which a person comes to understand or believe something in a new or different way. Even in the context of one person “teaching” another, there still exists a tremendous number of variations on the teacher-student relationship, up to and including a parent helping his child learn to walk.

For the sake of this work, the authors will focus on institutional education. Institutional education is a system where people of different ages gain an education. Examples of some institutions are pre primary education, basic education, primary education, secondary education and higher education. These all provide a large variety of learning environments and learning spaces. The institution can be public, private or unconventional. In the same vein, according Barrow (2011), institutional education is a society’s formalized and systematic undertaking to educate its members most notably but not exclusively its youngest members. Institutions of education, whether they are nursery and primary schools for children, or polytechnics, colleges of education and universities for young adults, have as their goal, the preparation of students for living some specific sort of life. The sort of life that is intended can vary tremendously, from the very general (as in the case of nursery and primary schools) to the highly specific tertiary educational institutions where people go to further their knowledge in a specific area, and/or to acquire a degree, but it is necessary that there be a sort of common picture, a “type” of student that the institution desires to produce as an end-product.

One of the benefits of looking at these institutional settings is that they are presented with the execution of a deliberate, intentional process (teaching) undertaken by an identifiable group of actors (teachers), and aimed at a specific class of subjects (students).

This work will proceed by first, looking at what the determinants of proper end of education to live a fulfilled life are, followed by a brief overview of proper end of education and relevance and adequacy of the proper end of education to foster the worth and development of an individual to live a fulfilled life. Relying on some established accounts of education’s fundamental nature, the authors are of the opinion that equipping students with the ability to foster the worth and development of an individual to live a fulfilled life is a proper end of institutional education. More specifically, the authors will show that schools, if they are to accomplish this goal, must take it as one of their goals to initiate students to the “cultural discourse” of their society.
Determinants of the Proper End of Education

In evolving a proper end of education to live a fulfilled life, two things are important: they are relevance in terms of satisfaction and adequacy that is, coverage with regards to areas of development of the goal. To Osaat (2015), “schooling in black Africa must prepare the younger generations to face the problems of building advanced and fraternally united countries tomorrow on the political, economic, and cultural levels from the present balkanized and backward African states”.

Africans have been balkanised for lack of progress and the only way forward is to prepare the young ones to be able to build a strong nation devoid of sectionalism, nepotism, ethnicity, injustice, and so on. Having recognized the indispensability of relevance and adequacy of the goal in politics, economics, moral and cultural development, and the necessity for evolving the goal of proper end of education, other necessary criteria also required are as follows:

1. Evolvement of a viable and enviable ideology based on moral and socio-cultural background for the development of individuals in order to live a fulfilled life.
2. Identification of the type of individuals’ educational institutions aim at building.
3. Identification of necessary values and value system in the individual and society needed for living a fulfilled life.
4. Formation of a clear and simple statement of purpose/objectives which must be coherent and consistent with set goals over a period of time.
5. Uniformity of principles and system of education.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF PROPER END OF EDUCATION

One of the fundamental and necessary ends of a proper education is equipping students with the capacity to foster the worth and development of an individual to live a fulfilled life. Talking about “ends” or “aims” in education is a difficult business but the first distinction that needs to be made, in the authors’ view, is between proper ends and improper ends, for education is an activity that submits itself readily to this sort of evaluation. If a teacher raises a group of students to be gangstars, then what the teacher is doing is unquestionably “un-educative” and manifestly improper.

Indeed, the very concept of education’s “ends” has been called into question, in as much as education is thought to be a sort of instrumental good. Still, it seems like there should, at least, be some highly generalized principles that describe what we think those engaged in “education” should be working toward.
The point here is that a proper education must necessarily take as its aim fostering the worth and development of the individual to live a fulfilled life. This the authors believe is not a controversial claim, and establishing it will not take much by way of philosophical arm-twisting. This is not the only goal or philosophy of education, nor is it even the most important, but the fact remains that it is both an important and a necessary goal.

In Dewey (1985), education is viewed as a type of cultural initiation. The “point” of this initiation is meaningfulness and usefulness. Dewey further claims that education’s main effect is “a life of rich significance”. Here, it means, education is necessary for society to survive. And in order for a society to exist in the first place, its members must share a common end (or ends), and they must also be both aware of and interested in that end. One of the hallmarks of philosophy of Nigerian education is that a society member’s engagement with these shared and common ends must be both active and genuine. It is not sufficient that students participate in education by habit or for instrumental reasons such as coercion; they must understand what they are doing and their actions must have a meaning that comes within the context of those shared ends. In agreement with his view, Dewey actually urges that we should reject the commonly assumed dichotomy between the “inner” life of a student, that “which does not connect with others” and the external, instrumental demands of “social efficiency”.

Peters (1983) is widely considered to have been among the first to take a rigorously analytical approach to the “philosophy of education”. Peters’ perspective begins within the mind of the person being educated. Peters believes that the basic operation of the mind is inherently discursive: to think, value, or appreciate, in other words, to engage in a sort of linguistic and social activity. To Peters (1966), persistence is the product of the initiation of an individual into public traditions enshrined in the language, concepts, beliefs, and rules of society. One’s introduction into social conventions, including a public language and perspective, thus shapes not only the words used but the content of one’s thoughts as well. To support this view, Bonnett and Cuypers (2003) stated that the very sorts of things about which we think, about which we have desires, are “first and foremost objects in a public world, marked out and differentiated by a public language into which the individual is initiated”.

That is to say, whatever knowledge one will or has acquired is the enlargement of the self and the betterment of the society. It is something we come by through associations with others of similar inclinations and capacities. Critical rationality is something that is internalized through what seems to be an individual’s goals, not only by explicating the concept of education which is meant to be distinguished from mere training but also an account of what
is worthwhile about education: what gives the process of education its normative and moral force.

Generally, Peters’ (1986) theory of education aims at initiation into something of value, something like an Aristotelian process of habituation. As Peters puts it, “the dialogue within is inseparable from the dialogue without.” This is not to say that the individual does not actually exist independently or even that he is a mere vessel for socio-linguistic inheritance. It is rather to say that it is more or less impossible to imagine a consciousness that did not exist within a social and linguistic milieu of some sort. The individual consciousness which we may or may not take to be coextensive with the individual, exists in a sort of give and take with the public language, on which he “imprints his own individual style and pattern of being”.

Peters further argues that education involves becoming properly acquainted with value-laden understanding. A proper education requires promoting things that are either valuable, or at least seen as valuable. Indeed, much of Peters did is to set apart education from skills or vocational training by invoking a model of an “educated person”. Peters readily admits that his conception of education is more or less identical with “liberal education,” so his model of an educated person is a liberally educated person which if properly harnessed will foster the worth and development of an individual to live a fulfilled life.

**RELEVANCE AND ADEQUACY OF THE PROPER END OF EDUCATION IN FOSTERING THE WORTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL IN ORDER TO LIVE A FULFILLED LIFE**

In Kalusi’s (2015) view, the necessary goal to foster the worth and development of an individual to live a fulfilled life has become very relevant to the aspiration of a country’s educational system. The inadequacy of education in Nigeria lies in the fact that at best, it is merely a statement of aims, goal and objectives, lacking clarity, coherence and consistency.

Relevance in this context is when something is being connected with what has been discussed or has a bearing or impact on human nature. It is not relevant if it is not meant to positively change an individual and the general society at large. It must also be tailored toward the demand and aspiration of national educational development.

On the matter of relevance and adequacy of the proper end of education, two things are to be considered. They are:

1. Clarity of concept and statement of goal
2. Provision of guidance to the society and its citizens

First, the concepts and goals are not clear. For example, what does it mean to foster the worth and development of the individual for each individual’s sake, and for the general development of the society? Second, lack of clarity of expression, concepts and apparent
inconsistencies in policy statements pose a serious problem in providing guidance to the society. The relevance should also be in soundness and practice and real impact must be created on people.

For real impact to be created in the life of the people, Peters (1983) believes that a proper end of education is the provision of a capacity for engaging in meaningful activities. In other words, it is a proper (and fundamental) end of education to equip a student with the basic tools needed to live a “meaningful life”. To this end, education necessarily involves internalising values that allow one to participate in social life through shared activities, and it is important that those activities be the sorts of activities that are valued within the discourse into which the student is being initiated.

THE WAY FORWARD

- Educational institutions should prepare the young ones to be able to build a strong nation devoid of sectionalism, nepotism, ethnicity and injustice.
- There should be uniformity of principles and system of education, at least some highly generalized principles that describe the sorts of things toward which we think those engaged in “education” should be working toward.
- There should be identification of necessary values and value system in the individual and society.
- There should be room for a person to raise his child not just to the immediate social circumstances, but in order to participate in some other culture, or even to be an “agent of change” to one’s own culture. The worthiness of such a goal, in educational terms, will be determined in great part by whether or not such an upbringing leads to a meaningful life.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, education is necessary for society to survive. And in order for a society to exist in the first place, its members must share a common end (or ends), and they must also be both aware of and interested in that end. When an educational system is doing the job that it is supposed to do, it is helping its student live meaningful lives and when education goes “right”, a student is initiated into the values of his or her community in such a way as to afford a workable and authentic social identity. Education is therefore not relevant if it does not positively change an individual and the general society at large. It must also be tailored toward the demand and aspiration of national development.
REFERENCES


