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EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND SELF- RELIANCE: CHALLENGES FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AS IT RELATES TO HISTORY AND CULTURE

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Abstract

This work focuses on Education for Sustainable Growth and Self-reliance: challenges for developing countries as it relates to History and Culture. Education can simply be defined as a change in behaviour as a result of experience. The paper using analytical method of research explains man's moral reciprocal adjustment to the community, to the society and to the ultimate cosmos at large. The aims of Education are to mirror, to harness, to promote, to steer, to popularize, to preserve and to stabilize the culture of the people for the younger generations. History helps to preserve the culture of the people; it helps to produce inquisitive minds, to make balanced judgments to produce philosopher's and to appreciate contemporary issues. The writer concludes this work by saying that history helps to make a balanced education.

Keywords: Education, Growth, History, Culture.

Introduction

Miss C.V. Wedgwood has written “History ... is an art like all the other science” the life of man is continuous and unified, all its aspects overlapping and it is this reality which the artists/historian tries to convey by reassembling the material on which the scientist historian has imposed an artificial separation. Thus, the final form of the historian's explanation will depend partly in his assessment of the relative importance of the factor adduced and partly on aesthetic consideration. It will also reflect his philosophic approach, whether homothetic aimed at the establishment of general “laws” or idiographic, seeking to understand unique events and situation, though even in the later case, he is unlikely to resist making a few summarizing generations.

According to Herodotus the father of history, History has been described as that father of all disciplines, hence, we have historical relativism or historical relationism. There is no nation or discipline in the world that has no history of the past, be it America, Japan, Russia, Cambodia, etc. similarly too, there is no discipline

that has no history, be it medicine, law, physics, pharmacology, etc. He contended therefore that there is no nation that can do without history.

Going further, Carlyle the great historian once said “History is the biography of great men”. Men like Moshshewe, Dan Fodio, Shaka or Menelik. In exploring the past, the historian faces a lot of problems such as: The problem of explaining the role of great men which has often be over exaggerated or blown out of proportion, two, there is the problem of how the historian will take account of incidents which from their nature are described (by contemporaries and subsequently) as “accidental” or “contingent”.

A third aspect of historical explanation, which needs some comments, is that of conditional causation. Fourthly, history is a great deal more complicated than many laymen think. Finally, since truth is never totally attainable, history remains as has been said an “unending debate”, never to be exhausted.

To a layman, history can be defined as the study of past events, the rise of man and fall of nations, to the writer, it means

more than that. History can be defined as the recapitulation of past events and the regeneration of present events, from the past events you are able to have an insight or projection into future events and to avoid the pitfalls of the future.

According to Daniel F. McCall (1969), History can be defined as the problems of man by sheer forces of his intellect into the nature of things, himself included, it is his unending pre-occupation and distinguishing characteristics. Quoting Daniels R.V. (1972)

History is the memory of human group, experience, if it is forgotten or ignored, we cease in that measure to 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 event recorded as history that have generated all the emotions, the values, the ideals that make life meaningful that have given man something to live for, struggle over, die for. Historical events have created all the basic human groupings, countries, religious classes and all the loyalties that are attached to these.

(See Daniels R.V. Studying History, How and Why?) 2nd Edition, New Jersey, Prentice Hall Inc., 1972, p.3.

According to E.H. Garr. “History is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past, the historian without his facts is rootless and futile. The facts without the historian are dead and meaningless. The historian belongs not to the past but to the present”. Professor Trevor, Roper tells us that the historian “out to love the past”.

According to Collingswood, the philosophy of history is convened neither with the past by itself nor with the historian's thought about it by itself; but with the two things in their mutual relations (this dictum reflects current meaning of the word “history” – the inquiry conducted by the historian and the series of past events

The context of this celebrated aphorism is as follows.

“The practical requirements which underline every historical judgment give to all history the character of “contemporary history” because however remote in time, events thus recounted may seem to be. History in reality refers to present need and present situation. Wherein those event vibrate”B. Croce, History as the story of liberty. Engl. Transl. 1941, p.19.

According to Carr (1961), “The past which a historian studies is not a dead past, but a past which in some sense is still living in the present”.

The historian belongs not to the past but to the present. Professor Trevor Roper tells us that the historian ought to love the past. This is a dubious injunction. He went further to say that “But a past act is dead i.e. meaningless to the historian unless he can understand the thought that lay behind it. Hence all history is the history of thought and history of thought is the re-enactment in the historian's mind of the thought whose history he is studying.

Carr (1961) equally contended that the reconstitution of the past in the historian's mind is deeper on empirical evidence. But it is not itself an empirical process and cannot consist in a mere recital of fact. On the contrary, the process of reconstitution governs the selection and interpretation of the facts. This indeed, is what makes them historical facts. History says Professor Oakeshott who on the point stands near to Collingswood, is the historian's experience. It is “made” by nobody save the historian: to write history is the only way of making it.

The historian belongs not to the past but to the present, Professor Trevor-Roper tells us that the historian ought to love the past”. This is a dubious injunction. To love the past may easily be an expression of the nostalgic romanticism of the old men and old societies, a symptom of loss of faith and interest in the present or future.

Finally, and quoting Carr (1961:26), St. Augustine looked at history from the point of view the early Christians, Tillamont from that of a seventh century Frenchman, Gibbon, from that of an eighteenth century Englishman, Mommsen from that of a nineteenth century German. There is no point asking which was the right point of view. Each was the only one possible for the man who adopted it.

Needs for History

The writer would like to start this aspect of work by quoting R.G. Collingswood in Daniel F. McCall of 1964 he stated.

“This historian can discuss what has been completely forgotten, in the sense that no statement of his reached him by an unbroken tradition from eye witnesses. He can even discover what,

until he discovered it, no one ever knew to have happened at all. This he does partly by the critical treatment of statements contained in his source, partly by the use of what are called unwritten sources which are increasingly employed as history becomes increasingly sure of its own proper criterion”.

Bearing this in mind, history is seen by most historians as a cultural or aesthetic understanding like the creation and appreciation of art, a fulfillment of something that can be done without – it is, one might infer a luxury.

Thirdly, history is even as a necessary part of a civilized society. It gives a human and intellectual status to an educated man with which his other studies can't wholly supply him.

Fourthly, and quoting Samuel Johnson in Daniel McCall (1964:14). Whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future predominant over the present advances as in the dignity of thinking beings.

Fifthly, since the world needs leader and followers too, of great breadth of vision. History especially a universal history can help to construct this wide horizon of knowledge and

understanding. Sixthly, the task we face today is far more Herculean one, for our universe is not an empire, but humanity and the globe. The accomplishment of this work cannot be the work of one man, it will have to be the synthesis of many men of many nations and generations and it is urgent that we get on with it as expeditiously as possible. According to James T. Shot Well and Ernest F. Jacob in McCall 1968:15). “History is the recovery of that past which had already been lost when our literary history began”. According to Ikime (2006:4), History of our past years gave all of us pride, gave us a new personality in a situation in which our colonial masters and their own historians had for years deliberately sought to create the impression that we and the rest of black Africa had no history before they arrived on the scene. Secondly and according to Ikime (2006:4), History and historians provided our politicians with additional communication for the battle against colonial rule.

History gave us the pride in ourselves, helped to established us as worthy members of the comity of nations.

Present Trends or Status of History

History is now being considered as a useless discipline by the government of the day which should not be taught in the educational institutions of our land. Today, parents now tell their children not to read History. In many of our secondary schools, the number of pupils offering History is very low. There are states in which graduates of History are not considered for employment. They are not even given the chance to compete with other graduates for available job. History and Geography have disappeared from the junior secondary schools replaced by something called social studies which have very little History in it. It is even now being planned to introduce social studies into senior secondary schools. What all this means is that in a few years from now, most of those who pass through our schools will not be taught History at all. If the present trend continues, History may well disappear from our entire educational system in half a century from now. As Obara indicated in a different forum in February (2005), when that happens, Nigeria would have set a world

records, it would have become the only country in the world which does not teach its own history to its citizens (Obaro, 2006).

Problems of Studying History

Carr (1961:22), standing on Sir George's head and quoting him that history is “a hard core of interpretation surrounded by a pulp or disputable facts”. The second problem an historian faces is that of the imaginative understanding for the minds of the people with whom he is dealing with for the thoughts behind their acts. The third problem is that we can view the past, and achieve our understanding of the past, only through the eyes of the present. The historian is of his own age, and is bound to it by the condition of human existence.

A Survey of the Development of Historical Study since the end of the 19th Century

A summary of Itsueli's work or article on this in 1981 showed that by the end of the 19th century, history has become an independent discipline, particularism and specialization in history were ushered in, the era of professionalism was encouraged, the

era of amateurism went away, there was also the growing tentacle of nationalistic spirit, historical relativism, historical revisionism, historical scholasticism were encouraged and ushered in.

History and Culture

The writer is of the contention and belief that a lot of discussions and light have been thrown into the concept of history in all its ramifications, and in the course of a lot of historical analysis, culture in relation to history has been touched. However, a lot of work needs to be done on this.

Culture is an integral part of history, both of them work in pari-pasu. There is no nation of the world that has no culture and in the course of studying the culture of a people, history is as well as studied.

What we call sources of history viz oral tradition, written record, archaeology, linguistics, ethnology, ethno – zoology, physical anthropology and serology geography, physics and the analysis of art constitute the people's culture.

When the historian, on the other hand, undertakes to write a history of an African society, the potential contribution of

anthropology is far greater. Anthropology has specialized in the study of non-western societies and the concept of culture which is basic to the study has now become by now thoroughly familiar to other disciplines when it is frequently referred to but often only indifferently used in large measure, it is the anthropologist themselves who will furnish the data on the structure of the society, the economy institutions, the inventory of national culture (i.e. its good and technology). Which are the patterns of social change and personality – norms of the African societies.

Still in the cultural realms, without History, it is impossible for man to function effectively as man especially in the realm of politics and statesmanship whether we acknowledged it or not History prepares the individual for living within his society. Write Robert, V. Daniel. In this age of mass education ..., one of the major tasks ... of teaching is to prepare the student to be an informal and conscientious citizenry to play his part as a responsible member of a democratic society, and very likely to assume the role of intelligent leadership.

“History perhaps more than any single discipline is the natural vehicle for instruction in these responsibilities. The subject matter of

history affords the essential perspective for the citizens to understand what is going on in the world and the method of historical thinking in the best kind of training in the virtue of seasoned judgment”. (See Robert, V. Daniels quote in Ikime's work (2006:166)

Conclusion

Culture can be defined as the people ways of life, it can be defined as that complex whole of a people or a community which includes values, norms, morals and background of the people. According to Aghulor (1996), the concept of culture is very significant in intellectual arena for it marks the missing link between homo sapiens and other homos of mankind (less animals). Above all, there is no human being or group without culture. Taylor in Aghulor (1996) defined culture as “that complex whole, which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, law, morals, customs and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society. According to Aghulor (1996) Taylor's definition marks a distinction between the acquired qualities of man and the instinctive qualities.

Taylor's concept of culture implies a total repertoire of human actions, which are severally transmitted as against actions

that are genetically transmitted. This definition tries to explain that culture is passed from one generation to another.

Citing Clyde Kluckhohn and Kelly in Aghulor (1996), culture is defined as a historically derived system of explicit and implicit design for living which tends to be shared by all or especially designed members of a society.

Andah observed that culture embraces all the materials and non-materials expression of people as well as the process with which the expressions are communicated. It has to deal with all the social ethics, intellectual, scientific, artistic and technological expressions of a people usually either ethnic and/or nationality.

Generally, culture can be defined as the standardized ... (laid down procedure) or thinking, a state of mind, feeling or emotion and acting or doing things that man can acquire as a member of the society.

From the above definition, one can deduce that culture is the totality of all identifiable way of life that people within a geographical entity adopts as members of that society.

The features of culture are:

1. Culture is shared by the members of the society both young and old.
2. Culture is not inborn, but acquired as a member of the society through the process of socialization.
3. Culture is transmitted from one generation to another such that if an individual dies, his society and culture continues.
4. Culture is created by man through the process of adjustment to the social setting.
5. Culture is dynamic.

Approaches to culture shows that culture can be viewed from two main perspectives. Sectional and holistic approach is a particularized or sectional view of people's way of life; it concentrates on particular aspects of life of members of the society, it could be music, festivals, ceremonies, marriage or attitude towards particular acts or actions, values, tools making, crafts and arts, etc.

Holistic Approach

This approach looks at the totality of the people in the place of study; the totality of the way of life of people can be grouped into

material and non material culture. The material culture comprises the feasible aspect of man's culture such as tools, crafts, arts, artifacts, etc. Generally, material culture refers to those feasible materials created by man out of his initiative and industriousness for survival. Non-material culture deals with various aspects of our values, ideas, and philosophy, ceremonies, music, dance, festivals, religious, drama, folklore, literature, etc. They are those aspects of our activities that can't be seen but which are learnt through the process of socialization.

It is very important to note that the difference between material and non-material culture is more of superficial than real. This is because material culture influences the non-material aspect in practical life and vice versa. Aspects of culture include Nigerian Religion, Oral literature (Drama), Folk tales and oral tradition and drama, indigenous Nigeria poetry, music, dance, farming and food habit, technology and agriculture, art etc.

Similarities between History and Culture

1. Culture is historically derived.
2. The sources of history, oral tradition, written records,

Archaeology, ethno-Botany, ethno-linguistics, anthropology are all culturally derived.

3. Language of a society or community cuts across historical and cultural boundary.
4. The aspects of culture, features of culture and approaches to culture are all historically derived.
5. The value system of a community or a society, their norms, beliefs, mores, etc., are work of anthropologists who are considered as social historians.

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