

Some Visible Agents and Methods of Internalization of Education in Nigeria Before and after British Colonisation

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Abstract

Education is the culture which each generation purposely gives to those who are to be its successor in order to qualify them for transmission of the values and knowledge of the society. There were many agents in the transmission of education in Nigeria during the period in question. Each of the agents had its own methods of disseminating knowledge. Of particular interest in this paper are the following agents and the methods they used: Traditional educators applied various methods to convey knowledge. One of those was the informal method of instruction which included learning through play. Children were left to their own initiative to make toys with which they played. They made such toys from local materials of their own choices and interests. They molded them from mud and clay and made use of articles which were of little use to adults (Ocitti, 1973). Children also engaged in make-believe activities which were imitative, imaginative and symbolic. They enjoyed imitating their parents or other grown-ups, and especially those activities in which they themselves would pursue in later years. These activities included; building huts of grass, digging and hunting by boys. Girls, on the other hand, participated in activities of the family and life in the home. They therefore imitated their mothers in such activities as cooking, grinding, fetching water and firewood (Erny, 1981). The Christian Missionaries came with the introduction and development of Western (formal) education using the various methods like recitation, assimilation, content transmission and learning by rote. The Arab traders came to the country introducing the Islamic education through their trading enterprise and using the methods of recitation, repetition, rote learning and a host of others. The British Colonial government, as an agent of education in Nigeria formalized and modernized all various methods and came out with her own method of internalization of education. Except for the traditional Community, each of the other three agents i.e. the Christian Missions, the Arab traders and the British Colonial Government established schools to advance and develop their educational systems. This paper did a comparative analysis of agents of education and methods used by each of them in the 18th and 19th century in Nigeria. The Historical method was adopted for this study and this involved the use of the British colonial papers, official Nigerian government papers and documents of various Missions and the Berber merchants. One of the important findings of this analysis is that although, the traditional type of education was informal, the method used for disseminating knowledge suited the purpose of education in the country by then and the method achieved the result of preparing individuals for employment in their own environments and making them useful and active citizens (Fafunwa, 1974). Another finding indicated that to

a large extent, the missionaries discarded Nigerian's ways of life. They rejected much of the traditional ways of life because their desire was to convert as many as possible to Christianity religion. Thus, the education provided was biased towards religion.

INTRODUCTION

The following questions were raised and answered in this study.

1. Who were the agents of education in Nigeria in the 18th and 19th century?
2. What type of education did they offer Nigerians during these periods?
3. What methods did they use in transferring education to the recipients?
4. What were the end results of these strengths and limitations of each of the methods?

The Agents of Education in the 18th and 19th Century Nigeria

There were some agents of education in the 18th and 19th century Nigeria. Some of the visible ones are the Community people including parents, siblings and significant others in the community. Apart from the community people, there were the Arab traders known as Berber merchants who came to the country for trading purposes and in the course of their trading activities, spread the Islamic /Arabic education. There were also the Christian Missions like the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) now known as the Anglican; the Wesleyan Methodist, the Southern American Baptist; the Roman Catholic and a host of others who were really the agents of Western Education in Nigeria.

The British Colonial masters who colonized Nigeria since the 18th century also were the agents of education in the country. The various Nigerian governments (Military and Civilians) were also agents of education in Nigeria.

The type of Education offered by each agents in Nigeria during the 18th and 19th Century

The Nigerian Community with Traditional Education

Educational systems that existed in African societies prior to the coming of the Europeans was for the induction of members of the society into activities and mode of thought that were considered worthwhile especially their rich cultural heritage which was preserved and transmitted from generation to generation through a system of traditional education. This system is variously referred to as indigenous traditional, informal or community-based education. Even though there were no schools and professional teachers, there were certain places for initiation and adult members of

society served as teachers. It was essentially practical training designed to enable the individual to play a useful role in society. The philosophy of traditional education was based on the philosophy of functionalism, productivity and to inculcate social responsibility of the community to individuals to become contributing members of the society. In respect to vocation, children were taught farming, fishing, weaving, cooking, hunting, carving, knitting, building of houses, mat-making and forging local farm implements. Different societal issues constituted political traditional education. For example, young ones were taught rules and regulations governing family, village and the individual, relationship between members of society and villages. Intellectual training included the study of local history, legends, poetry, reasoning, riddles and proverbs. Those who excelled in these areas were highly revered in the society as their expertise was of immense benefit to their society. An individual's intellect in these directions was developed to enable him fit into such professional groups as rain makers, herbalists, hunters, cult leaders and priests.

Types of Education offered by the traditional Community in Nigeria



Drumming



Farming



Farming



Tapping



Hut Making



Basket weaving



Basket weaving

Intellectual training for them consisted of their sitting quietly beside their fathers at meetings and listening attentively to learn the process of such tasks and skills as arbitration of cases, oratory, wise sayings and use of proverbs. All these stimulated their sense of rationality. Girls were often expected to stay back at home to learn domestic and other chores such as cooking, sweeping, weeding the farmlands, hair weaving, decorations of the body, dye production; and the like from their mothers. As in the case of the boys, the girls did almost exactly what their mothers trained them to do. Generally, therefore, in spite of geo-political variations, traditional or indigenous education in most parts of Nigeria trained individuals to fit usefully into their society by learning and practising economic skills for self-sustenance; adapting to their role expectations and contributing to the development of their society.

Methods of Internalisation of Community/Traditional Education

From the very first day in the life of an African child, he starts **hearing poetry performed**, meant for their delight. It would usually be by the grandmother or some other women welcoming the new member by **chanting the family oriki**. During childhood, a proper and effective mode of socialization was ensured through the use of **literature**. So much essential information meant to ensure continuity of traditions and customs was packed into children's literature. According to Isola (2003), **information about plants, trees, and animal life, philosophical remarks about the language of nature, and the nature of language including non-verbal media of communication, mnemonics for counting, and moral instruction were integral in poems and stories for children:**

"Folktales were rich resources of night entertainment and there were folktales for every conceivable moral lesson. **Folktales introduced children to the socio-political problems of the society because the folktales of a society tend to reflect the fears and aspirations of the people.** A poor community would create reversal of roles in its folktales: the affluent prince became a slave and the hapless farmer suddenly came into riches! The arrogant was humiliated and the cheated avenged. **Among the Yoruba, the various adventures of the tortoise demonstrated how dirty tricks in any form would always land the culprit [trickster] in trouble.** Listening to those tales the child began to feel the nature of some of the socio-political and economic relations existing in the society. Folktales in general, because they contain

allegorical fantasy, tend to stoke the child's creative capabilities, and they [sic] got ample room for practice when they took their own turns at story telling sessions in the evenings.

The greater portion of education was informal. As Rodney (1972, p. 261) argues, this kind of education was acquired by children "from the example and behaviour of elders in the society. **Learning was by initiation, observation and repetition of what parents and other adults did and encouraging the young to do it.** This household education covered practical skills and continued as long as the child lived with his/her parents. The educational efforts of parents were supplemented by the efforts of the other adults in the community. All elders in the society were expected to play mother and father roles in teaching, scolding, advising, rewarding and punishing children in the village or community (Blackmore and Cooksey, 1980; Tiberondwa, 1978). Among the Banyaruguru of Western Uganda, an adult who showed no interest in the education of the young people in the community was regarded as inimical to the community. He or she was often branded a witch (Tiberondwa, 1978). This observation, which also applies to many other societies in Africa, denotes that the task of teaching and bringing up children

Strengths of Traditional Education

Education was functional and relevant to social life or realities of the community. Equal opportunities were provided for adults, females, males and children alike in all areas, academic, recreational, vocational, and social. Hence, there was no problem of unemployment as men and women were engaged in meaningful activities which they lived on. Traditional African education encourages smooth integration of the growing children into society. Since it was also done through oral literature and play, these enabled boys and girls to learn about the history of their tribe and enhanced their mental development. They also acquired such qualities as perseverance, self-control, courage and endurance. In this informal way, children developed an aptitude to perform their masculine and feminine roles. The education inculcates good manners, norms and values into their offspring.

Limitations of Traditional Education

Although the traditional education offered by the community was comprehensive such that it provided training in physical, character, intellectual, social and vocational development, it however had its limitations: One of them was the absence of writing which made people depend on the power of their memories to facilitate the retention and transmission of all learned ideas to future generations. But memory could fail, and in the event of the death of a custodian of some useful information or skill, all was lost

The Berbers and Islamic Education

Islam according to some scholars is the religion of trade. Trimingham credited trade and centralization for the spread of Islam. States that were structurally organized were prone to easy Islamic conversion than the stateless societies. Equally, centralized states fostered and protected trade both internally and externally. In effect, Islam largely spread through the activities of traders. Seeking knowledge has been an integral part of the Islamic tradition.. For Muslims, the Koran is the perfect word of God, sacred and therefore cannot be changed. It should be memorized from start to finish. The curriculum in a Koranic school is usually the Koran only. Every Muslim child, girl and boy, is expected to read and recite the Koran early on. A typical model of Koranic school is a small room, usually attached to a mosque, where a teacher, usually male, teaches students to read and in some cases memorize the Koran in Arabic whatever the child's mother tongue. Mats and ram or cow skin were the common furniture in such schools. The Koranic teacher is usually a *Hafiz Koran* – the one who has memorized the text and teaches by one-on-one coaching technique. The teacher also teaches by organizing small groups depending upon the age and level of learning of the student. If the number of students is high, the teacher utilizes the technique of peer tutoring, where those

students who have mastered a certain level of the Koran are made to teach the little ones. On a typical day, the teacher would start by asking students to recite what was taught the day before. After ensuring that the student has learned to read and pronounce the Koranic words in an acceptable manner, he/she reads with the student the next few paragraphs three or four times, until the student begins to rightly pronounce and read the new text. The value placed on memorization during students' early religious training directly influences their approaches to learning when they enter formal education offered by the modern state.

Two broad types of Islamic schools exist in northern Nigeria. Makarantar allo (the traditional Quranic school) refers to schools where the emphasis is teaching the Qur'an. The pupils use wooden slates and locally made ink. The slate is reusable, and all it requires is to wipe the slate clean and a new lesson can then be re-written. This is the first stage of Islamic education, and in some cases, underage children get sent to teachers far away from their homes and parents.

These two types of schools represent the old Islamic educational system, which are strictly traditional and completely private, with no formal funding (usually) from the state. The malamai (plural for teachers) took care of the education and spiritual development of children on behalf of the society and parents. The society and parents in turn took care of the malamai through fees, zakkah (tithes), sadaqah (offerings) and the baitul mal. The society also took care of the almajirai through giving them leftover food, and offering them opportunities as house helps. This unique system did not exclude willing students even if they were poor; it produced world class scholars in every field of Islamic knowledge, required little infrastructure and maintained social cohesion by

promoting the interaction of the rich and the poor. Qur'anic education is an integral part of Islam. Wherever there are Muslims, schools are found for the teaching of Qur'an and Islamic Education. In Nigeria, the history of Qur'anic school/ Islamic Education is dated back to 11th Century when Sayfawa court of the Kanem Empire was converted to Islam. By early 16th Century, Qur'anic / Islamic Education has taken a new dimension with the establishment of centres of learning in Borno, Zaria, Sokoto, Kano and Katsina. The teachers were mostly Arabs scholars and traders, while the syllabus was mainly reading, writing and memorisation of the Qur'an and reading of certain selected venerated texts in Arabic language and literature, logic and Islamic jurisprudence. But it was in the 19th century that Qur'anic / Islamic education began to enjoy a wider popularity especially in the Northern region. The products of the system were appointed by colonial administrators as Alkali (Judge) and were also assigned administrative functions. In the South –West, the situation was different. Administration was moulded on western lines and legal system was operated by judges and magistrates rather than Alkalis. So Qur'anic/Islamic Education was not given any recognition until 1896. In June 1896, as a result of demand by Muslims for formalization of Qur'anic / Islamic Education in schools, the first Government Muslim school was operated in Lagos. The Schools were later phased out in 1925 when government hands off funding of schools. However, the traditional Qur'anic schools flourished especially in the North, Middle Belt and South West. It is found in virtually every neighbourhood where there is a Muslim community. These schools are seen as community schools. The system is flexible; it allows enrollment at any point.

Methods of Internalization of Islamic Education

According to the religious education teachers, there are insufficient techniques and teaching materials that can be used when teaching using the traditional technique of Islamic education in West Africa. Therefore the majority of the teachers from various religious schools preferred to teach using only two techniques, which are via textbook and memorization, unlike to the modern teaching technique, whereby some of others teachers used various modern technique of teaching, such as discussion, demonstration, questioning and answering technique

(Haynes,2009) [6]. Nevertheless, the teachers are given freedom to choose other appropriate and effective technique that response to the needs of the students and that is compatible with the environmental situation. This is because it's necessary to help students to achieve their desired learning goal.

The Holy Quran recommended the following methods precisely: storytelling, use of questioning, metaphorical expressions. It also recommended the following strategies: repetition, illustrations, demonstration, field trips, punishments and rewards.

The Christian Missions and Western Education in Nigeria

The real history of school education in Nigeria began with the missionaries in 1842. At first, the kind of education brought by the missions aimed primarily at religious education, and Nigerian education in its early stages was interwoven with Christian evangelism". The missions throughout Nigeria varied in terms of denominational affiliation, but the mission schools' main objective is best articulated by one of the Catholic bishops in eastern Nigeria: "According to Bishop Shanahan, one of the pioneer Catholic missionaries in eastern Nigeria, 'Those who hold the school, hold the country, hold its religion, hold its future'" (Bassey 11-12). These mission schools comprised the basis of the more complete colonial education to come. In essence, the mission schools laid a foundation on which the colonial government built the larger educational framework. It is important to note, as Uduaroh Okeke does, that "the educational policy of the British Government in Nigeria cannot be divorced from the total policy of colonial administration" because "education is an instrument of national policy"

The first mission that came to Nigeria was the Church Missionary Society (CMS). They were followed by other Protestant denominations and in the 1860s by Roman Catholic. Formal education in Nigeria is traceable to the efforts of European Missionaries around 1842. Education at this time was regarded as of fundamental importance to the spread of Christianity (Esu, 1997). Thus, education introduced at this early stage was interwoven with Christian evangelism. The missionaries established and ran the early schools in Nigeria. They also designed the curriculum for such schools and devoted their meagre resources to the opening of schools for young Nigerians. All missionaries who came to Nigeria combined evangelical and educational work together. Consequently, early mission schools were founded by the Methodist Church of Scotland Mission, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the Roman Catholics. The Western-Type Education. began seriously in Nigeria with the arrival of the Wesleyan Christian Missionaries at Badagry in 1842. It has obviously been the most successful in meeting the overall formal educational needs of the consumers for the present and the future. Between 1842 and 1914, about ten different Christian missions had arrived and begun intensive missionary and educational work in Nigeria. Schools were built and the missions struggled for pupils/members such that there was a proliferation of primary schools established by different missions. Although literary education in the 4Rs (reading, writing, arithmetic and religion) was predominant, this new missionary education prepared the recipients for new job opportunities, as teachers, church evangelists or pastors, clerks and interpreters. Emphasis was also on character training. Most of the missions established primary schools and, initially, little emphasis was laid on secondary and higher education.

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